

THE CITY OF  
GREATER GEELONG

# SUBMISSION INTO DEVELOPING A NEW PLAN FOR VICTORIA

—

AUGUST 2024

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# Executive summary

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The City of Greater Geelong welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of a new Plan for Victoria (the Plan), a plan where everyone can have a place to call home with good connections to jobs, schools, and services.

We acknowledge and agree with the priorities already identified by government through extensive consultation with community, councils, and stakeholders, that residents across our municipality want:

- leafy green streets with trees, parks, and open space
- better public transport, walking and cycling connectivity
- affordable homes for everyone
- protecting the valuable land where our food is grown
- vibrant and social places for people to connect and thrive.

However we highlight that regional context will be instrumental in any future success of the Plan. Outside of metropolitan Melbourne, the greater Geelong municipality is the most populated region in Victoria, with an estimated resident population of 282,809. Population is forecast to grow to 396,388 by 2041. Due to its size and location, the City makes a significant contribution to the state's housing supply, economy, transport, and freight network, and has the largest proposed target for the state of 139,800 new homes.

We highlight in our response that the Victorian Government needs to consider not only the housing targets but also the planning, design, and delivery of the required infrastructure, including social infrastructure, to support this work, and importantly, that this needs to happen now to enable future housing targets to be met. There also needs to be clarity as to how infrastructure will be funded and how ongoing maintenance and delivery will be sustainable. There also need to be clear identification of the resourcing required to deliver on such aspirational targets and how supply will be ensured.

We provide the following recommendations for consideration in the new Plan, asking that the Victorian Government:

1. recognises the strategic importance of the greater Geelong region and develops a plan for Geelong within the new Plan.

## Affordable Housing and Choice

2. continue to work with local government to refine housing targets to ensure they are realistic and can achieve the desired outcomes, while continuing to monitor the supply and delivery of residential land and housing in the identified areas for growth
3. continue to work with rural and regional local governments to consider how settlement boundaries can be strengthened in line with the Urban Growth Boundary and green wedge provisions
4. work closely with critical suppliers, industry, and educational institutions to ensure the pipeline of all required resources to deliver on the Plan are available where and when needed
5. ensure regional infill and greenfield targets have been set following consideration of regional context, land availability (supply) and growth target needs (demand)
6. ensure the delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities is planned and commensurate with population and housing growth proposed under the Plan
7. consider market levers and incentives to increase the viability of medium and higher density development in strategically identified locations
8. support local governments to develop housing and neighbourhood character studies to deliver a residential development framework that supports achievement of housing targets under the Plan
9. continue to review and adequately resource the regulatory framework to provide efficiencies and confidence in the planning and building sectors
10. develop policies, guidelines, practice notes and case studies which will guide quality urban design that positively contributes to the public realm and enhances residents' quality of life
11. invest in community education to build support for mixed housing developments while providing clear information promoting the health, economic and community benefits of social housing
12. ensure government led or partnered projects lead by example in relation to sustainability, design quality and social housing contribution

13. work with local government to develop a state-based approach, which considers regional context and investment needs, for the planning and delivery of social and affordable housing
14. ensure affordable and social housing targets form part of the housing supply targets
15. ensure any funds paid into the fast-track Social Housing Growth Fund are invested into the local community
16. provide mandated social and affordable housing targets in the planning scheme through inclusionary zoning or other mechanism
17. ensure local and state governments utilise their position as landholders to deliver social housing when land they own is developed or goes to the market
18. consider incentives for social housing provision such as density bonuses or fast-tracking process.
26. ensure services, facilities, and infrastructure, including social infrastructure, are delivered commensurate with housing development
27. consider the development of a Victorian Integrated Transport Strategy, focusing on mode shift and requirements for future development, incorporating active travel, public transport as a priority, with funding to deliver on the strategy in a timeline commensurate with housing development
28. provide more certainty around state funding and grants to meet community needs.

### **Sustainable Environments and Climate Change**

### **Equity and Jobs**

19. prioritise government investment into growth local government areas to support economic investment and employment
20. continue to work with local government to monitor the supply, demand, take-up, and delivery of employment precincts
21. continue to refine buffer requirements to protect both employment land and sensitive land uses
22. continue to improve connections between regional, rural, and metro Victoria including rail, bus, road, energy and digital and telecommunications networks in timely manner that supports housing growth and employment links.

### **Thriving and Liveable Towns and Suburbs**

23. review the impact of rate capping on Councils' capacity to meet the needs of their communities
24. consider an exemption from, or reinvestment of, windfall tax on rural land sales where the land is rezoned for residential purposes inclusive of a minimum level of social and affordable housing.
25. provide development standards for community open space and social infrastructure

29. provide climate mapping, data, and guidance to inform decision-making around climate change impacts on housing development and sustainability including water, agricultural land capability, sea level rise, flooding, coastal hazards, and bushfires
30. provide a statewide approach to urban tree protection on private land that supports housing growth and ensures urban greening has a focus on biodiversity and habitat creation appropriate to the land
31. support and facilitate waste management and recycling initiatives that reduce waste going to landfill
32. integrate biodiversity protection through development of a state-wide approach to biodiversity protection, which would set minimum standards for ecological restoration and contribute to the net gain objective
33. increase investment in conservation of existing public land to prevent decline, and strengthen reliance, against threats such as climate change, increased usage and completing uses
34. adequately fund and resource drainage and catchment management authorities, while working with local governments, to develop infrastructure standards that balance aspirations against upfront and ongoing maintenance costs, sustainability, and effectiveness of the stormwater networks
35. upgrade the electricity distribution and storage network to connect renewable energy and support greater feed-in options to support housing growth.

We look forward to hearing more from the Victorian Government on the Plan following its review of all feedback, and contributing further to the Plan's development and implementation.

# Submission

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Greater Geelong (the City) is the second largest city in Victoria. Located 75 kilometres south-west of Melbourne, the municipality covers an area of 1,252 square kilometres, comprising suburban, coastal and country areas.

Outside of metropolitan Melbourne, the greater Geelong municipality (the municipality) is the most populated region in Victoria, with an estimated resident population of 282,809. Over the past decade, the population of the municipality has experienced significant growth in the western and eastern corridors. Population is forecast to grow to 396,388 by 2041. Due to its size and location, the City makes a significant contribution to the state's housing supply, economy, transport, and freight network, and has the largest proposed target for the state of 139,800 new homes.

The City's proximity and connection to metropolitan Melbourne, our unique CBD, townships and suburbs, our natural assets including rural and coastal areas and our diverse economy makes us a destination location and one of fastest growing regions in Australia.

