

# Part 2: Description of the Plan

NWGGA Strategic Assessment Report

Public re-exhibition version



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## PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN

### 5 Introduction

This part (Part 2) of the assessment report provides a description of the Plan and is structured to address the following:

- The overall purpose, content and structure of the Plan and associated documents (Chapter 5)
- The need and justification for the Plan and how it was developed, including consideration of alternatives (Chapter 6)
- Development that is supported by the Plan including the classes of actions (Chapter 7)
- An overview of the conservation that will be delivered by the Plan (Chapter 8)
- An overview of the assurance and implementation processes for the Plan (Chapter 9)

The sections of the ToR that are relevant to Part 2 are outlined in the following text box:

- 2.1. The Report must describe the Plan to which the Agreement relates:*
- a) The Report must provide a summary outlining the Plan's overall purpose, key elements, spatial extent, and timeframes, including how long the Plan is proposed to be in effect.*
  - b) The Report must provide details about the key elements of the Plan, including:*
    - i. the outcomes, commitments, and measures to be delivered for protected matters.*
    - ii. the class or classes of actions likely to be taken under the Plan over the term of the Plan.*
    - iii. the legal and administrative frameworks to implement and ensure compliance with the Plan, and the persons and authorities responsible for implementation and compliance*
    - iv. the relationship of the Plan to other relevant Commonwealth and State policies, plans and guidelines, commitments, regulations and legislation, including environmental approvals*
    - v. an identification of actions or classes of actions that are outside the scope of the Plan*
    - vi. management and funding arrangements for implementing the Plan and complying with any approval given with respect to the Plan under Part 10 of the EPBC Act, including but not limited to:*
      - *a description of the mechanism that will be used by City of Greater Geelong to verify the persons who are proposing to take an action in accordance with the Plan, and to inform those persons of approval conditions*
  - c) The Report must describe the need and justification for the Plan including the environmental, social and economic drivers for its development.*
  - d) The Report must describe the decision-making framework that was used in considering alternatives and developing conservation outcomes of the Plan. It should identify the alternative options that were evaluated to reach the final Plan, and why these options were not supported.*
- 4.5. The Report must include an analysis of the conservation benefits (beneficial impacts) of the Plan, including:*
- a) how protected matters will be conserved, protected and managed within the strategic assessment area*
  - b) information regarding the process for establishing conservation areas. This must include information regarding land tenure, timing, funding and legal protective mechanisms.*
- 4.7. The Report must include information regarding the process for establishing conservation areas. This must include information regarding land tenure, timing, funding and management*

The following chapter provides an overall description of the Plan including:

- Purpose and content of the Plan
- Implementation documents which support the Plan
- Objective and outcomes of the Plan

## 5.1 PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the Plan is to ensure development within the Growth Areas and associated infrastructure development outside the Growth Areas protects MNES and proceeds in accordance with the requirements of the EPBC Act.

The Plan does not address Victorian planning, biodiversity or other regulatory requirements. Separate approvals are needed in accordance with State regulatory requirements before the development under the Plan can proceed.

The Plan:

- Describes the development (classes of actions) for which approval is being sought under the EPBC Act
- Sets out an objective, and a series of outcomes and commitments to define what the Plan will achieve
- Sets out a conservation framework to address the impacts of the development on MNES, including through avoiding and minimising, mitigating, and offsetting residual impacts
- Sets out an assurance and implementation framework to implement the Plan

The Plan recognises the importance of the biodiversity values within the Greater Geelong area for MNES and will facilitate Geelong's future growth by streamlining EPBC Act approvals and ensuring implementation is cost efficient in its support of both urban growth and the protection of MNES.

The commitments in the Plan represent agreed pledges by the approval holder (The City of Greater Geelong) for undertaking actions to address impacts to MNES. The commitments will not be changed once the Plan is endorsed under Part 10 of the EPBC Act, and the approval holder will be responsible for the delivery of these commitments over the life of the Plan.

### 5.1.1 PLAN TIMING

Implementation of the Plan will commence at the point that the Plan is endorsed and one or more of the classes of action has been approved. Implementation will occur for a period of 30 years. This timing is consistent with the implementation of the development under the *Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Framework Plan* (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021b) to 2047 and allows additional time to complete the implementation of the commitments under this Plan.

### 5.1.2 KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

The Plan includes the following key elements:

- Development – details the types of development (the classes of actions) that endorsement and approval under Part 10 of the EPBC Act will cover, including the scope and location of the development
- Conservation framework – describes conservation under the Plan, including the commitments that the Plan will deliver to avoid and minimise, mitigate and offset the impacts of the development on MNES
- Process based development – describes how development within parts of the Heales Road East precinct, and external infrastructure development located outside the Growth Areas within the Strategic Assessment Area will be delivered
- Assurance and implementation framework – describes how the Plan will be implemented and what assurance mechanisms will be put in place to ensure the Plan's outcomes are achieved

The key elements are described respectively in detail in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the Plan.

## 5.2 THE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The Plan is supported by four documents. These include:

- Three implementation documents:
  - The Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Commitments and Measures
  - The Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS)
  - The Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Funding Program
- A Strategic Assessment Report (SAR) (this document)

Figure 5-1 shows the relationship between the documents associated with the strategic assessment.

The three implementation documents do not form part of the Plan to be endorsed by the Minister under Part 10 of the EPBC Act. While the commitments will not be changed once the Plan is endorsed under Part 10, the measures set out in the implementation documents may be updated from time to time as part of adaptive management (see Section 7.5 of the Plan).

#### 5.2.1 COMMITMENTS AND MEASURES DOCUMENT

The Plan identifies a broad objective and national level outcomes relating to the protection of MNES under the EPBC Act and socio/economic considerations. The Plan's outcomes represent standards of environmental protection that will be achieved for MNES under the Plan in accordance with the requirements of the EPBC Act. The Plan's objective and outcomes will be achieved through the delivery of a set of commitments and measures. The outcomes, commitments and measures were developed through an 'outcomes framework' based on program logic principles (see Section 5.3).

The outcomes and commitments are set out in the Plan and will not be changed once the Plan is endorsed under Part 10 of the EPBC Act. However, the measures to implement the commitments may be updated from time to time over the life of the Plan through an adaptive management process in accordance with the Plan's MERI framework (see Section 7.5 of the Plan). The measures are set out in the Commitments and Measures document, including the following details for each measure are also provided:

- Responsibility
- Key support partner/s (if relevant)
- Timing

Additionally, the BCS identifies another broad objective focusing on state and local biodiversity, and subsequent state level outcomes, commitments and measures. Some of the Plan's outcomes are also relevant to the BCS. The commitments and measures for the BCS are also detailed in the Commitments and Measures document.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) have also been established for each outcome and commitment in the Plan and BCS. The KPIs are provided in the Commitments and Measures document and may be updated over the life of the Plan through the adaptive management process under the Plan's MERI framework.

#### 5.2.2 BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The BCS satisfies the delivery of two key actions (Action N1.3.1 and W1.3.1) of the Framework Plan for the protection of biodiversity in the Growth Areas. The Framework Plan says an "overarching biodiversity conservation strategy will be prepared for the growth area[s] that provides high level guidance for the management of nationally and state significant biodiversity values...The strategy will spatially identify how outcomes for matters of national environmental significance will be delivered..." (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021b).

The purpose of the BCS is to:

- Identify the national, state and local biodiversity values that are present in the Strategic Assessment Area and set out a conservation program for providing genuine, long-term positive results for those biodiversity values
- Set out how the conservation elements of the EPBC Plan for the Strategic Assessment Area will be implemented including through avoiding and minimising, mitigating, and offsetting residual impacts in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy (DSEWPC, 2012; DELWP, 2017b)
- Guide the preparation of Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) and subsequent development within the Strategic Assessment Area to ensure the outcomes are consistent with State biodiversity policy

#### 5.2.3 FUNDING PROGRAM

The Plan includes a funding framework that will ensure the Plan is adequately funded throughout its life. The funding framework is described in Section 7.4 of the Plan. The detailed measures that describe how the commitment for funding in the Plan will be implemented are provided in the Commitments and Measures document.

The City is also developing a Funding Program that will set out how the funding framework will be implemented. It describes how measures to achieve the commitments for funding will be implemented. The key commitments that will require funding are those that relate to:

- Offset establishment, management, monitoring and audit
- Securing and managing the NGGA Conservation Area and Cowies Creek Conservation Area
- Implementing conservation measures
- Implementing the MERI framework and compliance framework

**5.2.4 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT REPORT**

The Strategic Assessment Report (SAR) (this document) has been prepared to assess the impacts of the development under the Plan on MNES. The SAR also evaluates the adequacy of the Plan’s outcomes, commitments, and measures in protecting MNES over the life of the Plan.

The SAR has been prepared in accordance with the Commonwealth Terms of Reference (ToR) for the strategic assessment provided under the Strategic Assessment Agreement.

