

Greater Geelong Planning Scheme

Amendment C484ggee

Explanatory Report

Overview

Amendment C484ggee seeks to replace in the schedule to Clause 72.04 the current incorporated document, *City of Greater Geelong Heritage and Design Guidelines* (Helen Lardner 1997) with a new and updated incorporated document, *Greater Geelong Heritage Design Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, November 2025) and consequential changes to Clause 15.03-1L Heritage conservation - Greater Geelong

Where you may inspect this amendment

The amendment can be inspected free of charge at the City of Greater Geelong website at geelong.link/amendments

And/or

The amendment is available for public inspection, free of charge, during office hours (by appointment only) at the following places:

Wurriki Nyal, 137-149 Mercer Street, Geelong

Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm

The amendment can also be inspected free of charge at the Department of Transport and Planning website at <http://www.planning.vic.gov.au/public-inspection> or by contacting the office on 1800 789 386 to arrange a time to view the amendment documentation.

Submissions

A submission must be sent to Strategic Implementation, City of Greater Geelong:

Lodged online: geelong.link/amendments

or

By post: PO Box 104, GEELONG VIC 3220

Panel hearing dates

In accordance with clause 4(2) of Ministerial Direction No.15 the following panel hearing dates have been set for this amendment:

- Directions hearing: week commencing 3 August 2026
- Panel hearing: week commencing 31 August 2026

Details of the amendment

Who is the planning authority?

This amendment has been prepared by the City of Greater Geelong, which is the planning authority for this amendment.

The amendment has been made at the request of the City of Greater Geelong.

Land affected by the amendment

The amendment applies across the municipality to all places affected by a heritage overlay.

What the amendment does

The amendment seeks to replace in the schedule to Clause 72.04 the current incorporated document, *Heritage and Design Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, 1997) with a new and updated incorporated document, *Greater Geelong Heritage Design Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, 2025) and consequential changes to Clause 15.03-1L heritage conservation

Specifically, the amendment proposes to:

Ordinance changes

- Amends **Clause 15.03-1L** Heritage conservation to rename to Heritage conservation - *Greater Geelong*, delete reference in the strategies and the policy document to the *Heritage and Design Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, 1997) and insert the *Greater Geelong Heritage Design Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, 2025) in its place. Consequential changes to the strategies and policy guidelines are also made to achieve better alignment with the new Guidelines.
- Amends the **Schedule to Clause 72.04** Incorporated Documents to delete the *Heritage and Design Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, 1997) and to include the *Greater Geelong Heritage Design Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, November 2025) as an incorporated document:

Strategic assessment of the amendment

Why is the amendment required?

The *Heritage and Design Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, 1997) have provided an effective framework for guiding development in heritage areas for more than two

decades. They have supported good design outcomes and contributed to the conservation of Geelong's built heritage.

However, the 1997 Guidelines were prepared in a different policy context. Recent changes include increased focus on sustainable design, accessibility and contemporary architectural approaches. The 1997 Guidelines require updating to reflect updated planning policy, community expectations, and best practice heritage management.

Introducing the *Greater Geelong Heritage Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, November 2025) as an incorporated document under Clauses 15.03-1L and 72.04 of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme gives them statutory weight, providing greater certainty and consistency for applicants and Statutory Planning.

The *Greater Geelong Heritage Design Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, November 2025) will update and replace the *Heritage and Design Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, 1997), building on their successful legacy with contemporary design principles, sustainability standards and accessibility considerations.

How does the amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?

Section 4 of the Act sets out the objectives of planning in Victoria. Those that are directly related to this Amendment are:

“4. (1) the objectives of planning in Victoria are -

(a) to provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land.

(b) to provide for the protection of natural and man made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity.

(d) to conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historic interest or otherwise of special cultural value.

(e) to protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and co-ordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community.

(g) to balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.”

The Amendment achieves these by providing updated heritage design guidance for development affecting places included in the heritage overlay across Greater Geelong.

How does the amendment address any environmental, social and economic effects?

