



6 December 2013

Plan Melbourne
Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure
planmelbourne@dtpli.vic.gov.au

Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: Plan Melbourne Submission

The Geelong Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), on behalf of its members, is pleased to lodge a submission to Plan Melbourne. The Chamber represents over 750 businesses and organisations in the Geelong region employing over 22,000 people. Plan Melbourne is a vision for Melbourne but Geelong's strong social and economic connections with metropolitan Melbourne necessitate our input into this process.

Strategic Connections

We are extremely pleased that Plan Melbourne recognises the strategic connections between Geelong and Melbourne. Avalon Airport and the Port of Geelong are identified in Plan Melbourne as important economic and transport infrastructure. Domestic and international passenger services are extremely important to the Geelong region. Many micro and small businesses in the Geelong area are employed in the tourism industry and strategic recognition of future development of the airport is strongly supported.

Expansion of the Geelong Port and associated activities is also critical for Geelong. Geelong's economy is changing and investment in state significant infrastructure is needed to attract new investment and also provide ongoing improvements and opportunities for existing businesses.

Improvements to transport infrastructure is important for the Geelong economy. The Regional Rail Link project and Princes Highway upgrades are necessary to move people and freight between Melbourne and Geelong. Many businesses are exposed to extended delays when travelling to Melbourne so it is critical that there is ongoing investment to improve these vital inter-city connections.

Jobs and Investment in Geelong

We understand that Plan Melbourne will integrate with the G21 Regional Growth Plan (April 2013) (G21 RGP). The G21 Plan also targets new investment, employment and infrastructure outcomes at a regional level. Some of the initiatives in the G21 RGP, we believe, are of state and national significance and therefore should be specifically referenced in Plan Melbourne. These include:

- The Geelong Ring Road Employment Precinct (GREP) as a 'State- Significant Industrial Precinct'. G21 has identified this area as priority project to attract investment and jobs. The Chamber supports this project and considers state-wide recognition equally as important as promoting the GREP as a preferred Victorian location to invest in manufacturing and industrial operations. The existing and future businesses in the GREP are particularly important to the Geelong economy through the resultant employment and downstream economic benefits.
- Deakin University is one of the largest employers in Geelong and its expansion at the both the Waterfront and Waurin Ponds Campus is of major importance for the region. Epworth Hospital and Barwon Health propose new health facilities adjacent to Deakin's Waurin Ponds campus. The G21 RGP identifies the potential around Deakin's Waurin Ponds Campus for health, education, research and innovation capacity. The Chamber therefore requests that the Waurin Ponds precinct recognition to be elevated as a 'National Employment Cluster'. Plan Melbourne identifies other university and mixed use areas as 'National Employment Clusters' and this precinct should be recognised in both the G21 RGP and Plan Melbourne.

Geelong - A Second City

Plan Melbourne responds to the growing pressures facing Melbourne's metropolitan areas. The Chamber supports the State of Cities objective to maximise the growth potential of Victoria. Geelong, however, should be recognised as Victoria's second city. As Victoria's second largest city, a formal recognition in Plan Melbourne will facilitate attraction of more investment, jobs and residents to the Geelong region.

Melbourne's Western Region, which adjoins the City of Greater Geelong, is projected to nearly double its population by 2050. It is expected that some residents from Geelong will travel to new employment areas in the West, but the Chamber encourages and recognises the benefits for this new population in the West to also consider living and working in Geelong. The relationship between the Western region of Melbourne and Geelong is expected to strengthen in the future and this needs to be reinforced in Plan Melbourne.

We also note the new ABS population projections are much higher than the growth estimates in Plan Melbourne. We request that strategies are put in place to direct some of this additional growth to the Geelong region.

Initiative 1.5.5 of Plan Melbourne recommends streamlining of approval processes for tourism investment in Victoria. The Chamber supports this recommendation which will facilitate further investment in the Tourism sector in the Geelong region.

Implementation of Plan Melbourne

The Chamber supports the Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA) facilitating key planning and development projects in the Geelong region. Planning processes often delay business and employment outcomes so any mechanism to fast-track decision making processes is supported. Other recommendations to improve planning and business processes are also supported.

Overall, the Chamber supports the principles in Plan Melbourne to rebalance Victoria's growth. Further growth in Geelong will support our existing businesses and also attract new businesses and investment in the region at a time when Geelong's economy is undergoing significant change and diversification.

Yours sincerely



Kylie Warne
President



Bernadette Uzelac
Executive Officer