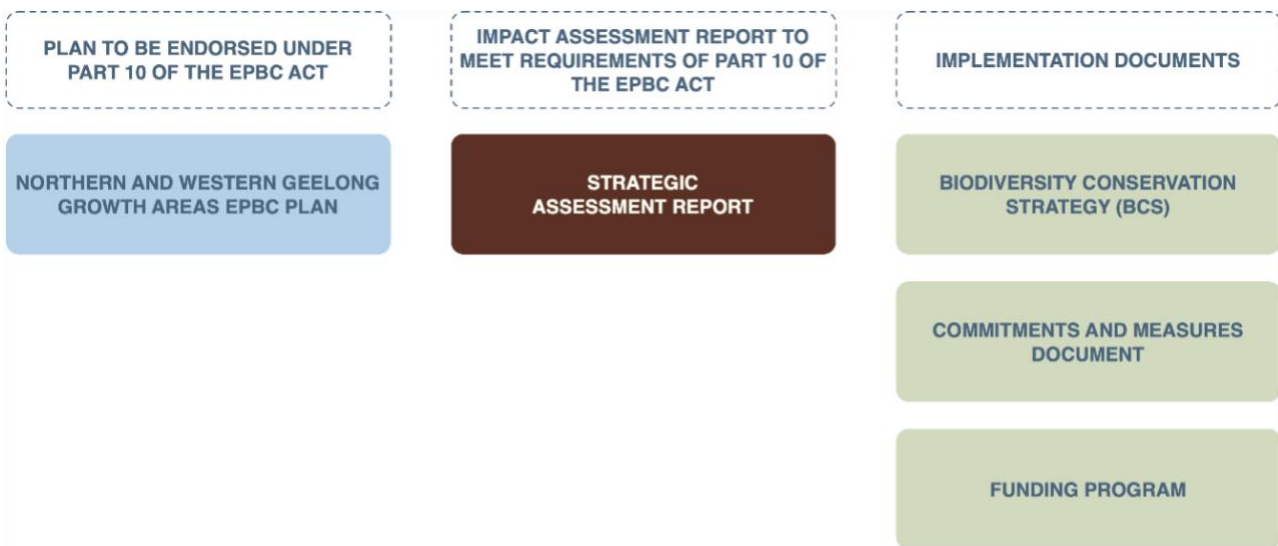


Figure 5-1: Strategic assessment documents

**5.3 OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES OF THE PLAN**

The Plan identifies a broad objective, as well as nine outcomes relating to the protection of MNES under the EPBC Act and socio/economic considerations. The Plan’s outcomes represent standards of environmental protection that will be achieved for MNES under the Plan in accordance with the requirements of the EPBC Act. The Plan’s objective and outcomes will be achieved through the delivery of a set of commitments and measures.

The outcomes, commitments and measures were developed through an ‘outcomes framework’ based on program logic principles. The outcomes framework provides a way to structure what the Plan will deliver for the conservation of protected matters in a clear and logical way. It supports accountability and transparency by providing the basis and set of benchmarks for monitoring, reporting, and ongoing evaluation and adaptive management of the Plan.

The outcomes framework is a requirement of the Endorsement Criteria in the Strategic Assessment Agreement.

### 5.3.1 OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

The outcomes framework is comprised of four components:

- A broad *objective*
- *Outcomes*
- *Commitments* to deliver the outcomes
- *Measures* to implement the commitments

The definition of each of these is provided in Table 5-1.

**Table 5-1: Definition of the components of the outcomes framework**

Framework component	Definition
Objective	Articulates the reason the Plan is being undertaken and the broad goal it is intended to support
Outcomes	The impacts or changes to environmental and socio/economic conditions that are expected to be achieved because of the delivery of the commitments and that are needed to achieve the overall objective of the Plan
Commitments	The direct results of implementing the measures that are expected to lead to the achievement of the outcomes
Measures	The specific actions that will be undertaken to meet the commitments

### 5.3.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE PLAN

The objective of the Plan is to:

*Provide for the protection of matters of national environmental significance while supporting the delivery of the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Framework Plan and its objectives*

### 5.3.3 OUTCOMES OF THE PLAN

The outcomes of the Plan are set out in Table 5-2. Refer to the Commitments and Measures document for an explanation and justification for each outcome.

The outcomes are fixed for the life of the Plan for the purposes of the EPBC Act once the Plan is endorsed. The measures to implement the commitments are set out in the implementation documents for the Plan and are not set out in the Plan (see Table 5-2)

While the commitments in this Plan will not be changed once the Plan is endorsed, the measures set out in the implementation documents may be updated from time to time over the life of the Plan through an adaptive management process in accordance with the Plan's MERI framework (see Section 7.5 of the Plan).

The improvement step of the MERI framework provides the opportunity to adaptively manage implementation of the Plan to ensure the commitments are successfully delivered and the Plan's objective and outcomes are achieved.

The approval holder is responsible for tracking progress against the achievement of outcomes under the Plan's MERI framework and adjusting measures as necessary through adaptive management to ensure the outcomes will be achieved.

**Table 5-2: Outcomes of the Plan**

No.	Outcome
1	Populations of Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard are maintained within the Northern Conservation Area
2	The extent and condition of Natural Temperate Grassland is maintained within the Eastern Conservation Area
3	Impacts to habitat for Golden Sun Moth, Striped Legless Lizard and Natural Temperate Grassland within the gully avoidance area will be avoided and minimised
4	Potentially suitable habitat attributes for Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon within the Northern Conservation Area will be protected and managed to support potential recovery of the species
5	The long-term viability of the important population of the Growling Grass Frog along Cowies Creek is supported through the protection and enhancement of habitat
6	The protection and management of land outside of the Growth Areas makes an important contribution to the recovery efforts for Natural Temperate Grassland, Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard in Victoria
7	Matters of national environmental significance associated with the Moorabool avoidance area, as well as other waterways, riparian areas and wetlands are protected from any adverse impacts of development under the Plan
8	The Plan improves regulatory efficiency by streamlining EPBC Act approvals
9	Implementation of the Plan is effective, timely, and cost efficient

#### 5.3.4 COMMITMENTS

The commitments of the Plan are set out under the development, conservation and assurance and implementation chapters in the Plan.

The commitments are fixed for the life of the Plan for the purposes of the EPBC Act once the Plan is endorsed.

The Plan's commitments cover:

- Incorporating the Plan into the planning system hierarchy so that development occurs in accordance with the Plan
- A series of conservation commitments relating to:
  - Avoiding and minimising impacts
  - Mitigating impacts
  - Offsetting residual impacts
- A series of assurance and implementation commitments, relating to:
  - Governance
  - Funding
  - MERI
  - Compliance

Commitments are referenced throughout the SAR where relevant. A full list of commitments is provided in the Commitments and Measures document

#### 5.3.5 MEASURES

Each commitment has a set of measures associated with it. The implementation of those measures is expected to deliver the commitments.

The measures set out:

- What will be done to deliver the commitment
- Responsibilities for implementation
- Any relevant key support partners for implementation
- Timing of implementation
- Where appropriate:
  - The relevant standards or methods that will be applied
  - Any conditions relating where, when and under what circumstance actions will be carried out

Measures may be adjusted as necessary through adaptative management to ensure the outcomes and commitments are delivered (see Section 9.4).

The full list of the Plan's measures is provided in the [Commitments and Measures document](#).

# 6 Need for the Plan and consideration of alternatives

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Plan has been prepared as part of a broader and complex long-term planning process for the Geelong region that aims to address a range of key planning challenges including population growth and housing availability.

This Chapter sets out:

- Key planning challenges and trends for Geelong
- Planning and policy context
- Need and justification for the Plan
- Considerations of alternatives in development of the Plan

## 6.2 KEY PLANNING CHALLENGES AND TRENDS

Geelong is subject to several key planning challenges, including those relating to:

- Population growth
- Housing affordability and availability
- Protecting the natural environment and amenity

### 6.2.1 POPULATION GROWTH

Geelong is considered to be the primary population centre outside of Melbourne and is the largest regional city in Victoria, and supports a population of over 282,000 people (Remplan, 2022; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

Population growth in Geelong has been strong in recent years with population growing at a rate higher than Victoria and Greater Melbourne, averaging 1.7% per annum between 2007-2016 and reaching 2.7% in 2015-2016 (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021b).

Geelong's population growth slowed in 2020-21 in line with the rest of Australia as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and Victoria's population declined for the first time in recent history (Parliament of Australia, 2021). However, from 2023-24 onwards, Melbourne is expected to be the fastest growing capital city in Australia and is likely to overtake Sydney's population in 2029-30 (Parliament of Australia, 2021).

Greater Geelong is the largest and closest regional city to Melbourne and is likely to grow in line with Melbourne, especially as urbanisation continues to spread from Greater Melbourne (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021b). The following key factors are considered to contribute to increasing population growth in Geelong (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021b):

- Increasing land and housing demand in Melbourne
- Increased traffic congestion and other perceived stress associated with 'big city' living in Melbourne
- Urban growth in Melbourne is shifting to the inner areas and the west (closer to Geelong)
- Geelong offers a high level of amenity and accessibility, with cheaper land and house prices and reduced congestion compared to Melbourne
- Geelong residents have easy access to the metropolitan job market, lifestyle and facilities
- Increasing online and flexible work arrangements may increase Geelong's viability for perspective residents
- Geelong is likely to continue to benefit from the demand for holiday and retirement housing

Based on recent analysis, the City is projected to exceed a population of 500,000 by 2050 with an anticipated, average annual growth rate of 2.5% (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021b).

### 6.2.2 HOUSING

Population growth is the main driver for increased urban growth and housing demand. In order to accommodate Geelong's future population, large areas of urban development are required (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021a).

Recently (partly the result of the COVID-19 pandemic), housing availability has not adequately kept pace with demand, which has led to high house and land prices (Ratio, 2022). This trend has been seen across most of Australia and supply of affordable housing is needed (Informed Decisions, 2022; Ratio, 2022).

Increasing the availability and variety of housing options will help to relieve the pressure on the current housing market. Providing diverse housing is also important for the success of new urban areas, as it attracts a range of potential residents at all stages of their life (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021a).

