



Geelong Chapter

Barwon Region

Strategic Priorities

2024—2025

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Acknowledgement of Country

UDIA Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

UDIA Victoria

The Urban Development Institute of Australia, Victoria (UDIA Victoria) is the peak body representing Victoria's urban development industry. We are a not-for-profit advocacy, research and educational organisation supported by a membership of land-use and urban development organisations. Our members include organisations from across the private sector and Victoria's public service. We are committed to working with both industry and Government to deliver housing, infrastructure, and liveable communities for all Victorians.

UDIA Victoria represents a broad range of industry organisations across Victoria's regions. We are proud to be able to play a role in the continued growth of our State's regional centres.

UDIA Victoria's regional chapters, including the Geelong Chapter (Barwon Region), are represented by committees made up of industry participants from the respective regions – ensuring local knowledge, expertise and insight informs everything we do.

UDIA Victoria's regional advocacy program recognises the important role the regions play in providing affordability and lifestyle for the Victorian community. At the same time, we support locally appropriate urban policy that reflects the unique characteristics of each region.

Geelong Committee

UDIA Victoria's Geelong Chapter (Barwon Region) is the preeminent voice for the urban development industry in Greater Geelong.

Our Committee of twenty-five dedicated, industry-leading experts from a broad range of fields including development, planning, law, engineering and design ensure there is sector-wide representation at a pivotal moment for the region.

The Committee brings a wealth of collective experience to issues of policy, planning and development.

We are committed to ensuring Geelong remains one of the most attractive and best-performing cities in Australia at a time of record growth.

Background

Geelong is Victoria's fastest-growing region, with the City of Greater Geelong experiencing the fastest increase in population of any major Australian city in the past decade. In order to support the region's rapid growth, and ensure it remains an attractive place to live, work, study, visit and invest, it is critical that industrial, commercial and residential development matches the region's growing needs.

The development industry is uniquely placed to play a key role in shaping Geelong's growth into the future. UDIA Victoria has identified a range of key priorities, in strategic and statutory planning; transport, servicing, employment and housing, that will ensure Greater Geelong's long-term productivity, livability and connectivity are not just maintained but enhanced.





From UDIA Victoria CEO, Linda Allison

Geelong's transformation continues at a rapid pace, as Victorians embrace the gateway to the Bellarine Peninsula.

Geelong offers lifestyle, affordability and proximity to Melbourne. Its potential as Victoria's second largest city is yet to be fully realised, and it requires careful, strategic policies and action.

UDIA Victoria is committed to supporting our major regional centres, and the businesses that support them.

We offer policies, education and networking opportunities to support sustainable growth.

I thank our Geelong members for their support, and encourage others to become part of the UDIA Victoria Community.



From UDIA Victoria Geelong Committee Chair, Nick Clements

As a local practitioner with more than a decade working in the region, it is a privilege to lead UDIA Victoria's Geelong Committee.

The committee brings a wealth of expertise, from across the industry, and we are passionate and optimistic about Geelong's future. We are deeply committed to ensuring the region's enduring livability, productivity and prosperity.



01

Long-term supply of developable land

One of the biggest challenges facing Greater Geelong as it continues to grow is an undersupply of zoned and unzoned land within the existing Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

The Victorian Government's recently released *Housing Statement* sets a bold target of building 800,000 new homes by 2034 - 80,000 homes per year for the next decade. Through the *Housing Statement*, 152,000 new homes are proposed to be built across regional Victoria. The State's major regional centres, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong are going to play a pivotal role in supporting this objective. However, without an adequate long-term supply of developable land, this will not be possible.

Importantly, current government forecasts for land supply in the region are based on lower demand than we are likely to see in the short-, medium- and long-term.

The Commonwealth Government's *HomeBuilder Grant* scheme generated greater activity in the residential development sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. This had the effect of overheating supply over a short period. The residual impacts of the stimulus measure on supply are beginning to subside, as construction is completed on thousands of projects commenced under the scheme.

We are also experiencing a short-term reduction in demand as a result of prevailing economic conditions. Since May 2022, the Reserve Bank of Australia has raised the official cash rate 13 times - the steepest rate in decades. In addition to stubbornly high inflation

and overall economic uncertainty, fewer people are entering the housing market, despite underlying demand.

As economic conditions improve, we are expecting to see a significant surge in demand which will place immediate pressure on the supply pipeline across metropolitan Melbourne and the regions. Given the long lead times associated with delivering housing, a demand surge is likely to exhaust available supply in a matter of years, without intervention.

Research by Core Projects shows the extent of the pipeline of supply in the region and demonstrates the urgent need to address the availability of developable land to meet increased demand.

The largest growth region in Greater Geelong, Armstrong Creek, has only 19 active projects underway, as at the end of July 2023. Of these projects, 7 are active, with only 100 lots remaining.