With fast growth comes many challenges that local government must address. Mayor Trent Sullivan' comment on the recent announcement of the draft housing targets:

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**“The government’s draft housing target for greater Geelong is the highest in the state and recognises our important role as the largest regional city in Victoria. Council is planning for strong population growth over the next two decades, but this level of new housing would be an increase on the forecasts in our Settlement Strategy.**

**Geelong is getting bigger and that brings a lot of exciting opportunities. At the same time, it's very important to us and our community that growth is planned and managed in a way that maintains what we all love about living here. We'll need to see significant government investment in services and infrastructure for our region as our population grows.”**

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As highlighted by Mayor Sullivan the City's goal is to maintain what everyone loves about living in greater Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula by planning for growth that will deliver a thriving and sustainable future without

detracting from the natural beauty of the region and its coastline.

To achieve this, we need a planning framework that sets clear and achievable goals, facilitates investment from all levels of government, implements effective policy and builds partnerships between government, agencies, communities, not for profit and private sectors.

We recommend that given the size, location, and strategic importance of the greater Geelong region a dedicated plan for Geelong is created as part of the new Plan for Victoria, which incorporates the further recommendations outlined below while recognising the needs of the greater Geelong region.

### Recommendation

That the Victorian Government:

1. recognises the strategic importance of the greater Geelong region and develops a plan for Geelong within the new Plan.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND CHOICE

*Providing all Victorians with a choice of a well-designed home, at an affordable price and close to daily needs.*

Regional growth requires a deep understanding of the regional context within which the growth will occur and the opportunities and challenges that may impact success in that location.

### Housing and Population Growth

It is crucial that the Victorian Government take a strategic statewide approach to setting housing targets which will ensure that current and future populations have a place to call home. However, when considering this, regional context, capacity, and investment is a crucial consideration.

The draft housing target for greater Geelong is 139,800 new dwellings over 27 years to 2051. This equates to 5,148 per year. The average dwelling construction over the past 5 years in greater Geelong has been 3,500 dwellings per year with a boom year in 2020-21 of 4,080 new dwellings.

The draft housing target presents a significant increase when compared to the greater Geelong average, with the expectation of an additional 1,648 dwellings per average year and an additional 1,068 dwellings when compared to

the boom year of 2020-2021. Without significant coordination, investment, and commitment from all levels of government delivery of such an increased target will present many challenges and is a stretch which is beyond the City and the current workforce's capacity to deliver.

The City's *Settlement Strategy 2020* projects housing needs for the period of 2016-2036 provides a number of recommendations to provide housing for a growing population, while protecting Geelong's unique lifestyle and environmental values. It sets out a number of growth scenarios, nominating a 2.5% growth rate as the most likely scenario which aligns with the *G21 Regional Growth Plan* aspirational population growth scenario.

The average population growth from 2016-2022 was 2.47% which supports this projected 2.5% growth scenario. This would see greater Geelong's population at 388,000 by 2036 presenting a need for an additional 73,400 dwellings.

Based on this projection of the need for 73,400 new homes between 2016 and 2036 (the *Settlement Strategy 2020* planning period), 24,452 have already been constructed as at 2022-2023, with a further 48,948 required by 2036.

In March 2022 there was an undeveloped residential lot capacity, within zoned broadhectare sites, of approximately 25,000 lots across the municipality. In addition to the zoned land stocks, there are approximately 4,200 hectares of land (with an estimated yield of 45,300 dwellings) identified for potential future broadhectare residential development. The bulk of this supply (88%) is in the Northern and Western Growth Areas. This tells us that the municipality has the land stock required to meet the *Settlement Strategy* recommendations at the projected growth rate of 2.5%.

The Council recently adopted a long-term settlement boundary to contain urban development, however this boundary does not have the same statutory weight or protection as the urban growth boundary.

While the current stocks should meet the *Settlement Strategy 2020* projections for 2036 there are serious questions around the ability to meet the draft housing target for greater Geelong with regards to the projected population, housing demand, market interest in higher density housing, the capacity of the building industry and the ability to deliver infrastructure and services commensurate with the proposed scale of housing development.

However, land stock to meet the demand of increased housing construction is only one part of the equation, an increase in demand, of the level proposed, will also need a

huge influx of resources to meet this demand. Clear pipelines to support resource supply including workers required from design to build, will be required.

The Victorian Government will need to work closely with suppliers, industry, and educational institutions to ensure that the pipelines are in place to support demand in the locations required. Poor pipeline planning will not only escalate costs, through the addition of regional supply oncosts, but also potentially delay delivery of construction due to lack of supply of both the human resources required and the construction resources and tools required to meet the target. This includes access to, and availability of, all distribution routes required to support supply such as roads and ports.

The supply of the tradespeople required to deliver on the Plan will require a coordinated approach to workforce planning led by industry i.e., Master Builders Association of Victoria and Master Plumbers, in partnership with trade specific educational institutions, including the Victorian TAFE network. These associations along with the Australian Jobs and Skills Councils, BuildSkills representing the build environment, are well versed in assessing workforce growth demand and supporting workforce development to meet future growth plans.

Without this planning the success of the Plan will be limited.

## Recommendation

That the Victorian Government:

2. continue to work with local government to refine housing targets to ensure they are realistic and can achieve the desired outcomes, while continuing to monitor the supply and delivery of residential land and housing in the identified areas for growth
3. continue to work with rural and regional local governments to consider how settlement boundaries can be strengthened in line with the Urban Growth Boundary and green wedge provisions
4. work closely with critical suppliers, industry, and educational institutions to ensure the pipeline of all required resources to deliver on the Plan are available where and when needed.

## Housing Distribution and Diversity

Housing distribution and diversity is critical for ensuring that the needs of all residents are catered for, including family size, location for work, recreation and play, education, and cultural needs.

Local Government is responsible for planning the use of land to meet residential needs, the City's *Settlement Strategy 2020* guides settlement and housing planning in the municipality out to 2036, while the focuses on social and affordable housing out to 2041.

Social housing is a secure and affordable housing option designed to support individuals and families with low incomes and housing needs. It encompasses a range of housing types, including public, community, and Aboriginal housing.

Specifically, affordable housing refers to housing suitable for very low, low, and moderate-income households. In 2017 the municipality sat at a score of 1,007 on the *SEIFA Index of Disadvantage*. For Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1s) across Australia, the average (population weighted) SEIFA score on the index of disadvantage is 1,000.