Without adequate planning for Geelong's future growth, there could be a range of negative consequences for Geelong including (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021a):

- Land and housing shortages
- Increasingly poor housing affordability
- Restricted housing options
- Slowed and reduced economic and social growth

The City has already identified existing and future residential areas (including the Growth Areas) which have the capacity to accommodate approximately 25 years of population growth. However, this may vary depending on the actual growth rate experienced over the coming decades (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021a).

### 6.2.3 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITY

The natural environment and built heritage of Geelong provides important social, cultural, aesthetic, economic, historic, and environmental values to the region. The environment of Geelong is under increasing pressure from historical and proposed new land uses (see Chapter 3 in Part 1) and balancing the protection of the environment and heritage with other urban development objectives is a significant planning challenge.

## 6.3 PLANNING AND POLICY CONTEXT

In order to address Geelong's planning challenges, a range of planning documents have been developed. An overview of the key planning and policy context for the identification and development Growth Areas is provided in this section.

The Victorian planning system is also the key delivery framework for implementing the Plan. The implementation of the Plan through Victorian regulatory frameworks is detailed in Section 2.3 of the Plan.

### 6.3.1 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Planning Policy Framework (PPF) is the policy content of planning schemes and provides overarching policy to guide land use, subdivision and development in Victoria. The PPF is informed by Victorian Government policy.

The PPF includes planning policies under three tiers:

- State-wide – policies of state significant that apply in all planning schemes in Victoria
- Regional – policies of state significant that apply to allied planning schemes based on geographic groupings
- Local – policies of location significant that apply to an individual local planning scheme

Clause 71.02 requires responsible authorities to take into account and give effect to all planning policies in the PPF in approving development and making other planning decisions under the Geelong Planning Scheme.

The State PPF provides key directions for settlement, housing, environment, infrastructure and transport. A key requirement of the State PPF is that all councils maintain at least a fifteen-year supply of land for residential development.

Relevant State PPF considerations for the Growth Areas to address Geelong's planning challenges include (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021b):

- Ensuring a sufficient supply of land is available for residential, commercial, retail, industrial, recreational, institutional and other community uses
- Locating urban growth close to transport corridors and services and provide efficient and effective infrastructure to create sustainability benefits
- Managing the sequence of development in areas of growth so that services are available from early in the life of new communities
- Protecting, restoring and enhancing sites and features of nature conservation, biodiversity, geological or landscape value
- Protecting and restoring catchments, water bodies, groundwater and water quality
- Providing housing choice and delivering more affordable housing closer to jobs, transport and services
- Supporting the establishment and maintenance of communities by delivering functional, accessible, safe and diverse physical and social environments through the appropriate location of use and development and through high quality buildings and urban design
- Establishing and maintaining a diverse and integrated network of public open space that meets the needs of the community
- Providing fair distribution and access to social and cultural infrastructure and health and education services
- Encouraging the concentration of major retail, residential, commercial, administrative, entertainment and cultural developments into activity centres that are highly accessible to the community
- Delivering an average overall residential density in growth areas to a minimum of 15 dwellings per hectare
- Supporting a diversified economy that builds on the region's competitive strengths
- Creating a safe and sustainable transport system by integrating land use and transport
- Sustainably managing water supply, water resources, wastewater, drainage and stormwater through an integrated water management approach
- Promoting the provision of renewable energy
- Providing social and physical infrastructure to be provided in a way that is efficient, equitable, accessible and timely.

Table 6-1 provides details of the key planning documents that are relevant to identification and development of the Growth Areas.

Table 6-1: Overview of planning policy documents and their relevance to the Growth Areas

Planning document	Purpose and objectives for addressing planning challenges	Relevance to the Growth Areas
<p><i>Housing Diversity Strategy</i> (The City of Greater Geelong, 2008)</p>	<p>The aims of the strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for the development of a range of housing types and densities and encourage urban consolidation within existing urban areas</li> <li>• Provide certainty to the existing and future community with regard to where different housing types would be supported or discouraged</li> <li>• Provide for a sustainable overall urban structure for Geelong</li> </ul> <p>Under these broad aims, a principal role of the strategy is to help address three key influences on housing in Geelong:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The environmental, social and economic need to manage urban sprawl and improve accessibility to urban services through consolidating urban development around places of activity and public transport infrastructure</li> <li>• The need to accommodate contemporary changes in housing needs, particularly the growing demand for medium and higher density housing that is close to urban services and lifestyle destinations</li> <li>• The need to manage the impact of urban consolidation and changing housing needs on the City's existing neighbourhood character, particularly the character of established suburban areas</li> </ul>	<p>The Growth Areas had not yet been identified when the document was developed. However, the Growth Areas help to address the aims of the strategy through the development of the <i>Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy 2020</i> (see below) which incorporated the aims of the <i>Housing Diversity Strategy</i>.</p>
<p><i>G21 Regional Growth Plan</i> (Geelong Region Alliance, 2013)</p>	<p>The G21 Region Plan was developed to establish a strategic framework for the environment, settlement, land use, community cohesion and the economy in the G21 region (includes Greater Geelong, Surf Coast Shire, Golden Plains Shire, Colac Otway Shire and Borough of Queenscliffe).</p> <p>The plan identifies how challenges for future growth may be addressed, including the delivery of priority projects to enable future productivity, liveability and sustainability.</p>	<p>The plan first identified the Growth Areas as 'Further Investigation Areas' for urban growth.</p> <p>The research undertaken to inform the G21 region plan included a projection of future population growth within the G21 region of 500,000 people by 2050.</p>

Planning document	Purpose and objectives for addressing planning challenges	Relevance to the Growth Areas
<p><i>Plan Melbourne 2017 – 2050 (Victoria State Government, 2017)</i></p>	<p>Plan Melbourne guides the growth of Melbourne over 35 years. It sets the strategy for supporting jobs, housing and transport, while building on Melbourne's legacy of distinctiveness, liveability and sustainability.</p> <p>The document sets out the Victorian Government's policy to take pressure off Melbourne by channelling growth into regional Victoria. It also seeks to integrate long-term land use, infrastructure and transport planning, and support jobs and growth.</p>	<p>Investing in development of regional Victoria (which includes Geelong) is one of the Plan's seven outcomes:</p> <p><i>"Continuing to invest in regional Victoria is important to support housing and economic growth, enhance social and economic participation and grow strong, healthy communities."</i></p> <p>The plan also states that development in regional Victoria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should keep with the character and amenity of individual towns</li> <li>• Balance the protection of productive land, economic resources and biodiversity values that are critical to the Victoria's economic and environmental sustainability</li> </ul>

Planning document	Purpose and objectives for addressing planning challenges	Relevance to the Growth Areas
<p><i>Council Plan 2018–22: Putting Our Community First</i> (The City of Greater Geelong, 2018)</p>	<p>Outlines the City’s priorities to make Greater Geelong a clever and creative city-region. It aims to guide the City’s resources to deliver infrastructure, services and programs to the community in a sustainable way</p> <p>The Plan helps deliver local PPF policies are used to implement the objectives and strategies of the Municipal Strategic Statement.</p> <p>Includes 11 strategic priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved health and safety of our community</li> <li>• Informed social infrastructure and planning</li> <li>• A more inclusive and diverse community</li> <li>• Planned sustainable development</li> <li>• Effective environmental management</li> <li>• Vibrant arts and culture</li> <li>• Integrated transport connections</li> <li>• A thriving and sustainable economy</li> <li>• Growing our tourism and events</li> <li>• Innovative finances and technology</li> <li>• Organisational leadership, strategy and governance</li> </ul>	<p>The plan informed the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Framework Plan (see below), and the strategic priorities will also shape the subsequent precinct structure planning process for the Growth Areas.</p> <p>Relevant local PPF considerations for the Growth Areas identified in the document include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clause 21.06 Settlement and Housing that prioritises the investigation of future residential and industrial land use needs for Geelong, as a basis for future growth area planning, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assessment of the environmental, resource, landscape, development pattern, access, servicing, land use, economic and social constraints and opportunities associated with possible growth areas around Geelong</li> <li>○ Identification of a preferred growth area or areas</li> <li>○ Preparation of detailed growth area plans</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Clause 21.08 Development and Community Infrastructure that provides direction around development contributions to ensure that infrastructure, open space and transport infrastructure is delivered in an efficient and timely manner in line with population growth.</li> </ul>

Planning document	Purpose and objectives for addressing planning challenges	Relevance to the Growth Areas
<p><i>Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy 2020 (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021a)</i></p>	<p>The purpose of the strategy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse future housing needs and trends</li> <li>• Develop a clear policy framework that will guide planning and decision-making and</li> <li>• Help meet Greater Geelong’s future housing needs</li> </ul> <p>The strategy is intended to address municipal housing needs until 2036 which addresses the State Planning Policy Framework that all Victorian councils must plan to accommodate projected population growth over a 15-year period.</p> <p>The strategy makes a number of recommendations to maintain Geelong’s housing advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve significant landscapes and environments from urban encroachment</li> <li>• Contain urban development within settlement boundaries</li> <li>• Encourage urban consolidation, to increase the contribution it makes to the overall housing supply</li> <li>• Manage future growth to deliver more sustainable, well-serviced communities</li> </ul>	<p>Under the strategy, the City aims to direct the majority of Geelong’s future housing needs to urban areas including the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes a target of 50 per cent of housing growth occurring in established areas and 50 per cent accommodated in three major growth areas – Armstrong Creek, Northern Growth Area and the Western Growth Area</li> <li>• Identifies that the land within the Growth Areas has the capacity to accommodate 110,000 residents (16,000 dwellings in the NGGA and 18,000 dwellings in the WGGA)</li> <li>• States that the Growth Areas should comprise of a mix of housing types and densities to be consistent with state and local policy.</li> </ul> <p>Managing future growth in the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas is a key focus of the Settlement Strategy as reflected in its principles and directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide clear strategic direction on the spatial distribution of residential growth in Greater Geelong</li> <li>• Ensure housing diversity is achieved in existing and growth area communities</li> <li>• Increase the level of affordable and social housing in Greater Geelong.</li> <li>• Ensure growth areas are well planned and deliver sustainable communities</li> <li>• Manage the release of new growth areas to make sure infrastructure, services and facilities are provided in a timely and efficient way</li> </ul>