The Western Geelong Precinct currently has just 1 trading project, while the Northern Geelong Precinct consists of just 3 active projects, comprising over 500 lots.

There are 12 projects currently trading in the Surf Coast and Ballarine regions, comprised of 12 projects in 7 different townships. Of those 12 active projects, 8 have less than 100 lots remaining.



UDIA Victoria will continue to advocate for

- The City of Greater Geelong and Victorian Government to adequately plan for the future growth of the region and ensure there is a sufficient pipeline of zoned developable land to meet the growing demand for housing.
- Decision-makers to provide certainty to industry relating to the strategic planning of development land and key infrastructure, including commitments to projects and timelines for their delivery.
- Increased funding and resourcing for the State's strategic planning body, the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), to ensure they are able to adequately plan for the long-term growth of Geelong.
- A balanced approach to issues of cultural heritage, biodiversity, ecology, conservation, and planning for the sustained growth of Geelong. Including due consideration of the important role Geelong's Northern and Western Growth Areas will play in supporting the Government's housing objectives.

02

Strategic Planning

Planning of Victoria's second largest (and fastest growing city) is of paramount strategic significance to the State. UDIA Victoria is increasingly troubled by long delays to the city's strategic planning. The City of Greater Geelong are principally responsible for the masterplanning of the region and we are concerned that they are not suitably resourced to fulfil this responsibility. UDIA Victoria calls on the State Government to take a more active role in planning. This includes delegating responsibility of strategic planning to the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) to expedite preparation of future:

- Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) and Development Contributions Plans (DCPs) in Geelong's Northern and Western Growth Areas; and
- Urban Design Frameworks in suitable areas of established Geelong (i.e. Transport Orientated Development).



03

Statutory Planning / Engineering

Across metropolitan Melbourne and the regions, resourcing and availability of skilled labour is a growing issue. Leading to long delays and increased costs associated with planning and development delivery. Local government departments are especially under-resourced. UDIA Victoria will continue to advocate for:

- Improved resourcing within local government engineering and planning departments;
- A greater role for third-party, accredited practitioners and consultants, to minimise the impact of resourcing shortfalls and ensure commercial, industrial and residential development in Geelong can keep pace with population and jobs growth.
- Streamlining standards, practices and processes, and greater engagement between industry proponents and approval authorities. Existing procedures are leading to poorer outcomes for the state, local government, industry and the community. Greater Geelong's growth needs to be nurtured. Otherwise, its attractiveness as a place to live, work, study and invest will be diminished.

04

Integrated Transport and Land Use Planning Strategy

The Geelong Settlement Strategy (2020) identifies an aspirational target of 50 per cent of trips within the municipality occurring by active and public transport. While strategic land use planning has continued, transport planning and investment has not kept pace.

The Geelong Growth Area Transport Infrastructure Strategy (GGATIS), commenced in August 2019. The GGATIS was to be developed and implemented alongside the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Framework Plan (2020).

A draft of the GGATIS was due to be released in November 2021. This has yet to occur, despite the City of Greater Geelong progressing the preparation of PSP across the Northern and Western Growth

Areas. As of November 2023, The City of Greater Geelong has not proceeded with the finalisation or implementation of the GGATIS.

The current approach to local and regional transport planning relies on a bottom-up approach, with local government required to identify need, coordinate and fund relevant projects. This has meant relatively limited involvement from the State Government.

This approach has proven unsuccessful and has not provided sufficient guidance or certainty for the community and industry regarding long-term commitments to regional planning and infrastructure.

UDIA Victoria will continue to advocate for

- The preparation of a municipal-wide Integrated Transport Strategy that will guide short, medium and long-term projects.
- Advocate for greater State Government involvement and leadership towards the creation of an integrated transport planning for the region with a particular focus on the bus network and connections, the frequency of bus services, robust planning and a trial of 'bus-on-demand'.
- Increased active transport initiatives, including delivery of the already planned and funded active transport links (such and cycling lanes) throughout the Geelong region.
- Ongoing commitment from all levels of government to delivering critical infrastructure projects necessary for Greater Geelong's continued growth, such as improved rail connections, an Avalon station to connect Avalon Airport, Avalon Employment Precinct and the Northern Growth Area.
- Completion of planning for initiatives that have been commenced, including the Armstrong Creek and North Torquay transit corridor and the extension of Baanip Boulevard.
- Greater funding from State and Commonwealth Government for the provision of strategic infrastructure that will deliver greater connectivity, liveability and productivity outcomes for the region.

05

Integrated Servicing Strategy

The City of Greater Geelong is in urgent need of a municipal-wide Integrated Servicing Strategy (ISS). The delivery of critical service infrastructure like drainage, sewers, water and power through Geelong’s established suburbs and growth corridors has typically been rolled-out in an ad-hoc approach, with no overarching strategic guidance. With Geelong experiencing record population growth, it has never been more important to provide transparency to the community and development sector in relation to the planning and delivery of key service infrastructure.