The amendment will not have any adverse effects on the environment. Protection

for heritage places will retain existing infrastructure and resources. *Geelong Heritage Design Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, November 2025) promotes sustainable development through conserving valuable resources and economizing on materials, balanced against the demands for development. The amendment will have positive social equity and sustainability effects by promoting and contributing to equitable access to heritage places, more inclusive design outcomes, and positive environmental and climate objectives by:

- Supporting community identity and connection through the protection of Geelong's heritage;
- Providing clear, publicly available guidance to ensure transparent, consistent decision making;
- Enabling diverse housing opportunities within heritage areas by supporting contextually appropriate infill and adaptive reuse projects; and
- Promoting retention and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, reducing demolition waste and embodied carbon emissions.

Does the amendment address climate change?

The amendment does not consider climate change in accordance with section 12(2A) of the Act and Ministerial Direction No. 22 Climate Change Consideration under section 12A of the Act. The amendment does not enable significant change to and/or intensification of the use and development of urban land or enable a new use and development of land that may be exposed to a natural hazard that arises from, or is likely to arise from, the impacts of climate change.

The amendment replaces an outdated incorporated document that provides guidance for development applications associated with places of heritage significance. Protecting heritage places promotes retention and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, reducing demolition waste and embodied carbon emissions.

Does the amendment address relevant bushfire risk?

The proposed amendment will affect heritage properties within designated bushfire prone areas but will not result in changes that will increase the risk to life, property, infrastructure, or the natural environment from bushfire.

Does the amendment comply with the requirements of any other Minister's Direction applicable to the amendment?

The proposed amendment is consistent with the Ministerial Direction on the *Form and Content of Planning Schemes* under Section 7(5) of the Act.

The amendment complies with Ministerial Direction No. 11 (Strategic Assessment of Amendments) under section 12 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The amendment is consistent with this direction which ensures a comprehensive strategic evaluation of a planning scheme amendment and the outcomes it produces.

The requirements of Ministerial Direction No.15 – The Planning Scheme Amendment Process by meeting the procedural requirements of the planning scheme

How does the amendment support or implement the Planning Policy Framework and any adopted State policy?

The amendment is consistent with, and supports the following objectives of Clause 15 (Built Environment and Heritage) in the Planning Policy Framework:

- Clause 15.03-1S (Heritage conservation) - to ensure the conservation of places of heritage significance.

The relevant key strategies of this clause include:

- Encourage appropriate development that respects places with identified heritage values.
- Retain those elements that contribute to the importance of the heritage place.
- Encourage the conservation and restoration of contributory elements of a heritage place.
- Ensure an appropriate setting and context for heritage places is maintained or enhanced.
- Support adaptive reuse of heritage buildings where their use has become redundant.
- Consider whether it is appropriate to require the restoration or reconstruction of a heritage building in a Heritage Overlay that has been unlawfully or unintentionally demolished in order to retain or interpret the cultural heritage significance of the building, streetscape or area.
- Clause 15.03-1L (Heritage conservation - Greater Geelong) which includes new key strategies to:
 - Discourage the demolition of a heritage place unless:
 - It is identified as non-contributory (not significant).
 - The demolition is partial and retains the three-dimensional form and principal fabric.
 - It will enhance the significance of the heritage place.
 - Support use and development of a heritage place that enhances its significance and contributes to its longevity.
 - Design external alterations of buildings to make a positive contribution to the significance of the heritage place.
 - Encourage new development to provide a contemporary design interpretation which considers scale, form, materials and streetscape context.
 - Encourage the subdivision of land where the proposed subdivision will not adversely affect significant fabric, setting, layout, historical relationship of buildings or views to the heritage place from the public realm.
 - Encourage the retention of original landscape elements that are significant

to the heritage character of the site.

Heritage design guidelines provide clear, practical advice to guide alterations, additions, infill development, and new works within heritage overlays. They include principles for appropriate scale, form, and siting of new development, integration of sustainable design and accessibility improvements, demolition, conservation, and repair of heritage fabric, and use of materials, colour and detailing that complement heritage character.