Planning document	Purpose and objectives for addressing planning challenges	Relevance to the Growth Areas
<p>Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future (The City of Greater Geelong, 2022a)</p>	<p>This document presents a 30-year vision for Geelong and was prepared in consultation with over 16,000 Geelong residents.</p> <p>The community's vision is:</p> <p><i>"By 2047, Greater Geelong will be internationally recognised as a clever and creative city- region that is forward looking, enterprising and adaptive, and cares for its people and environment."</i></p> <p>The document seeks to include the following community values into future development of Geelong:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green spaces and corridors, including farmland and recreational space, between urban areas</li> <li>• Easy access to open space and parkland near homes Geelong clever and</li> <li>• The uniqueness and significance of natural bushland, coastlines, wetlands, rivers and beaches</li> <li>• Sustainable development that responds to climate change</li> <li>• Design that makes best use of technology for better and more sustainable living</li> <li>• Development that enhances the identity of diverse neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Design excellence and innovation in new buildings and public spaces</li> <li>• Creating high amenity neighbourhoods that are well connected and sustainable.</li> </ul>	<p>Functions as a key resource for designing and establishing the new communities in the Growth Areas and includes nine community led aspirations which will be implemented throughout the development of the Growth Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A prosperous economy that supports jobs and education opportunities</li> <li>• A leader in developing and adopting technology</li> <li>• Creativity drives culture</li> <li>• A fast, reliable and connected transport network</li> <li>• People feel safe wherever they are</li> <li>• An inclusive, diverse, healthy and socially connected community</li> <li>• Sustainable development that supports population growth and protects the natural environment</li> <li>• Development and implementation of sustainable solutions</li> <li>• A destination that attracts local and international visitors</li> </ul>

Planning document	Purpose and objectives for addressing planning challenges	Relevance to the Growth Areas
<p>Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Framework Plan (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021b)</p>	<p>The Framework Plan was prepared to outline development of the Growth Areas as part of the City's plan to address the long-term growth in Geelong. The overarching Framework Plan vision is:</p> <p><i>"By 2047, Greater Geelong will be internationally recognised as a clever and creative city-region that is forward looking, enterprising and adaptive, and cares for its people and environment."</i></p> <p>The Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Framework Plan is the largest greenfield planning project in regional Victoria with the capacity to accommodate 110,000 new Geelong residents.</p> <p>The Framework Plan's objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create diverse and vibrant new urban communities</li> <li>• Integrate transport and land use planning</li> <li>• Plan for local employment</li> <li>• Create growth areas with high amenity and character</li> <li>• Protect biodiversity, waterways and cultural heritage values</li> <li>• Create integrated open space networks</li> <li>• Plan for environmental sustainability</li> <li>• Stage development to ensure the efficient and orderly provision of infrastructure and services</li> </ul> <p>The Framework Plan is incorporated into the Geelong Planning Scheme at Clause 11.02.</p>	<p>The Framework Plan is a high-level strategic document that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlines considerations for future development in the Growth Areas</li> <li>• Describes the existing social, economic and environmental context of the Growth Areas</li> <li>• Summarises pre-existing technical investigations</li> <li>• Provides an overarching vision for the Growth Areas and subsequent objectives and actions to achieve the vision</li> <li>• Outlines concept plans for future land uses within the Growth Areas</li> </ul> <p>A key function of the Framework Plan is to guide the future preparation of detailed Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) for the Growth Areas, which will set-out the specific land uses within each urban precinct</p>

## 6.4 NEED AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PLAN

The Plan is needed for the following key reasons. It:

- Supports the delivery of the Growth Areas
- Supports the delivery of key planning documents and subsequently addresses key planning challenges for Geelong
- Provides a mechanism to address conservation challenges for the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion in a strategic way

### 6.4.1 SUPPORTS THE DELIVERY OF THE GROWTH AREAS

The Plan supports delivery of the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas (the Growth Areas).

The Growth Areas provide strategic prioritisation of land for urban growth as part of Geelong's need to address long-term population growth and meet social, economic and environmental outcomes for Geelong and the wider region. The Growth Areas provide two new areas for urban growth that are the key focus of urban development over the coming decades and will be the centres of economic and social activity in Geelong.

A range of social, economic and environmental benefits will be provided to Geelong and the wider region through delivery of the Growth Areas. Chapter 8 below describes conservation that will be delivered through development of the Growth Areas and Chapter 26.3 of the SAR provides a detailed analysis of the socio-economic impacts of the Plan.

### 6.4.2 SUPPORTS THE DELIVERY OF KEY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The Plan supports the delivery of key planning policies and documents for Geelong and Victoria. By supporting the delivery of these, the Plan is directly helping to address the key environmental, social, and economic planning challenges facing Geelong outlined in Section 6.2.

The key planning policies and documents that the Plan is supporting are listed in Section 6.3 and described in Section 2.3 of the Plan.

### 6.4.3 PROVIDES A MECHANISM TO ADDRESS CONSERVATION CHALLENGES

Conservation planning in the Victorian Volcanic Plain is subject to a number of challenges. Historically, biodiversity values in the region have been subject to significant loss and degradation due to agricultural practices and more recently as the result of urban growth (DSE, 2003; EHP, 2021). Many ecological communities and species are listed as threatened under both State and Commonwealth legislation in the region. Areas of remaining native vegetation are often of high conservation value, but at the same time, the population of Geelong is growing, and housing availability and affordability is a priority.

These issues make it challenging to identify options that satisfy regulatory and community expectations around biodiversity conservation while also addressing the need for cost effective development.

Strategic assessment processes provide significant opportunities to address the key conservation challenges in the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion while facilitating cost effective development.

Strategic assessments can have the following benefits:

- Streamline the assessment and approval process and reduce duplication between regulatory requirements
- Enable effort to be focused on the highest biodiversity value areas of the landscape
- Address ecological function and landscape-scale ecological processes, such as habitat connectivity
- Manage threats at a landscape scale that can maximise benefits to multiple species
- Be designed and implemented strategically, such as by consolidating offsets into large and more viable patches
- Be implemented ahead of impacts occurring from development, to help reverse any trend of decline

Conservation benefits of this Strategic Assessment are described in Chapter 8 below.

## 6.5 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

This section describes the decision-making framework used in considering alternatives and developing conservation outcomes for the Plan.

Alternatives to the Plan can be discussed in terms of:

- Alternatives to the Growth Areas
- Alternative approaches to delivery of urban development
- Alternative conservation outcomes

### 6.5.1 ALTERNATIVES TO THE GROWTH AREAS

Alternatives to the Growth Areas can be considered at two levels:

- The 'no action' alternative (i.e., not delivering the Growth Areas at all)
- Alternative location and size of the Growth Areas

#### **NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

When considering alternatives, it is common to assess the possibility of not undertaking the proposed action, or in this case not delivering the Growth Areas. However, this is not considered to be a viable alternative as there is a strong need and justification for large areas of urban development to support Geelong's projected future growth and the associated challenges (as explained in 6.4).

#### **ALTERNATIVE LOCATION AND SIZE OF THE GROWTH AREAS**

Identification of the Growth Areas (including their location and size) was determined through a detailed strategic state planning processes that aimed to address Geelong's key planning challenges (as described in Sections 6.2 and 6.3). In summary:

- The locations of the two Growth Areas were first identified as 'Future Investigation Areas' in the *G21 Regional Growth Plan* (Geelong Region Alliance, 2013)
- The exact location and size of the Growth Areas and their capacity to support Geelong's projected growth and housing needs was defined in the *Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy 2020* (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021a)
- The Framework Plan was prepared to outline development of the Growth Areas and inform future PSPs for the Growth Areas (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021b)

These key planning processes were informed by numerous other state planning objectives and policies (see Section 6.3) and involved numerous consultation processes with the community and other stakeholders (described in Part 4, Chapter 26.4 of the SAR). Given the extensive pre-existing planning and decision-making process to determine the size and location of the Growth Areas, it was not considered necessary or economically feasible to evaluate other alternatives to the size and location of the Growth Areas as part of the strategic assessment process. Instead, the strategic assessment process focussed on evaluation of alternative conservation outcomes within the Growth Areas (as explained in Section 6.5.3 below).

### 6.5.2 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO DELIVERY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Growth Areas provide large areas for greenfield urban development that were identified through various strategic planning documents (as described in Section 6.3). The Growth Areas represent a planned approach to delivery of urban development in Geelong. The City has taken responsibility for setting outcomes, planning, and co-ordinating the delivery of development for the Growth Areas.

Delivering the Growth Areas as one package is the most effective approach to address the key planning challenges facing Geelong (see Section 6.2) as it provides for a planned and strategic approach for urban development and allows for:

- Co-ordinated precinct structure planning and better integration of land use and transport to maximise social and economic benefits, including housing, employment, community facilities, transport networks, and open space
- More effective investment by infrastructure agencies when planning for services
- Better co-ordination and alignment between the objectives of different government agencies
- Better direction for the development industry about where future development will occur and greater certainty for landowners about the future use of their land
- A co-ordinated approach to development contributions to help fund the delivery of key infrastructure
- A more efficient use of local government resources when responding to development proposals

The alternative to the proposed approach for delivering the Growth Areas is a larger number of smaller urban precincts or projects that are separately identified and approved. This approach does not provide the benefits that come with the co-ordinated planning and approval, and consolidated development within the Growth Areas.