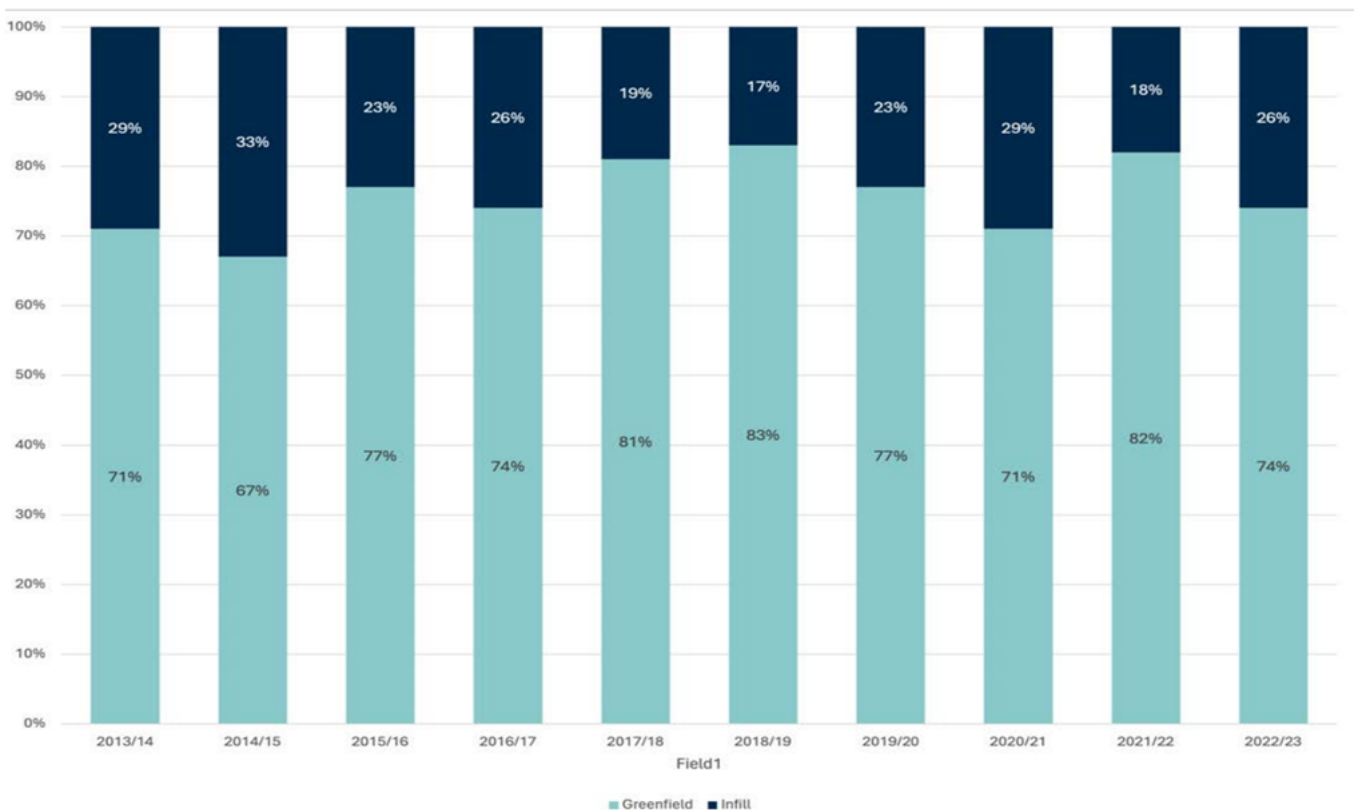
Comparatively the municipality sits at a higher level of disadvantage than the G21 Region at 1,016.4. Increasing demand on social housing and support infrastructure.

Over the past 10 years, around 25% of housing has been delivered in established areas (infill) and 75% in new communities (greenfield development).

This distribution trend is likely to continue in the short to medium term as we see the build out of the existing Armstrong Creek Growth Area and the proposed Northern and Western Growth Areas come online.

The proposed growth areas will accommodate 110,000 new residents. In the longer term a target of 50% infill and 50% greenfield for new housing supply is considered realistic for the Geelong municipality.

The Victorian Government has a role to play in ensuring that government led or partnered projects lead by example in relation to diversity, sustainability, design quality and social housing contribution.



Source: Barwon Water, 2023

This can be achieved through land sale contracts and partnership agreements which seek exceptional outcomes to showcase what can be achieved when minimum standards are exceeded.

Housing diversity also needs to consider the location of housing. Barwon Water provides lot connection data to the City, a 'connection' means sewer and water have been provided to a site. The following table shows the connections for both infill and greenfield development.

The average connections per year over the 10-year period is 3,100, the more recent 5-year average is higher at 3,752. Assuming connections will lead to dwellings, this average is on target to meet the housing needs for the 20-year period noted above.

However, we note that the Plan presents a target of 70% of new homes to be built in established areas (infill), with growth areas (greenfield) delivering 30% of new homes.

These targets sit outside the City's current aspirational target of 50/50 as outlined in our *Settlement Strategy 2020*, and we would suggest that the Victorian Government should ensure regional infill and greenfield targets have been set following consideration of regional context, land availability (supply) and growth target needs (demand) to enable the Plan to have any chance at success.

## Greenfield Development

Greenfield developments require a commitment of significant investment to deliver the public transport links, road upgrades and other infrastructure and services set out in the precinct structure plans.

As noted in the City's *National Housing and Homelessness Plan Submission*, Geelong's next major growth front is the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas and will be home to 110,000 residents. To realise sustainable development outcomes the development will rely on new mass transit services by Department of Transport and Planning (Victoria) and the Victorian Government's commitment to the Geelong-Bannockburn passenger railway line.

There are currently no transport commitments by the Victorian Government to support these growth areas, therefore the housing density and intensity cannot be increased to support greater affordability and more homes due to the lack of access to public transport. The lack of commitment or funding for local government in shaping infrastructure also leads to the greater economic burden on

households living in areas without access to transport choices that provide access to higher order employment.

Infrastructure cost for roads, drainage, sewer, potable and recycled water in Victorian greenfield developments have risen significantly by 46% between Q2 2018 to Q1 2023 and it is putting pressure on development contributions system to collect and deliver infrastructure that support new housing development in growth areas, including in regional cities like Geelong.

It is vitally important that greenfield developments create liveable, strong communities from the outset to deliver the required community outcomes, especially when seeking behaviour changes and modal shifts through community and housing design such as, reducing carbon footprint and 20-minute neighbourhoods. Strong roads and paths connectivity, with transport links to facilities, services and jobs are crucial for community sustainability. Without public transport links growth areas will continue to be car dependent and residents will experience excess commute times and reduced quality of life.

It is recognised that greenfield developments often present timing challenges, especially in relation to public transport, schools, and delivery of access to local employment, there needs to be a clear focus on delivering liveability when looking at greenfield development as part of the Plan.

## Infill Housing

The City's infill strategy is to achieve greater housing diversity in strategically located areas close to public transport which aligns with the principles of Plan Victoria.

The *Housing Framework Review 2024* identifies substantial, incremental, and minimal housing change areas in strategically identified locations.

While the potential years of supply in greater Geelong's established areas has not been calculated, the overall assessment is that capacity constraints will not set a limit on the share of future housing demand met by urban consolidation – if the demand is there, the capacity can be found. It should be noted that the 'capacity' for housing growth in established areas is influenced not only by planning policies, but also by housing preferences (for detached houses versus town houses and apartments) and by relative property prices – that is, whether the price premium for detached housing in desirable established areas become high enough to make redevelopment for alternative forms of housing viable.

According to the *2021 Census* by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the diversity of housing types was 70% single detached housing (suburban and compact suburban housing), 13% medium density housing (townhouses, units, terraces) and 16% were high-density housing (apartments). The City has identified a need to increase housing diversity in both established and greenfield communities.