Heritage design guidelines assist applicants in preparing proposals that respect heritage values and support consistent, transparent decision-making by Council.

Amendment C484ggee clearly supports the PPF by updating the heritage design guidelines to ensure they are modernised, reflect current development approaches and sustainability, and will support decision making on permit applications affecting places of heritage significance.

With the implementation of the new Heritage Design Guidelines, commensurate updates to the local policy clause are also made to ensure there is consistency and alignment between policy and the Guidelines and to remove duplication with the state policy clause. This will ensure better implementation of state and local policy with the Guidelines in permit decision making.

Is the amendment consistent with the delivery of the relevant housing target set out in the Planning Policy Framework?

Recent State government changes to planning policy and housing codes include *Victoria's Housing Statement (2023)* and *Plan for Victoria (2024)* to increase housing supply and streamline development approvals. These reforms highlight the importance of clear, locally tailored heritage design guidelines to ensure that growth and development occur in a way that enhances, rather than erodes, Geelong's valued heritage character.

The City's heritage represents a legacy of thoughtful design, strong community ties, and a commitment to sustainability. Today, Greater Geelong boasts a rich array of historic buildings and places, but the need for rapid housing growth and higher urban density poses challenges. Careful planning and thoughtful design is needed to ensure the preservation of Greater Geelong's valuable heritage.

The implementation of the new *Greater Geelong Heritage Design Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, November 2025) will not preclude opportunities for higher density development across the heritage overlay within Greater Geelong. The Guidelines they will ensure the heritage significance of the properties is considered in decision-making, balancing the community benefits of protecting heritage with the provision of housing.

The new Guidelines will promote and contribute to equitable access to heritage places, more inclusive design outcomes, and positive environmental and climate

objectives by enabling diverse housing opportunities within heritage areas by supporting contextually appropriate infill and adaptive reuse projects.

How does the amendment support or implement the Municipal Planning Strategy?

The amendment supports the Municipal Planning Strategy of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme, specifically at Clause 02.03-5 (Built environment and sustainability) which identifies strategic directions to ensure that development enhances Geelong's sense of place and identity and to conserve and enhance individual heritage places and areas of pre- and post-contact heritage significance.

This amendment achieves this through the updating of the heritage design guidelines that provide advice and direction on alterations, additions, infill development and new works, and demolition within heritage overlays.

Does the amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions?

The amendment makes proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions by reviewing an existing incorporated document and replacing it with an updated and modernised one. In C484ggee, this is appropriately being delivered through the changes to the schedule to Clause 72.04 to replace an existing incorporated document with a new one, and to make consequential changes to Clause 15.03-1L where the incorporated document is referenced in policy.

The proposed amendment is consistent with Planning Practice Note 1 – Applying the Heritage Overlay (PPN01).

How does the amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

The development of the new *Greater Geelong Heritage Design Guidelines* (City of Greater Geelong, November 2025) was undertaken through benchmarking against other Council Heritage Design Guidelines, consulting with Council's Heritage Advisory Committee, and internal consultation with Council's Statutory and Strategic Planning Units.

Relevant external agencies will also be formally notified through the Planning Scheme Amendment process.

Does the amendment address relevant requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010?

The proposed amendment will not have a significant impact on the transport system, as defined by section 3 of the Transport Integration Act 2010.

How does the amendment have regard to the principles set out in

the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong)* Act 2017 in relation to Yarra River land and other land, the use or development of which may affect Yarra River land?

The amendment does not relate to an area affected by The Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017. Greater Geelong Council is not adjacent to the Yarra River or within 500 metres of a bank of the Yarra River.

Resource and administrative costs

What impact will the new planning provisions have on the resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority?

The amendment is not expected to have any significant impact upon the resources and administrative costs of the council. An existing incorporated document is being replaced with an updated and modernised one that will better assist statutory decision makers with assessments of development proposals and changes to the heritage places.