### 6.5.3 ALTERNATIVE CONSERVATION OUTCOMES

As discussed above, the strategic planning process to identify and define the Growth Areas involved various levels of decision making, primarily through preparation of the Framework Plan which involved high-level design of the urban structure of the Growth Areas. However, development of the Plan through the strategic assessment process provided an opportunity to further consider alternative conservation outcomes within the Growth Areas based on updated information on biodiversity values.

When the Strategic Assessment process commenced, the City reviewed the avoidance priorities of the Framework Plan and confirmed that further avoidance was needed for the NGGA (in addition to the 82.3 ha identified in the Framework Plan) to better avoid impacts to MNES and native vegetation.

The City undertook a structured decision making (SDM) process in 2022 to determine the optimal layout of the NGGA (Gregory *et al.*, 2010). This layout was provided in the documents released for public exhibition in 2023.

Prior to exhibition of the documents, the Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon (VGED) (*Tympanocryptis pinguicolla*) was rediscovered in Victoria in January 2023. Following rediscovery, detailed work was undertaken for the project including targeted surveys and detailed habitat assessments in the Growth Areas (Biosis, 2024), and a habitat attribute analysis which used a range of analysis to understand the potential value of the NGGA for VGED (Biosis & Open Lines, 2024).

An additional SDM process was undertaken for the project in 2024 (see Supporting Document C). This process considered both the information collected during the VGED survey program and habitat attribute analysis, and community feedback from the first round of public exhibition. This SDM process focussed on the NGGA, although the initial phase identified that further avoidance was necessary within the WGGA. The Moorabool avoidance area was therefore incorporated into the Plan for the WGGA in addition to Cowies Creek Corridor and the Moorabool River Corridor.

To identify the optimal avoidance layout for the NGGA the SDM process considered three decision objectives and seven performance criteria. The decision objectives covered environmental, social, and economic issues and were:

1. Maximise the avoidance and protection of biodiversity
2. Maximise the supply of housing delivered in the precinct
3. Ensure the cost of the conservation program is feasible

Multiple different alternative layouts and scales of avoidance across the NGGA were evaluated against these objectives. The layout that performed best has been incorporated into the Plan as the Northern Conservation Area, Eastern Conservation Area and gully avoidance area.

# 7 Development under the Plan

## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter describes the development that is proposed under the Plan including details of the following:

- Where development can occur
- Development actions that are supported by the Plan
- Development that is not covered by the Plan
- Who can undertake development and their requirements

### 7.1.1 COMMITMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Plan's commitments for development are provided in Table 7-1. The measures to implement these commitments are described in the Commitments and Measure document.

**Table 7-1: Commitments for development**

No.	Commitment
1	Development within the Strategic Assessment Area will proceed in accordance with any Commonwealth approval conditions and in accordance with the EPBC Plan and NWGGA Biodiversity Conservation Strategy
2	Proposed minor changes to the boundaries of land subject to development (as shown in Figure 4-1 of the Plan) will meet the eligibility for consideration and be in accordance with the process for considering changes set out in Section 4.5 of the Plan
3	Development within the portion of Heales Road East subject to process based development (as shown in Figure 4-1 of the Plan) and external infrastructure development will only proceed if undertaken in accordance with the requirements for process based development in Section 6.3 of the Plan

## 7.2 LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

The strategic assessment area scope, size and location is described Part 1 (Section 3.2).

Refer to [Map 7-1](#) for a map showing the development land within the Strategic Assessment Area.

Development under the Plan is only proposed to occur within specific locations in the Strategic Assessment Area (development land). This includes:

- 'Land subject to development' within the Growth Areas. Development within this land is proposed for all classes of actions (see Section 7.3). Development within parts of the Heales Road East precinct (which forms part of the 'land subject to development') is subject to a specific process, described further in Section 8.6
- The 'Northern Conservation Area' and the 'Eastern Conservation Area' within the avoided land in the NGGA. Development within these areas is restricted to the environmental management class of actions (see Section 7.3.5)
- The 'Cowie Creek Conservation Area', Moorabool River corridor and Moorabool avoidance area within the avoided land in the WGGA, and the gully avoidance area within the avoided land in the NGGA. Development within these areas is restricted to the environmental management class of actions and limited activities under the supporting infrastructure and services class of actions (see Sections 7.3.4 and 7.3.5)
- Some development – called 'external infrastructure development' – which may occur outside the Growth Areas within the Strategic Assessment Area. This development is limited to the supporting infrastructure and services class of actions and the environmental management class of actions (see Sections 7.3.4 and 7.3.5). The Plan shows indicative locations where external infrastructure development is intended to occur (see [Map 7-1](#)) and includes a set of commitments to ensure this development is located to avoid and minimise impacts to MNES. The delivery of external infrastructure development is described further in Section 8.6

The Plan provides a process to allow minor changes to the boundaries of land subject to development (as shown in [Map 7-1](#)) where this is necessary to address planning issues during the preparation of PSPs. Provided these changes are made in accordance with the requirements of the Plan, any impacts of these changes on MNES are covered by the Part 10 EPBC approval associated with the Plan and additional approval is not required under Part 9 of the EPBC Act.

Proponents of the boundary change may include the City, developers, or infrastructure providers.

The process for allowing minor boundary changes is set out in Section 4.5 of the Plan. This process requires any changes to meet the eligibility for consideration and be in accordance with the process for considering changes set out in this section.

### 7.3 DEVELOPMENT CLASSES OF ACTIONS

There are five classes of actions for development under the Plan:

- Urban and commercial development
- Industrial development
- Rural development
- Supporting infrastructure and services
- Environmental management

Each class of actions includes a number of broad 'development types' under which a variety of specific 'impact activities' (as defined in the *Victoria Planning Provisions*) may be undertaken. Examples of specific impact activities for each development type are provided in Chapter 4 of the Plan.

Certain development and actions are also considered to be outside the scope of the Plan (see Section 7.3.6).

#### 7.3.1 URBAN AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The urban and commercial development class of actions covers actions and activities associated with residential and commercial areas. It includes the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of the following:

- Residential buildings and accommodation
- Education centres
- Leisure and recreation premises
- Offices
- Places of assembly and public buildings
- Retail premises
- Community services

All activities under the urban and commercial development class of actions can only occur within the land subject to development (refer to [Map 7-1](#)).

#### 7.3.2 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The industrial development class of actions covers actions and activities associated with the construction and operation of facilities for industrial use. It includes the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of:

- Industry
- Warehouses
- Energy generation

All activities under the industrial development class of actions can only occur within the land subject to development (refer to [Map 7-1](#)).

### 7.3.3 RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The rural development class of actions covers actions and activities associated with the use of rural land for agriculture and associated activities. Examples of the types of activities included under this CoA include:

- Grazing animal production
- Animal training
- Domestic animal husbandry
- Horticulture
- Market garden
- Saleyard
- Winery

All activities under the rural development class of actions can only occur within the land subject to development (refer to [Map 7-1](#)).

### 7.3.4 SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

The supporting infrastructure and services class of actions covers actions and activities that are required to facilitate and support all other types of development. This covers a wide range of activities including (but not limited to) those required for the supply of water, electricity, fuel, transport, telecommunications, the removal of waste, as well as safety interventions like erosion prevention. It includes the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of:

- Transport terminals
- Utility installation
- Supporting infrastructure

All activities under the supporting infrastructure and services class of actions can only occur within the following locations (except where this is external infrastructure development – see below) (refer to [Map 7-1](#)):

- Land subject to development
- Cowies Creek Conservation Area (noting the limited scope of permissible activities outlined below)
- Moorabool River corridor (noting the limited scope of permissible activities outlined below)
- Moorabool avoidance area (noting the limited scope of permissible activities outlined below)
- Gully avoidance area (noting the limited scope of permissible activities outlined below)

Within Cowies Creek Conservation, Moorabool River corridor, Moorabool avoidance area and the gully avoidance area, the following specific impact activities (as defined in the VPP) are not permissible under the supporting infrastructure and services class of actions:

- All activities included within the ‘transport terminals’ category under the VPP
- The following activities included within the ‘utility installation’ category under the VPP:
  - Data centre
  - Telecommunications facility
- All activities included within ‘transport system’ under the VPP (except for cycling paths and footpaths and their associated infrastructure)
- The following specific impact activities (as defined in the VPP):
  - Car park
  - Freeway service centre
  - Helicopter landing site

Within the Cowies Creek Conservation Area, Moorabool River corridor, Moorabool avoidance area and the gully avoidance area, development under this class of actions must also be undertaken in accordance with the following principles and standards:

- Development does not prevent the achievement of any environmental objectives, outcomes, commitments or management actions established for the areas, including any relevant Conservation Management Plans for the area
- Development does not directly impact habitat for MNES
- Potential indirect impacts are minimised as much as possible by implementing mitigation measures

In addition, for the Cowies Creek Conservation Area, opportunities to enhance the MNES values of the conservation area are maximised in the design and planning process for the class of actions.

#### **EXTERNAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

External infrastructure development includes the supporting infrastructure and services class of actions where that is located outside the Growth Areas within the Strategic Assessment Area. [Map 7-1](#) shows indicative locations where external infrastructure development is intended to occur.