The *Housing Framework Review 2024* also identified key development areas and increased housing diversity areas (high and medium density housing) as substantial housing change areas located in and around activity centres and in areas with good access to public transport. There is policy and zone support to achieve these outcomes.

Substantial change areas make up 9% of residential areas, excluding the activity, mixed-use and comprehensive development zones. While 85% of greater Geelong's residential areas are incremental changes areas with only 6% nominated as minimal change.

Central Geelong is well suited to much higher levels of residential development and the City will continue to work with the state government to achieve that.

The *Central Geelong Framework Plan – A plan for the heart of Djilang (2023)* defines the intent for Central Geelong.

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**“The Framework Plan is a long-term strategic plan to support growth and appropriate change in central Geelong to 2050. It will support central Geelong’s transition into a modern, connected, liveable, prosperous and environmentally sustainable place across nine interconnected precincts.**

**The Framework Plan enables a central city that provides jobs, services and key destinations for the regions rapidly growing community. It provides direction for significant growth while protecting the amenity and unique qualities of central Geelong through new planning controls and guidelines for building design. Continued improvements to the city’s streets and public spaces are set out in the Framework Plan, as are actions for the improvement of public transport.”**

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The Central Geelong Framework Plan presents a target of 16,000 people living in central Geelong and 60,000 jobs. This project, like many infill developments, presents both opportunities and challenges, as outlined in the Central

Geelong Framework Plan. Such strategies, need to be considered in the Plan, as they represent consultation and commitments years in the making.

On the Bellarine Peninsula there is increased housing development on infill land, including apartments, in towns like Ocean Grove and Portarlington where there is high amenity and a strong holiday and retirement market.

Infill development helps make more efficient use of existing space and infrastructure while preserving agricultural land and environmental features.

For regionally based local governments developing a Plan which includes a realistic target and commitment to infill development will enable local government to manage housing supply to meet growth targets.

### **High Density Housing Market**

Apartment housing analysis in 2022 indicates the apartment market in greater Geelong is still to mature.

Many of the apartments constructed to date are in high rise buildings in central Geelong with bay views and have been constructed by large firms and Tier 1 builders. Such projects can cost in the order of \$3,500/sqm or more for construction only. For developers (after other costs such as land, soft costs and profit are considered), end sale values of apartments need to be in the vicinity of \$7,500/sqm or higher to justify this type of project.

Indications are that townhouses are a healthy product in the current market while there are mixed results for medium density (2-3 storeys) and high density (5-10 storeys) apartment developments with many of the sites sitting just above or below the breakeven point.

The capacity of greater Geelong to accommodate apartments in its suburbs is growing as the population grows and diversifies. It is likely that apartment product types in the suburbs will be more diverse and smaller in scale compared to the high-rise projects seen in the Geelong CBD.

This will enable a greater range of builders, including small and medium sized construction firms, to deliver apartments at a lower cost rate, such as in the vicinity of \$2,500/ sqm (construction only). This could support developers making projects viable if they can achieve end sale values over \$6,500/sqm plus to support these projects. The smaller scale and lower cost projects typically equate to 3 to 6 level projects.

Higher density housing in the suburbs will require improved public transport access to key locations and high levels of amenity (price, public transport, walking & cycling links, quality public and open space, restaurants, entertainment, culture etc) to make the 'trade-off' to live in an apartment.

Confidence in the building regulatory system is also essential to the higher density housing market. Well publicised issues such as external wall cladding, water proofing, structural defects, and insurance shows that some of the people responsible for the design and permitting of buildings, such as architects, draftspersons, fire safety engineers and building surveyors are failing to carry out their responsibilities to ensure compliance with the *National Construction Code*.

The City is keen to understand the capacity analysis and assumptions undertaken for the greater Geelong housing target, including what the allocation was between the various housing density categories and typologies? We also believe more work is required by the Victorian Government to understand the constraints of the heritage overlay.

### Community Engagement

Engagement that empowers the community to help shape the vision and built form outcomes for an area increases the level of support for change.

Most communities understand the need for increased housing but are cautious about the impact on the character of the area, increasing traffic and parking issues and infrastructure, services and facilities not keeping pace with population growth. It is important these issues are addressed now, so that planning for additional housing is supported by clear policy, delivery, and funding mechanisms.

The Victorian Government has a role to play in engaging and educating Victorians on the benefits of sustainable, social, and affordable housing including increased densities in strategically identified areas.

The Victorian Government can also provide greater certainty on the quality of built form outcomes for medium and higher density housing to increase the community's confidence and acceptance of this type of housing, especially in traditional 1-2 storey neighbourhoods which make up the majority of regional Victoria.

Adequate resourcing of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, and Planning Panels Victoria is required to reduce delays to get a hearing date and reduce

delays in decision making. These processes are resource intensive for all participants and the time and costs associated with these processes get passed on to the end user being the home buyer.

### Recommendations

That the Victorian Government:

5. ensure regional infill and greenfield targets have been set following consideration of regional context, endorsed strategies and plans, land availability (supply) and growth target needs (demand)
6. ensure the delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities is planned and commensurate with population and housing growth proposed under the Plan
7. consider market levers and incentives to increase the viability of medium and higher density development in strategically identified locations
8. support local governments to develop housing and neighbourhood character studies to deliver a residential development framework that supports achievement of housing targets under the Plan
9. continue to review and adequately resource the regulatory framework to provide efficiencies and confidence in the planning and building sectors
10. develop policies, guidelines, practice notes and case studies which will guide quality urban design that positively contributes to the public realm and enhances residents' quality of life
11. invest in community education to build support for mixed housing developments while providing clear information promoting the health, economic and community benefits of social housing
12. ensure government led or partnered projects lead by example in relation to sustainability, design quality and social housing contribution.

### Social and Affordable Housing

Greater Geelong currently has approximately 4,300 dwellings of social housing. 3,628 are public housing dwellings owned by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Approximately 665 properties are owned by community housing providers. The distribution of social housing across Geelong is uneven due to historical development patterns with post-war housing development

leading to investment in public housing in suburbs like East Geelong, Norlane, and Corio, this is now being addressed through development plans.

Geelong's *Social Housing Plan 2020-2041* aims to increase the supply of social housing from the current 3% of total households to 7% by 2031 (an estimated increase of 6,000 dwellings) and 10% by 2041 (a further 6,000 dwellings).

While we do not have a clear picture of the number of homes needed for First Nations people in this region Aboriginal Housing Victoria has measured the housing need of First Nations people across Victoria and is calling for 5000 additional social housing units for Aboriginal people by 2036. It is important that this is considered in any social housing response.

In 2021 the Geelong City Council established the Geelong Affordable Housing Trust which can be used for Council owned land that is identified for social housing. The use of surplus government land for this purpose is a key opportunity.