UDIA Victoria urges decision-makers to:

- Develop an overarching strategy to guide short-, medium- and long-term projects for the region.
- Ensure the strategy provides the basis for much-needed State and Commonwealth funding to support Victoria’s biggest economic and population centre outside Melbourne.

06

Jobs & Investment Strategy

The City of Greater Geelong does not have a comprehensive, municipal-wide Jobs and Investment Strategy. Without an overarching strategy, Geelong is potentially missing significant investment opportunities and foregoing untold economic growth.

Geelong’s long-term growth is of strategic significance to the State and the nation. A business-as-usual approach will not harness the potential of the region’s unparalleled growth and risk foregoing economic and productivity benefits.

UDIA Victoria is advocating for:

- A municipal-wide Jobs and Investment Strategy (i.e. Employment Strategy) that sets out how and where localised employment opportunities will be facilitated in parallel with housing growth.



07

Longterm Settlement Boundary

Land prices are continuing to rise in Greater Geelong as a result of reduced availability.

The City of Greater Geelong began their review of the long-term boundary in August 2021, to provide clarity to the development industry and ensure the existing boundary has security of land supply until 2036.

UDIA Victoria will continue to advocate for:

- Finalisation of the review of Geelong's long-term settlement boundary.
- Findings of the review to be released, and should the findings outline a need to expand the existing boundary;
- Its expansion be planned for and actioned urgently, understanding the importance of a long-term supply of developable land.



08

Urban Design Frameworks

Urban Design Frameworks, Strategic Plans and Masterplans are fundamental to successfully unlocking the potential of key urban areas in Geelong. UDIA Victoria will continue to advocate to:

- Resolve and adopt the outstanding balance of the Pakington Street and Gordon Avenue Urban Design Framework.
- Commence the planning scheme amendment process to implement the Pakington Street and Gordon Avenue Urban Design Framework.
- Commence the planning scheme amendment process to implement the South Geelong Urban Design Framework.
- Commence the preparation of new urban design frameworks for other appropriate infill precincts.



09

Infill Housing & Planning Controls

The Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy, 2020, identifies the imbalance in Geelong's growth and seeks to deliver a minimum 50/50 split of infill and greenfield development by 2036. Approximately 20 per cent of Geelong's growth is currently being delivered in established areas – well shy of the 50 per cent target.

A more balanced approach to the provision of housing in the region will ensure Geelong remains a vibrant, attractive and affordable place to live. UDIA Victoria encourages State and Local Government to:

- Review the application of the Residential Growth Zone, General Residential Zone and Neighbourhood Residential Zone to rectify their disproportionate allocation across the municipality; and
- Ensure support for appropriate infill housing growth outside of Central Geelong and areas subject to current/future Urban Design Frameworks – including reviewing the existing increased housing diversity areas policy to broaden its application to other appropriate areas.

10

NWGGA Development Contributions

Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas (NWGGA) is regional Victoria's largest urban growth project, accommodating more than 110,000 new Geelong locals. The project is a key part of the region's continued population, employment and economic growth.

The City of Greater Geelong has outlined an ongoing 10-year process for the potential commencement of Elcho Road West, Heales Road West, and Batesford North PSPs, from commencement in 2013, through the G21 Regional Growth Plan, to present day.

As it stands, the current Development Contribution Arrangements are prohibitively expensive and are jeopardising the ability of proponents to deliver critical affordable housing supply in the area.

UDIA Victoria implores government to:

- Undertake an urgent review of the existing Development Contribution Plans for the Creamery Road and Elcho Road East precincts in Geelong's Northern and Western Growth Areas.

11

Central Geelong Development

Similar to the process underway for Market Square’s redevelopment, which is behind the successful redevelopment of a key driver of the local economy, UDIA Victoria recommends:

- The urgent preparation of masterplans for other identified Strategic Development Sites in the Central Geelong Framework Plan.
- Ensure future masterplanning prioritises stimulating important public and private investment in Central Geelong and supports the region’s ongoing growth.



12

Regional Housing Fund

The State Government’s announcement of a Regional Housing Fund is potentially a huge boost for housing in Victoria’s regions. UDIA Victoria will advocate for:

- The appropriate and timely allocation of these funds in Greater Geelong.
- Extensive government consultation with industry participants, key stakeholders and the community to ensure funding is responsibly and most effectively invested.
- The timely delivery of key infrastructure, amenities and housing in our major regional centres - not just in Melbourne. There has never been a more urgent need for investment in housing in our regions.



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UDIA Victoria's Geelong Committee is committed to working closely with all levels of government, industry and the wider community.

The priorities identified in this paper will be reviewed regularly and updated to respond to the evolving needs of the region.

For more information on the Geelong Committee, or UDIA Victoria membership, contact us at the details below.



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