The delivery of external infrastructure development is described further in Chapter 6 of the Plan and summarised in Chapter 8.6.

#### **7.3.5 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

The environmental management class of actions covers actions and activities that are required to facilitate environmental management under the Plan. The types of activities included under this CoA include:

- Constructing and managing wetlands to provide habitat for the Growling Grass Frog in the Cowies Creek Conservation Area
- Biomass reduction to manage native grasslands (such as controlled burns and sheep grazing)
- Pest plant and animal control works
- Revegetation activities (such as direct seeding) to restore degraded vegetation
- Exclusion fencing
- Signage
- Paths or tracks required for management activities

All activities under the environmental management class of actions can only occur within the following locations (except where this is external infrastructure development – see below) (refer to [Map 7-1](#)):

- Land subject to development
- Northern Conservation Area
- Eastern Conservation Area
- Gully avoidance area
- Cowies Creek Conservation Area
- Moorabool River corridor
- Moorabool avoidance area

Activities under this class of actions must be undertaken in accordance with the following principles and standards:

- Activities will only be undertaken only where it is sympathetic to or enhances habitat values or attributes for MNES
- Activities are consistent with any environmental objectives, outcomes, commitments or management actions established for the relevant areas, including any relevant Conservation Management Plans for the area
- The overall benefit of the activities is greater than the potential impacts
- The activities will be consistent with relevant best practice methods or guidelines, such as the *Growling Grass Frog Habitat Design Standards* (DELWP, 2017a) and other relevant MNES standards as relevant (noting that these are likely to change and/or be updated throughout implementation of the Plan)
- The mitigation hierarchy is applied to ensure any negative impacts are avoided and mitigated as much as practicable while still allowing the necessary environmental management activity to be undertaken

**EXTERNAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

External infrastructure development includes the environmental management class of actions where that is located outside the Growth Areas within the Strategic Assessment Area. [Map 7-1](#) shows indicative locations where external infrastructure development is intended to occur.

The delivery of external infrastructure development is described further in Chapter 6 of the Plan and summarised in Chapter 8.6.

**7.3.6 DEVELOPMENT NOT COVERED BY THE PLAN**

Development that is not covered the Plan includes the following:

- Actions that are already approved under the EPBC Act
- Actions that do not require approval under the EPBC Act because:
  - They have prior authorisation or are subject to continuing use provisions (in accordance with sections 43A and 43B of the EPBC Act)
  - They are within the scope and are undertaken in accordance with a previous referral that was determined to be 'not a controlled action' under Part 7 of the EPBC Act
- Any classes of actions that are not described in the Plan
- The following specific impact activities (as defined in the VPP) that were considered in the planning process for the strategic assessment and excluded from the Plan:
  - Airport
  - Aquaculture
  - Broiler farm
  - Cattle feedlot
  - Heliport
  - Intensive animal production
  - Intensive dairy farm
  - Marine dredging
  - Pig farm
  - Poultry farm
  - Poultry hatchery
  - Reservoir
  - Rice growing
  - Timber production
  - Wharf
  - All activities included within the 'earth and energy resources industry' category under the VPP
  - All activities included within the 'recreational boat facility' category under the VPP
  - All activities included within the 'energy' category under the VPP (except for solar energy facility which is permitted under the industrial development class of action, see Table 4-3 in the Plan)

If actions that have been excluded from the scope of the Plan are proposed to take place within the Plan area in the future, they will be subject to separate assessment and approval under the EPBC Act.

**7.4 PERSONS WHO CAN UNDERTAKE DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR OBLIGATIONS**

Any person can undertake development within the Plan area and access the associated Part 10 EPBC approval provided the following requirements are met:

- Development must comprise the classes of actions as defined in Chapter 4 of the Plan
- Development must only occur in the development land as defined in Chapter 4 of the Plan
- Development must proceed in accordance with any Commonwealth conditions of approval

- Development must proceed in accordance with the Plan, including the avoidance and minimisation, mitigation and offset requirements of the Plan
- Developers must pay any required biodiversity levy (see Section 7.4 of the Plan) or (for process based development) meet the offset requirements in Chapter 6 of the Plan
- Development must be registered in accordance with the developer registration system (see Section 7.5.3 of the Plan)
- Development must comply with any conditions imposed by way of the developer registration system *including* conditions concerning the delivery of offsets and an obligation to pay a levy when required.

Development that does not meet these requirements may need separate approval under the EPBC Act.

The Victorian planning system is the key delivery framework for implementing the Plan (see Section 2.3 of the Plan).

The Commitments and Measures document details the specific measures that will be taken to ensure the Plan's requirements are incorporated in the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme.

# 8 Conservation framework

## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter outlines the conservation framework for the Plan, including:

- Overview of the conservation framework
- Avoidance and minimisation of impacts
- Mitigation of impacts
- Residual impacts and offsets
- Delivery of process based development

Section 5 of the Plan provides a detailed description of the conservation framework and Section 6 of the Plan provides a detailed description of process based development.

## 8.2 OVERVIEW OF THE CONSERVATION FRAMEWORK

The purpose of the conservation framework is to ensure:

- Development within the Plan area avoids and minimises, mitigates, and offsets impacts to MNES in accordance with the requirements of the EPBC Act and the Endorsement Criteria in the Strategic Assessment Agreement
- The Plan's biodiversity-related outcomes for MNES are achieved

The Plan's conservation framework for protecting MNES has been developed in accordance with the offset mitigation hierarchy (DSEWPC, 2012). The mitigation hierarchy requires impacts on MNES to be firstly avoided and minimised to the greatest extent practicable, and then mitigated. The remaining residual impacts can then be offset.

The conservation framework set outs the commitments that will be delivered for:

- Avoiding and minimising impacts to MNES
- Mitigating impacts to MNES
- Offsetting residual impacts to MNES

The conservation framework is supported by a range of implementation mechanisms to ensure its delivery. These are summarised in Chapter 9.

Part 5 of the SAR provides an evaluation of the adequacy of conservation program in addressing the impacts of the development.

### 8.2.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONSERVATION FRAMEWORK

The Plan's conservation framework for protecting MNES will be implemented through a series of commitments and measures that are set out in this Chapter and provided in the Commitments and Measures document. Further description of the measures and their implementation are provided in the Commitments and Measures document and the BCS.

Refer to Section 5 of the Plan for further details of the conservation framework and its implementation.

## 8.3 AVOIDANCE AND MINIMISATION OF IMPACTS

### 8.3.1 CONTEXT

Avoiding and minimising impacts to MNES is the first step in the offset mitigation hierarchy. The avoidance process provides opportunities to avoid and protect areas of high biodiversity value and is fundamental to a determination that commitments adequately address the likely impacts on MNES and reducing the need for offsets.

Avoidance is defined in the Plan as any land not directly impacted by development within the Growth Areas.

Avoidance is described in detail in Part 4, Chapter 16.3 and avoidance outcomes for MNES are described and justified throughout Part 4 of the SAR as relevant.

### 8.3.2 COMMITMENTS FOR AVOIDANCE AND MINIMISATION

The Plan's commitments for avoidance and minimisation are provided in Table 8-1. The detailed measures for implementing these commitments are provided in the Commitments and Measures document.

**Table 8-1: Commitments for avoidance**

No.	Commitment
4	The Northern Conservation Area will be established in perpetuity to avoid and protect 77.7 ha of habitat for Striped Legless Lizard, 119.5 ha of habitat for Golden Sun Moth, and 125.3 ha of habitat potentially important for the recovery of Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon
5	A Conservation Management Plan will be prepared and implemented for the protection and ongoing management of Striped Legless Lizard, Golden Sun Moth and Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon within the Northern Conservation Area
6	The Eastern Conservation Area will be established in perpetuity to avoid and protect 6.7 ha of habitat for Natural Temperate Grassland
7	A Conservation Management Plan will be prepared and implemented for the protection and ongoing management of Natural Temperate Grassland within the Eastern Conservation Area
8	3.4 ha of habitat for Striped Legless Lizard, 4.6 ha of habitat for Golden Sun Moth and 3.7 ha of habitat for Natural Temperate Grassland will be avoided within the gully avoidance area
9	The Cowies Creek Conservation Area will be established in perpetuity to avoid and protect habitat needed to support the continued persistence of the Growling Grass Frog in the WGGA
10	A Conservation Management Plan will be prepared and implemented for the protection and ongoing management of Growling Grass Frog and areas of potential habitat for Adamson's Blown-grass within the Cowies Creek Conservation Area
11	Habitat enhancement works for the Growling Grass Frog will be undertaken in Cowies Creek downstream of the WGGA to support the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term viability of the Cowies Creek metapopulation of Growling Grass Frogs</li> <li>• Persistence of the species within the WGGA</li> </ul>
12	Development within the Moorabool avoidance area will be restricted to support the potential MNES values of the river corridor and the escarpment
18	Development within the portion of Heales Road East subject to process based development (as shown in Figure 4-1 of the Plan) will be designed and located to prioritise avoidance of impacts to MNES and native vegetation. This must ensure that any confirmed population or occurrence of MNES that would be considered important or notable (for instance, due to size, condition or potential contribution to the recovery of the MNES) is avoided and subsequently protected, maintained and managed to ensure the persistence of that population or occurrence in the long-term. Impacts to all other populations or occurrences will be avoided and minimised as far as practical

No.	Commitment
19	<p>External infrastructure development will be designed and located to prioritise avoidance of impacts to MNES and native vegetation. The following specific avoidance outcomes will be delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spiny Rice-flower – any confirmed population or part of the population must be avoided and will be protected, maintained and managed to ensure the persistence of that population in the long-term</li> <li>• Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon - any confirmed population or part of the population must be avoided and will be protected, maintained and managed to ensure the persistence of that population in the long-term; and the recovery team will be notified</li> <li>• Other MNES – any confirmed population or occurrence that would be considered important or notable (for instance, due to size, condition or potential contribution to the recovery of the MNES) must be avoided and will be protected, maintained and managed to ensure the persistence of that population or occurrence in the long-term. Impacts to all other populations or occurrences will be avoided and minimised as far as practical</li> </ul>

Refer to [Map 7-1](#) for the locations of the NGGA Conservation Area in the NGGA and Cowies Creek Conservation Area in the WGGA.