There are examples in Geelong where the state has not included a social housing requirement in the sale of public land, such as the Flinders Peak and Rosewell former school sites, Council would like to see such requirements pursued in the future.

A consistent state-based approach to social and affordable housing delivery is currently lacking in the planning scheme. Since the scrapping of the 1.75% social housing levy an alternate mechanism has not been identified.

The current approach of individual council's trying to get a voluntary contribution through policy aspirations or encouragement in ordinance leads to uncertainty and creates delays while these matters attempt to be negotiated.

The City currently tries to negotiate a section 173 agreement for a percentage affordable housing contribution as a transfer of dwellings to a Registered Housing Association, or a monetary contribution to a Registered Housing Association to the value of the housing contribution or a combination of both.

Victorian government initiatives, such as the *Victorian Social Housing Growth Fund* and *Homes for Victorians Strategy* will also support future investment in social housing regionally.

The City is committed to supporting clever and creative housing solutions to increase housing diversity and affordability and would like to see international and national best-practice models considered in the Plan.

Example:

A prominent international example is the German Baugruppen (building group) model which offers architecturally designed, sustainable and affordable housing. It delivers a co-housing model which develops a mix of private and communal spaces.

The German co-housing projects are entirely owned and designed by their residents, with the help of an architect. There are no commercial developers or real estate agents, considerably lowering construction costs while improving ownership engagement.

## Recommendations

That the Victorian Government:

13. work with local government to develop a state-based approach, which considers regional context and investment needs, for the planning and delivery of social and affordable housing
14. ensure affordable and social housing targets form part of the housing supply targets
15. ensure any funds paid into the fast-track Social Housing Growth Fund are invested into the local community
16. provide mandated social and affordable housing targets in the planning scheme through inclusionary zoning or other mechanism
17. ensure local and state governments utilise their position as landholders to deliver social housing when land they own is developed or goes to the market
18. consider incentives for social housing provision such as density bonuses or fast-tracking process.

These actions are required if the Plan wants to ensure that all Victorians are provided with the choice of a well-designed home, at an affordable price and close to daily needs.

## EQUITY AND JOBS

*Enabling all Victorians to have access to jobs, schools, healthcare and shops so that they can lead prosperous lives.*

Regional economic development and access to secure and sustainable employment are key to sustainable success of such aspirational housing targets.

### Geelong Economy

Greater Geelong has experienced the fastest employment growth of all large Australian regional cities. The total number of businesses, jobs, and our Gross Regional Product (GRP) have all increased substantially in recent years.

ABS data shows the overall growth in jobs has consistently outpaced population growth, particularly in the five years to 2021 (4.4% p.a. versus 2.5% p.a.). Strong economic and population growth is reflected in significant growth in the construction sector (9.8% p.a.) and to a lesser extent utilities.

The City is one of Geelong's largest employers, providing full-time, part-time, or casual employment for 1863 people.

A structural economic shift towards service sectors and a stabilisation in manufacturing is also reflected in the data. The highest growth service sectors in the five years to 2021 have been population-driven sectors like health care and social assistance and public administration and safety, and business services like professional, scientific, and technical services and financial and insurance services.

### Economic Development Plan

The City's Economic Development Plan, *Geelong on the Rise a Clever and Creative International City (2024-2034)* provides specific actions and initiatives to help attract 120,000 people to the region, add a further 55,000 new jobs and increase GRP by \$9.7 billion by 2041.

The Economic Development Plan identifies opportunities in the advanced manufacturing, defence, visitor economy and events, creative industries and digital technology, clean economy, professional business services, transport, logistics and fulfilment sectors.

Some of the challenges that have been identified and that are impacting realisation of these opportunities include:

- a lack of available and affordable housing
- traffic congestion and a lack of public transport

- a rapidly changing environment
- pockets of high socioeconomic disadvantage
- climate change and sustainability
- lack of serviced industrial land
- changing skills base
- workforce shortages.

Greater Geelong is a region that values its multicultural communities and embraces inclusivity and cultural diversity. It is an economy that is inclusive for First Nations people, our CALD community, people living with a disability and social enterprises. This commitment must go hand in hand with any future development supporting the lifestyle, including housing development, and work environment of our communities.

### Employment Precincts

Greater Geelong has thirteen existing and planned employment precincts including the major precincts of Avalon Airport, Geelong Port, and central Geelong.

A review of industrial land in 2018 found there is approximately 21 years industrial zoned land across greater Geelong based on the average annual rate of land consumption in the period 2015 to 2018 (excluding the Industrial Employment Precinct next to Avalon Airport and the Western Employment Precinct). In terms of future (unzoned) industrial land stocks it is estimated that there is 7 years of additional supply.

State and local government Investment Facilitation Units report that businesses have had difficulty in finding appropriate industrial land for investment.

A lack of industrial land for future development and economic growth has a flow effect on job opportunities to support future population and housing growth.

### Land use Buffers

When looking at land use it is important to consider land use buffers and their role in supporting environments that are sustainable for a quality and active lifestyle and employment.

The City wishes to highlight the importance of the Victorian Government's role in continuing to refine buffer requirements, we see this as crucial for several reasons:

**Preventing Land Use Conflicts:** Buffers help separate incompatible land uses, such as industrial areas and

residential neighbourhoods. This separation minimizes conflicts that can arise from noise, dust, odours, and other pollutants.

**Protecting Human Health and Safety:** Sensitive land uses like homes, schools, and hospitals are particularly vulnerable to industrial emissions. Proper buffers ensure these areas are shielded from harmful impacts, safeguarding public health.

**Ensuring Industrial Viability:** By providing a clear separation, buffers give industries the certainty they need to operate without the risk of encroachment from sensitive uses. This stability is essential for the long-term viability of industrial operations.

**Enhancing Community Amenity:** Well-planned buffers can include green spaces or recreational areas, improving the overall quality of life for nearby residents while maintaining necessary separations.

**Supporting Strategic Planning:** Buffers are a key component of effective land use planning, helping to balance the needs of different land uses and ensuring sustainable development.

### Access to Employment

Geelong is historically a car-reliant city. The City has identified that there is a clear need to move toward more of a 50-50 split between car travel and public/active transport.

The *G21 Transport Strategy* forecasts a 491% increase in road congestion around Geelong by 2041. The modelling considered all new transport infrastructure projects planned for the region over the next 30 years.

Investment in improved public and active transport across the region must be a top priority for the Victorian Government otherwise housing growth will add to existing congestion which will significantly impact productivity, emission levels, road maintenance costs and quality of life.

Research by Infrastructure Victoria found one in three people who live in Geelong's growth areas would rather live in an established area, in a medium-density home such as a townhouse or low-rise apartment than their current location.

This could indicate one of two things, there is either a lack of housing diversity or there are excessive commute times and lack of services, infrastructure, and facilities in growth areas. Such deficiencies mean people are prepared to forgo a detached home to live in medium or high-density

housing as a trade-off for the better services available in established areas.

This finding reinforces the importance of the delivery of infrastructure, access, and jobs to support greenfield developments.

### Recommendations

That the Victorian Government:

19. prioritise government investment into growth local government areas to support economic investment and employment
20. continue to work with local government to monitor the supply, demand, take-up, and delivery of employment precincts
21. continue to refine buffer requirements to protect both employment land and sensitive land uses
22. continue to improve connections between regional, rural, and metro Victoria including rail, bus, road, energy and digital and telecommunications networks in a timely manner that supports housing growth and employment links.

These actions are required if the Plan wants to enable all Victorians to have access to jobs, schools, healthcare, and shops so that they can lead prosperous lives.

### THRIVING AND LIVEABLE TOWNS AND SUBURBS

*Creating connected, well-designed, vibrant and inclusive communities for everyone to call home.*

Sustainable communities need investment in planning as well as delivery. They need clear strategies, standards, and guidelines to support housing development that enables communities to thrive and grow in a sustainable manner.

### Community Assets

There are over 1,000 individual parcels of open space in greater Geelong covering an area of over 13,000 hectares.

The City either owns or has management responsibility on behalf of the Crown for most of these open spaces, but other public land managers operating in the region are also responsible for large areas, including coastal reserves, Ramsar-listed wetland complexes, waterway corridors and National and Regional Parks.

Over the past decade, greater Geelong has seen a marked quantum and quality improvement in open space provision in the emerging growth areas, which has highlighted the disparity of provision in greater Geelong's existing and older suburbs. These existing areas were developed under different planning eras when open space was not as highly valued as it is today. Compounding this inequity and pressure is the fact that many established areas are still undergoing significant growth through infill development and densification.

There is a need to provide baseline provision and development standards for primary recreation open space that is in line with best practice.

The City provides over 865 indoor and outdoor community places and spaces, including sporting facilities, playgrounds and parks, leisure centres, community halls, libraries, neighbourhood houses and much more.

Delivering for new communities and monitoring and managing existing assets including aging assets requires significant investment. Ensuring facilities meet community needs, are fit for purpose, are environmentally sustainable and efficient to run are key priorities for Council.

The G21 Regional Alliance has identified priority projects to enhance the liveability of the region. The priorities are endorsed by key stakeholders and are informed by community consultation. Cooperation and investment across all levels of government is required for their delivery if the Victorian Government wants connected, well-designed, vibrant, and inclusive communities for everyone to call home.

### **Rate Capping**

Local government provides a very wide range of highly valued services and infrastructure for their communities which contribute to thriving and liveable municipalities.

However, rising costs associated with service delivery and infrastructure cannot be offset by current income streams.

The Council's budget notes that we, along with many other councils, acutely feel the impacts of inflation and substantially higher costs which are compounded by the Victorian Government's rate cap, which limits crucial rate revenue.

Local government plays a critical role in ensuring that communities are productive, resilient, and liveable. They have a small revenue base to do this work, with substantial assets to maintain. The City is continually challenged to

balance the needs and aspirations of the community against fiscal responsibility.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has noted a more flexible approach to rate capping is required to recognise the unique infrastructure challenges of diverse local government areas. Highlighting the financial impact and drain on local government through cost shifting by governments, and the true cost of council services and infrastructure delivery.

The City acknowledges that the Victorian Government has recently taken recommendations into an *Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services* and respects that the recommendations made by MAV and local governments, including the City, will be considered in that review.

However, given successive Victorian Government's reluctance to review the rate cap, it must consider alternative mechanisms on how it proposes to bring greater affordability into the sector, to ensure the growth proposed in the Plan can be delivered.

Local government needs greater control of their own revenue mechanisms to address local needs and aspirations. We wish to reiterate that understanding of regional context is critical for delivering on regional demands and needs.

### **Tax treatment of property**

As noted in the City's *National Housing and homelessness Plan* there has been substantial academic analysis highlighting tax treatment and settings influence on the provision of:

- new housing supply and land use,
- the demand for housing by level of investment in relation to other assets classes,
- labour mobility
- the capacity for housing mobility with changing needs of households Implications of monetary policy and tax treatment of properties

Taxation at the state level indirectly influences housing supply in many ways. Stamp duties are a tax on property transfers and are seen as a barrier to housing supply as it affects not only investors in properties but developers purchasing land to develop incurs stamp duty liability in the process.

Windfall Gains Tax for rezoning of land imposes a levy on landowners for unearned profit but may require developers

to undertake more risk if the landowners decide to pass on the cost to developers. A developer may decide to be more selective in development projects with consequences on supply of land and housing. A proportion of these value capture outcomes and levies could be reinvested (through funding or financing) to incentivise developers and landowners to provide housing that is based on need, such as social and affordable housing to maintain the continuity of housing supply.

We would also highlight that universities are exempt from the windfall gains tax where the revenue from the sale is used for the university's charitable objectives.

We would recommend that the Victorian Government should consider a similar exemption to rural land sales where the land is rezoned for residential purposes inclusive of a minimum level of social and affordable housing.

Where exemption is not possible, we would wish to see, as noted above, a clear reinvestment of tax paid back into the region from which it has been collected, ensuring a clear and transparent reinvestment cycle.

## Neighbourhoods

The City supports the 20-minute neighbourhood concept and has adopted this approach for the Northern and Western growth areas, which support:

- Safe, accessible, and well-connected access
- Thriving local economies and facilities
- Services and destinations to support local living
- Climate resilient design
- High-quality public realm and open spaces
- Viable densities for viability

The biggest barriers to achieving these outcomes in new communities is the lag time between housing construction and residential occupancy, and the delivery of public transport and other services, including employment opportunities. The delivery of employment land takes longer to achieve than residential land.

A thriving and liveable community also needs social infrastructure. Greenfield builds can create community pockets where people feel isolated and disconnected due to lag times in supporting infrastructure such as shops and recreational spaces. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare highlights the challenge this is placing across Australia, and how loneliness has been linked to premature

death and poor physical and mental health amongst other conditions.

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**“Social isolation and loneliness can harm both mental and physical health and may affect life satisfaction. They are concerning issues in Australia due to the impact they have on peoples’ lives and wellbeing.”**

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Funding support from the Victorian Government is required to ensure investment in these spaces is sustainable – not just delivering roads, bricks and mortar but also ensuring spaces and programs for social interaction to meet the social needs of local communities.

### Example:

Currently, the Victorian Government provide operational funding for existing Neighbourhood Houses, however, the Victorian Government does not fund any new Neighbourhood Houses in growth communities, despite new community infrastructure being delivered.

Neighbourhood Houses are acknowledged as being the heart of a community, they bring people from all walks of life together through social, educational, recreational and support activities. They are an example of key social infrastructure that needs to be considered when looking at communities that support strong mental health and wellbeing.

Funding for planning, designing and delivery of community infrastructure would deliver huge benefits to communities. This is particularly true when supported by established minimum standards for this infrastructure and a coordinated rollout.