## 8.4 MITIGATION OF IMPACTS

### 8.4.1 CONTEXT

Mitigating impacts to MNES is the second step in the offset mitigation hierarchy. The mitigation process reduces how likely or significant unavoidable impacts may be and further reduces the need for offsets.

Development under the Plan has the potential to indirectly impact habitat and populations of MNES within the Growth Areas and within the Plan area outside the Growth Areas. These indirect impacts relate to:

- Altered fire regimes
- Changes to water flows and water quality
- Disturbance due to noise, dust, litter, or light
- Disturbance from increased public access to natural areas
- Fauna mortality and barriers to movement
- Inadvertent impacts on adjacent habitat or vegetation
- Predation or competition by pest or domestic fauna
- Spread of infection or disease
- Spread or introduction of weeds

The Plan includes commitments to ensure each of these indirect impacts is mitigated. These commitments are expected to substantially reduce the risk of residual impacts to MNES associated with these indirect impacts to the extent that offsets for these impacts are not required (see Part 4 of the SAR).

### 8.4.2 COMMITMENTS FOR MITIGATION

The Plan's commitments for mitigation are provided in Table 8-2. The detailed measures for implementing these commitments are provided in the Commitments and Measures document.

**Table 8-2: Commitments for mitigation**

No.	Commitment
13	Standard mitigation measures will continue to be implemented to minimise the indirect impacts of the development on MNES in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Greater Geelong Planning Scheme</i> (The City of Greater Geelong, 2022b), as updated from time to time, and generally in accordance with the Framework Plan (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021b)

No.	Commitment
14	<p>The following additional specific mitigation measures will be implemented to minimise the indirect impacts of development on the two NGGA Conservation Areas and Cowies Creek Conservation Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a conservation interface for the conservation areas</li> <li>• Design and baffle public lighting in accordance with National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife to prevent light spill and glare within the Cowies Creek Conservation Area</li> <li>• Prepare Construction Environmental Management Plans for construction works on land immediately adjacent to the conservation areas</li> </ul>
15	<p>Additional specific mitigation measures will be implemented to minimise the indirect impacts of the development on MNES associated with waterways, riparian areas and wetlands including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EPBC listed threatened and migratory birds</li> <li>• <i>Galaxiella toourtkoourt</i> (Little Galaxias)</li> <li>• <i>Litoria raniformis</i> (Growling Grass Frog)</li> <li>• <i>Nannoperca obscura</i> (Yarra Pygmy Perch)</li> <li>• <i>Prototroctes maraena</i> (Australian Grayling)</li> <li>• <i>Lachnagrostis adamsonii</i> (Adamson's Blown Grass)</li> <li>• Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar site</li> </ul>

## 8.5 RESIDUAL ADVERSE IMPACTS AND OFFSETS

### 8.5.1 CONTEXT

Offsetting impacts to MNES is the final step in the offset mitigation hierarchy. Offsetting is intended to compensate for any residual adverse impacts that remain after impacts have been avoided and minimised, and mitigated.

A detailed impact assessment of development under the Plan has been undertaken in Part 4 of the SAR. This impact assessment determined that there will be residual adverse impacts in the NGGA to Natural Temperate Grassland, Striped Legless Lizard, Golden Sun Moth, and habitat potentially important for the recovery of Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon (noting that this species was not recorded in the NGGA as part of targeted surveys) (summarised in Section 8.5.2).

The Plan establishes a strategic offsets approach that aims to maximise the benefits to MNES. It does this through two key approaches to ensure the Plan's outcomes are achieved:

- Coordinated offset delivery within the NGGA which is a key outcome of the strategic avoidance planning process, and provides in-situ protection and management of the key MNES, local to the areas impacted by development under the Plan
- Focusing offsets on large patches of native vegetation and habitat that are well located in the landscape from a biodiversity perspective, including sites that:
  - Occur within key biodiversity corridors and improve connectivity across the landscape
  - Are connected to existing conservation reserves

Conservation planning science (for example, see (Gordon, Langford et al., 2011)) confirms the benefits of strategic approaches and supports the position that the Plan's approach to offsets will be substantially stronger than what would occur under standard project-by-project approvals.

Supporting Document D provides the method and rationale for the offset package. This includes a detailed explanation and justification of the offset targets and the consistency of the offsets package with the principles of the EPBC Act Offsets Policy (DSEWPC, 2012).

### 8.5.2 RESIDUAL ADVERSE IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE GROWTH AREAS

Development under the Plan (excluding process based development, see Chapter 8.6) will result in the clearance and direct loss of the following MNES in the NGGA:

- Natural Temperate Grassland – 5.4 ha
- Striped Legless Lizard habitat – 130.8 ha
- Golden Sun Moth habitat – 624 ha (noting that 490.3 ha of this comprises areas of non-native vegetation)
- Habitat potentially important for the recovery of Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon – 44.2 ha

It is noted that there are no residual adverse impacts to MNES in the WGGA, and offsets are not necessary for development in that location (refer to Part 4 of the SAR).

A detailed analysis and discussion of direct impacts to these MNES is provided in Chapters 19 and 21 of the SAR.

### 8.5.3 COMMITMENTS FOR OFFSETS

The Plan's commitments for offsetting residual adverse impacts are provided in Table 8-3. The detailed measures for implementing these commitments are provided in the Commitments and Measures document.

**Table 8-3: Commitments for offsetting**

No.	Commitment
4	The Northern Conservation Area will be established in perpetuity to avoid and protect 77.7 ha of habitat for Striped Legless Lizard, 119.5 ha of habitat for Golden Sun Moth, and 125.3 ha of habitat potentially important for the recovery of Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon
5	A Conservation Management Plan will be prepared and implemented for the protection and ongoing management of Striped Legless Lizard, Golden Sun Moth and Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon within the Northern Conservation Area
6	The Eastern Conservation Area will be established in perpetuity to avoid and protect 6.7 ha of habitat for Natural Temperate Grassland
7	A Conservation Management Plan will be prepared and implemented for the protection and ongoing management of Natural Temperate Grassland within the Eastern Conservation Area
16	Offset sites will be established to meet the following targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13.9 ha of Natural Temperate Grassland</li> <li>• 331.2 ha of known habitat for Striped Legless Lizard</li> <li>• 500.7 ha of known habitat for Golden Sun Moth</li> </ul> These offsets will be delivered through a combination of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Northern and Eastern Conservation Areas (Commitments 4 and 6), and</li> <li>• Strategic offset locations outside of the NGGA to meet the balance of the offset targets</li> </ul>
17	Offset delivery will keep pace with and occur ahead of impacts within the NGGA
20	Unavoidable clearing of any areas confirmed to support MNES due to development within the portion of Heales Road East subject to process based development (as shown in Figure 4-1 of the Plan) or external infrastructure development will be offset in accordance with the EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy and associated Offsets Assessment Guide (or equivalent) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012; DSEWPC, 2012)

## 8.6 PROCESS BASED DEVELOPMENT

### 8.6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section outlines the reasoning and requirements for process based development under the Plan.

Section 6 of the Plan provides a detailed description of process based development.

### 8.6.2 OVERVIEW OF PROCESS BASED DEVELOPMENT

Under the Plan, some development is subject to an additional process prior to development occurring. This is required because there is some uncertainty around the timing, location, and/or extent of impacts of the development. This process based development is required for (see [Map 7-1](#)):

- Development within specific locations within the Heales Road East precinct
- External infrastructure development

#### **HEALES ROAD EAST PROCESS BASED DEVELOPMENT**

Heales Road East is one of four precincts within the NGGA. A large portion of the Heales Road East precinct was not subject to the on-ground surveys that were undertaken across the Growth Areas to inform the assessment undertaken in the SAR. Surveys were not possible due to access constraints in the smaller, privately owned land holdings that occur across a large portion of the precinct. These areas within the Heales Road East precinct are currently zoned as Rural Living Zone (RLZ) under the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme which allows for a mix of residential and rural land uses. One small portion of the area is zoned as Public Use Zone 1 (PUZ1) for service and utility activities.

Parts of the Heales Road East precinct have been identified for future investigation of residential or employment development in the Framework Plan (the future investigation areas in Heales Road East). The future investigation areas in Heales Road East are not likely to be subject to precinct planning and development until late in the life of the Plan, and significant portions of this land may remain as rural living and not be subject to development at all in the life of the Plan. The future investigation areas in Heales Road East are therefore subject to a high level of uncertainty as:

- Current environmental values including the occurrence of MNES have not been confirmed on ground
- Given the current land use (smaller, intensively used properties), it is likely that the predicted presence of MNES in these areas is overly precautionary (i.e. predicts more value than actually occurs) and does not reflect the actual biodiversity values that are present
- Some areas may not be subject to development within the life of the Plan

Due to this uncertainty the Plan includes requirements for process based development within the future investigation areas in Heales Road East which will need to be met if development under the Plan in these areas is to be undertaken. This will ensure that development will appropriately avoid, minimise, mitigate, and offset any residual impacts to MNES within these areas. These areas are identified in [Map 7-1](#) as 'Heales Road East process based development'.