Funding from governments is required to support scoping, planning and design to support these neighbourhoods.

For greater Geelong we highlight that public and active transport networks also need improvement to achieve this goal. Residents in 20-minute neighbourhoods need safe, well-connected pathways to enable pedestrians and cyclists to optimise active transport modes.

## Transport

Better connections between public transport modes or different kinds of transport will take planning and investment by all levels of government before planned housing growth is unlocked. These links are required for more than just access to work, they are required to enable people to live the lifestyle they want, connect with friends and family, connect with community, shops, and recreation, and participate in a vibrant life in a safe manner.

The City recommends the development of a new *Victorian Integrated Transport Strategy*. This strategy would help to clarify the mode shift and requirements needed to support future housing development and the resulting population shifts in growing and emerging communities while reviewing current use in inner city and suburban areas.

Such an approach would give the market confidence to support investment in housing builds, knowing that the transport infrastructure required, especially in greenfield developments, is being delivered simultaneously, reducing the time lag which impacts personal health and wellbeing substantially.

Such a strategy should include benchmarks for public transport access in metro, regional and rural communities around such things as distance to access public transport, frequency of services and reliability of services. Setting clear expectations from which investment and growth will flow.

It would enable a clear vision for active travel and public transport needs to be set, with regional context to inform design. We see this as a priority need with investment by all governments to deliver on the strategy in a timeline commensurate with the timeline set for increased housing supply.

## Arts, Culture and Heritage

The City believes that thriving and liveable towns and cities is not just about transport, open spaces, active transport, and healthcare, it is also connected to a strong arts, culture, and heritage environment. Thriving neighbourhoods, suburbs and cities need spaces for residents to engage creatively and support a lifestyle that they want.

Arts, culture, and heritage industries are also significant contributors to local employment, community wellbeing and vitality, tourism, and economic development - and provide an essential government service to communities.

Geelong's accreditation as a UNESCO City of Design provides a unique opportunity to set the direction for arts and culture in Geelong.

UNESCO Design Cities share several similar characteristics including cultural landscape maintained by design and the built environment (architecture, urban planning, public spaces, monuments, transportation); opportunity for local designers and urban planners to take advantage of local materials and urban/natural conditions; design-driven creative industries such as architecture and interiors, interaction design, urban design, sustainable design.

This designation, and the expectations that come with it, are embedded into the planning and design for greater Geelong, and forms part of our planning approach to support future population and housing growth.

We believe that continued support in the delivery of Creative Victoria's strategy - Creative State 2025, and the development of a new strategy in coming years, will be vital for ensuring the ongoing creative needs of communities in growth areas are met.

## Recommendations

That the Victorian Government:

23. review the impact of rate capping on Councils' capacity to meet the needs of their communities
24. consider an exemption from, or reinvestment of, windfall tax on rural land sales where the land is rezoned for residential purposes inclusive of a minimum level of social and affordable housing
25. provide development standards for community open space and social infrastructure
26. ensure services, facilities, and infrastructure, including social infrastructure, are delivered commensurate with housing development
27. consider the development of a Victorian Integrated Transport Strategy, focusing on mode shift and requirements for future development, incorporating active travel, public transport as a priority, with funding to deliver on the strategy in a timeline commensurate with housing development
28. provide more certainty around state funding and grants to meet community needs.

These actions are required if the Plan wants to create connected, well-designed, vibrant, and inclusive communities for everyone to call home.

## **SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

*Protecting our environment, agricultural land, and natural resources for a sustainable and healthy future.*

Sustainable environments and climate change impacts are about more than managing transport emissions and greenspaces, it is about ensuring that we have the infrastructure and resources to support the development of liveable and socially responsible communities.

### **Climate Action**

The City has set a target under its *Climate Change Response Plan* of net zero emissions across the municipality by 2035. This is consistent with, but more ambitious than, the State target to achieve net zero emissions by 2045.

We have made significant progress in reducing the organisation's emissions and managing climate impacts.

We have also committed to reaching net zero emissions for our City operations by 2025 and already use 100% renewable electricity. We are rapidly transforming our fleet to zero-emission vehicles and recover 95% of the methane generated from our landfills.

By the 2050s, some predictions suggest Geelong's climate will be more like the current climate of Shepparton. The frequency of extreme weather events, such as droughts, bushfires, heavy rain, and heatwaves, are also expected to increase.

Understanding and mapping the known and potential risks will assist all levels of government and communities' plan. Resourcing this work across Victoria's local government areas can be difficult and a consistent state-based approach to data and mapping is appropriate.

Building community resilience and capacity in a future where we will experience more extreme weather events and climate change impacts will need to be a priority in the Plan to ensure housing developments will meet future climate conditions and impacts.

### **Environment & Sustainability**

The City's native vegetation, habitat and biodiversity continues to be under extreme pressure from threats

associated with climate change, population growth and changes to land use in both rural and urban areas.

An estimated 5% of pre-European indigenous vegetation remains in the City and of this almost all is degraded to some extent. More than 86% of all our native vegetation communities (ecological vegetation communities) are endangered or vulnerable.

Aside from areas secured in nature reserves, most nature areas are small, fragmented, and isolated, and the number of plants, animals and vegetation communities that are threatened is increasing. Impacts from pest plants and animals and a range of factors continue to degrade nature.

The current system of offsetting native vegetation is ineffective, and the focus should be on protecting what is left and restoring and connecting these areas. In greater Geelong, around 90% of offsets are located outside of the municipality, contributing to the local loss of biodiversity and local extinctions. Under the current framework the no net loss objective is not being met.

Where land is identified for conservation purposes the mechanisms to deliver the reserves must be put in place, highlighting the learnings from the Victorian Auditor-General's Office 2020 report on *Protecting Critically Endangered Grasslands* which should be incorporated into the Plan.

Greater Geelong's *Urban Forestry Strategy (2015-2025)* has a target of improving Geelong's tree canopy cover from 14% to 25% over a thirty-year period. Geelong has 75,268 street trees and over 45,000 urban park trees. Opportunities for further planting includes nature strips, roadsides, trails, parks, and reserves.

Our community is also concerned about the protection of trees on private land. Some councils are utilising local laws or overlays, including significant landscape overlay, vegetation protection overlay and environmental significance overlay, to deliver private tree protection.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) *2020 Net Gain Accounting Qualitative Update* estimates that every year, Victoria loses some 10,380 habitat hectares of native vegetation on private land. The loss of 10,380 habitat hectares of native vegetation annually in Victoria highlights the ongoing challenges in preserving biodiversity and maintaining healthy ecosystems.

In assessing this report the Auditor-General highlighted that Victoria had the most native vegetation cleared land

proportional to land mass of any Australian state or territory.

Greater Geelong is considering the options for tree protection on private land but given the size of the municipality the upfront and ongoing resourcing is considerable.

## Waste Management

As highlighted by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Cwth) in their *2021 State of the Environment Report*:

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“Australia’s population and cities are expanding and so are the associated pressures on the environment — urban heat, congestion, pollution and waste. There is growing pressure on water and energy resources, and climate change is driving higher temperatures and more frequent and intense extreme weather events. Together this is damaging biodiversity and ecosystems in and around our cities, as well as human health and wellbeing.”

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Our municipality is projected to generate up to 58,000 tonnes of household waste by 2026. This waste will pose a threat to our natural environment if not managed well, particularly plastic waste, which is already polluting our land, rivers, coasts, and the oceans.

The City is committed to a circular economy and continues to strive towards eliminating waste and greenhouse gas emissions.

Local Government cannot do this alone and seeks the support of all governments to make this happen. Just as the Plan requires a focus on road and paths connectivity to reduce car emissions, the Plan needs to consider the outputs of household waste and seek ways to reduce outputs.

Reducing waste going to landfills is crucial during periods of growth:

**Environmental Impact:** Landfills are a significant source of pollution. They release harmful toxins, leachate, and greenhouse gases like methane, which contribute to global warming and climate change.

**Health Benefits:** Landfills can emit pollutants that affect air and water quality, leading to respiratory problems and other health issues for nearby communities.

**Space Management:** Landfills take up valuable land space that could be used for other purposes. Reducing waste helps minimise the need for new landfill sites.

**Economic Advantages:** Recycling and waste reduction can create jobs and save money by reducing the costs associated with waste disposal and landfill management<sup>3</sup>.

**Wildlife Protection:** Landfills can harm wildlife by destroying habitats and introducing toxic substances into the environment.

While recycling and reusing materials can conserve natural resources and reduce the need for new raw materials, preserving ecosystems and reducing the energy required for manufacturing a broader approach needs to be planned, that looks at all levels of waste production.

Local governments will require continued support from the Victorian Government to facilitate waste management and recycling initiatives that reduce waste going to landfill as the urban footprint expands under the ambitious housing targets.

## Stormwater Management

The City has 2,450 kilometres of drains to manage across our municipality, this network of structures including pipes, pits, open drains, retarding basins, and litter traps meets current housing and industry needs.

Servicing new growth areas presents many challenges to local government, as does maintaining and upgrading systems that were constructed last century.

Infill development will put increasing pressure on aging assets that were not designed to meet current standards or high levels of demand.

Climate change, removal of vegetation and the increase in severe weather events such as localised flooding also present additional demand and challenges on ageing stormwater systems.

As towns and cities grow, more land is covered with impermeable surfaces like roads, parking lots, and buildings.

These impervious surfaces prevent rainwater from naturally infiltrating into the ground. Instead, water runs off quickly, leading to higher peak flows in stormwater systems during heavy rainfall events. This excess runoff can overwhelm drainage infrastructure and cause flooding.

Barwon Water’s 2022 Urban Water Strategy outlines the ambitious goal of 100% productive use of recycled water.

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The regional alternative water grid concept involves the staged transition away from a traditional water, sewerage and stormwater systems that discharge to the ocean, to a connected grid of alternative water sources that distributes alternative water for beneficial uses, enhancing the resilience and prosperity of the region in the face of a changing climate.

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Such approaches to changing climate needs to be embraced by governments and supported, they should set a benchmark for best practice in any future plan. Barwon Water's 2022 Urban Water Strategy highlights the importance of including Traditional Owners, Local Councils, statutory authorities, and government agencies, to drive collaborative and integrated approaches to water management for the region.

Urbanisation introduces pollutants such as oil, heavy metals, and chemicals into stormwater runoff. and alteration of the natural landscape due to urban growth also impact run-off and affect streamflow patterns, erosion, and sediment transport.

Housing growth cannot happen without new or updated stormwater networks, urban growth significantly impacts stormwater systems.

As cities expand, it is critical to balance development with sustainable stormwater management practices to minimise flooding, protect water quality, and enhance resilience.

Local government will be looking to the Victorian Government to support this infrastructure demand so that the required infill and greenfield housing growth can occur.

### Electricity Grid

Like the stormwater network, increased housing development places additional demands on the state's electricity grid. Over the last few years we have seen brown outs and black outs become part of life, as climate change impacts electricity use and loads.

Local government will be looking to the Victorian Government for grid resilience that will cope with anticipated demands resulting from the proposed housing targets. Grid resilience is also required so that our electricity systems can withstand, adapt to, and recover from disruptive events, whether they're caused by extreme weather, cyber-attacks, or other unforeseen challenges.

We propose that the Victorian Government will need to plan for a resilient grid that can handle increased usage, building multiple pathways for electricity flow, considering the utilisation of advanced technologies to monitor and manage the grid in real-time, allowing for rapid adjustments. Integrating renewable energy sources like solar and wind, which can provide localised power and reduce dependency on centralised power plants.

### Recommendations

That the Victorian Government:

29. provide climate mapping, data, and guidance to inform decision-making around climate change impacts on housing development and sustainability including water, agricultural land capability, sea level rise, flooding, coastal hazards, and bushfires
30. provide a statewide approach to urban tree protection on private land that supports housing growth and ensures urban greening has a focus on biodiversity and habitat creation appropriate to the land
31. support and facilitate waste management and recycling initiatives that reduce waste going to landfill
32. integrate biodiversity protection through development of a state-wide approach to biodiversity protection, which would set minimum standards for ecological restoration and contribute to the net gain objective
33. increase investment in conservation of existing public land to prevent decline, and strengthen reliance, against threats such as climate change, increased usage and completing uses
34. adequately fund and resource drainage and catchment management authorities, while working with local governments, to develop infrastructure standards that balance aspirations against upfront and ongoing maintenance costs, sustainability, and effectiveness of the stormwater networks
35. upgrade the electricity distribution and storage network to connect renewable energy and support greater feed-in options to support housing growth.

These actions are required if the Plan wants to protect our environment, agricultural land, and natural resources for a sustainable and healthy future.

## SUMMARY

The City has made 35 recommendations to inform the development of a new plan for Victoria, we see this as an important piece of work that the Victorian Government is undertaking, and we want to be part of shaping the future for Victoria.

In consideration of these recommendations we wish to reinforce the importance of working with Traditional Owners across the state to embed the voices, rights, and aspirations of First Peoples in the Plan, ensuring self-determination and caring for country.

In closing we want to highlight some key takeaways from this submission:

- Regional growth requires a deep understanding of the regional context within which the growth will occur and the opportunities and challenges that may impact success in that location.
- Regional economic development and access to secure and sustainable employment are key to sustainable success of such aspirational housing targets.
- Sustainable communities need investment in planning and well as delivery. They need clear strategies, standards, and guidelines to support housing development, including social and affordable housing development, that enables communities to thrive and grow in a sustainable manner.
- Sustainable environments and climate change impacts are about more than managing transport emissions and greenspaces, it is about ensuring that we have the infrastructure and resources to support the development of liveable and socially responsible communities.

We welcome the opportunity to be involved in any future dialogue to help inform the development of the Plan.



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