#### **EXTERNAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

Some development – called 'external infrastructure development' – may occur outside the Growth Areas within the Strategic Assessment Area. This development is limited to the supporting infrastructure and services class of action and the environmental management class of action (see Sections 7.3.4 and 7.3.5).

External infrastructure development is required to support the urban development within the Growth Areas and help deliver the development objectives of the Framework Plan. Planning for essential infrastructure development for the Growth Areas is in various stages and the specific locations and the types of external infrastructure that will be needed are not yet known.

The Plan shows indicative locations where external infrastructure development is intended to occur (Refer to [Map 7-1](#)). These include:

- Corridors along Staceys Road, Bacchus Marsh Road, Anakie Road, Midland Highway, and Evans Road to facilitate road and intersection upgrades
- Corridors adjacent to Cowies Creek and Tower Hill Drive to facilitate shared trail upgrades
- Stormwater related infrastructure associated with Hovells Creek, Elcho Road drain and Wharf road outfall

These indicative locations have not been surveyed and the biodiversity values of these areas is not confirmed.

While the specific locations and potential impacts of external infrastructure are not yet confirmed, the Plan includes requirements for process based development which will need to be met if undertaking external infrastructure development under the Plan. This will ensure that external infrastructure development will appropriately avoid, mitigate, and offset any residual impacts to MNES.

### 8.6.3 REQUIREMENTS FOR PROCESS BASED DEVELOPMENT

Development within the portion of Heales Road East subject to process based development and external infrastructure development can only be undertaken under the Plan where it meets the requirements provided in Section 6.3 of the Plan. These requirements include the achievement of the avoidance, mitigation and offset commitments (and associated measures) for process based development (see Table 8-4).

The City will prepare Standards for Process Based Development (the standards). The standards will inform any proponents wishing to undertake development within the portion of Heales Road East subject to process based development or external infrastructure development of their obligations (see Section 6.3 of the Plan for details).

The development proponent will be responsible for preparing a report to the Executive Committee which describes how the requirements in the standards have been met.

### 8.6.4 COMMITMENTS FOR PROCESS BASED DEVELOPMENT

The Plan's commitments for process based development are provided in Table 8-4. See the Commitments and Measures document for measures relating to process based development.

**Table 8-4: Commitments for process based development**

No.	Commitment
3	Development within the portion of Heales Road East subject to process based development (as shown in Figure 4-1 of the Plan) and external infrastructure development will only proceed if undertaken in accordance with the requirements for process based development in Section 6.3 of the Plan
18	Development within the portion of Heales Road East subject to process based development (as shown in Figure 4-1 of the Plan) will be designed and located to prioritise avoidance of impacts to MNES and native vegetation. This must ensure that any confirmed population or occurrence of MNES that would be considered important or notable (for instance, due to size, condition or potential contribution to the recovery of the MNES) is avoided and subsequently protected, maintained and managed to ensure the persistence of that population or occurrence in the long-term. Impacts to all other populations or occurrences will be avoided and minimised as far as practical
19	Development within external infrastructure development will be designed and located to prioritise avoidance of impacts to MNES and native vegetation. The following specific avoidance outcomes will be delivered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spiny Rice-flower – any confirmed population or part of the population must be avoided and will be protected, maintained and managed to ensure the persistence of that population in the long-term</li> <li>• Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon - any confirmed population or part of the population must be avoided and will be protected, maintained and managed to ensure the persistence of that population in the long-term; and the recovery team will be notified</li> <li>• Other MNES – any confirmed population or occurrence that would be considered important or notable (for instance, due to size, condition or potential contribution to the recovery of the MNES) must be avoided and will be protected, maintained and managed to ensure the persistence of that population or occurrence in the long-term. Impacts to all other populations or occurrences will be avoided and minimised as far as practical</li> </ul>
13	Standard mitigation measures will continue to be implemented to minimise the indirect impacts of the development on MNES in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Greater Geelong Planning Scheme</i> (The City of Greater Geelong, 2022b), as updated from time to time, and generally in accordance with the Framework Plan (The City of Greater Geelong, 2021b)

No.	Commitment
20	Unavoidable clearing of any areas confirmed to support MNES due to development within the portion of Heales Road East subject to process based development (as shown in Figure 4-1 of the Plan) external infrastructure development will be offset in accordance with the EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy and associated Offsets Assessment Guide (or equivalent) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012; DSEWPC, 2012)

# 9 Assurance and implementation framework

## 9.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter outlines the assurance and implementation framework for the Plan, including:

- Governance framework
- Funding framework
- Monitoring, evaluation and reporting and improvement (adaptive management) framework
- Compliance framework

Section 7 of the Plan provides a detailed description of the assurance and implementation framework.

The Plan's assurance and implementation framework will be implemented through the detailed set of measures which are described in the Commitments and Measures documents, and through the Funding Program, which act as implementation documents for the Plan (see Section 5.2).

## 9.2 GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Governance is a key part of the Plan's assurance and implementation framework. It will ensure the objective and outcomes of the Plan are achieved, and the commitments and measures are efficiently and effectively implemented.

The Plan establishes a governance framework to ensure implementation of the Plan complies with Commonwealth approval conditions, is transparent and accountable, and is efficient and effective.

The governance framework includes a governance structure, and governance mechanisms and processes.

### 9.2.1 COMMITMENTS FOR GOVERNANCE

The Plan's commitments for governance are provided in Table 9-1. The measures to deliver the Plan's governance commitment are set out in the Commitments and Measures document.

**Table 9-1: Commitments for governance**

No.	Commitment
21	Governance arrangements will be established to implement the Plan, consistent with the Plan's governance framework
22	A Stakeholder Engagement Strategy will be developed to guide engagement with key stakeholders on the implementation of the Plan

## 9.3 FUNDING FRAMEWORK

The City is considering a range of options for funding the Plan and has identified a proposed funding framework informed by initial consultation with key stakeholders, including developers.

The key elements of the proposed funding framework are:

- Establishment of an implementation fund to fund the costs of implementing the commitments and measures, including securing and managing offsets for MNES required under the Plan in perpetuity
- Full recovery of the costs incurred by the City in implementing the commitments and measures, through a biodiversity levy payable by developers in the Growth Areas
- Establishment of governance and administrative arrangements to administer the implementation fund and the collection and application of the biodiversity levy

The proposed funding arrangements are described in Section 7.4 of the Plan. A Funding Program developed to give effect to the funding framework is available as part of the package of documents for public exhibition. The Funding Program will be finalised before any development within the Growth Areas proceeds.

### 9.3.1 COMMITMENTS FOR FUNDING

The Plan's commitment for funding is provided in Table 9-2.

**Table 9-2: Commitment for funding**

No.	Commitment
23	Funding arrangements will be established to fund the implementation of the Plan's commitments and measures over the life of the Plan, consistent with the Plan's funding framework

All the commitments in the Plan will require funding over the life of the Plan. The key commitments that will require funding to protect MNES are those which relate to:

- Offset establishment, management, monitoring and audit
- Securing and managing the Northern Conservation Area, Eastern Conservation Area and Cowies Creek Conservation Area
- Implementing conservation measures
- Implementing the MERI framework and compliance framework

The measures to deliver the Plan's Funding commitment are set out in the Commitments and Measures document.

## 9.4 MERI FRAMEWORK

Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) is a key component of the Plan's assurance and implementation framework. MERI provides a system for understanding how well a policy, plan or program is performing, communicating that to regulators and the public, and adapting implementation as needed.

Strategic assessments represent complex, long term programs for managing both development and conservation. Ongoing decisions over the life of a policy, plan or program are necessary to ensure successful implementation.

The MERI framework for the Plan is comprised of the following components:

- Monitoring
- Evaluation
- Reporting
- Improvement (adaptive management)

The purpose of the MERI framework for the Plan is to:

- Provide transparency and accountability for implementation of the Plan
- Determine whether the:
  - Plan's objective and outcomes are being achieved
  - Plan's commitments to achieve the objective and outcomes are efficient and effective
  - Measures set out in this document and the BCS to achieve the Plan's commitments are efficient and effective
- Enable new information over the life of the Plan to be assessed and integrated into implementation
- Adaptively improve implementation of the Plan where necessary to ensure the objective and outcomes are achieved

### 9.4.1 COMMITMENTS FOR MERI

The Plan's commitments for MERI are provided in Table 9-3. The measures to deliver the Plan's MERI commitment are set out in the Commitments and Measures document.

**Table 9-3: Commitments for MERI**

No.	Commitment
24	A MERI program will be implemented over the life of the Plan, consistent with the Plan's MERI framework
25	A development registration system will be developed and implemented to track development under the EPBC Part 10 approval

## 9.5 COMPLIANCE FRAMEWORK

A robust compliance framework is critical to the successful implementation of the Plan. The purpose of the compliance framework is to:

- Support the Commonwealth who have responsibility for compliance under the EPBC Act
- Ensure the City delivers the commitments and achieves the outcomes of the Plan
- Support regulated third-parties (developers) to undertake approved actions under the endorsed Plan in accordance with the Commonwealth approval conditions

### 9.5.1 COMMITMENTS FOR COMPLIANCE

The Plan's commitment for compliance is provided in Table 9-4. The measures to deliver this commitment are set out in the Commitments and Measures document.

**Table 9-4: Commitment for compliance**

No.	Commitment
26	A compliance program will be implemented over the life of the Plan, consistent with the Plan's compliance framework

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