ReInventing D'Jillong:
Current regeneration initiatives challenging the identity and place of Geelong

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Abstract:
Australian regional city regeneration in Australia is increasingly becoming an important topic as they attempt to position themselves mid-way between larger discourses about capital cities and peri-urban landscapes. Historically these cities, like Newcastle, Wollongong and Geelong,have been marginalised in infrastructure and planning support systems, yet subject to erratic Commonwealth and State funded initiatives that have divested major specific-purpose complexes into their cities. Such has been as a consequence of of 'decentralisation' and 'regionalisation' political platforms, but also to address employment and voting needs.

As an example, Geelong embraced contemporary industrialism, particularly automotive, and built on its port and wool export capacities. Politics, intransigence and lack of economic investment compounded the failure to create quality urban fabric and enable innovative planning. With this legacy, this regional city finds itself at the cusp of heavy industry disintegration, education and health sectorial growth, population increases aided by regional escapism, and a lethargic city centre. In attempting to redress these trends, Geelong is consciously attempting to re-image itself, regenerate key sections of its urban fabric, but also manage the regional escapism (sea change / tree change) phenomena. This paper critiques the larger context, and then uses three examples - "Vision 2" in the city centre, the Mega Port proposal, Fyansford Green and the Moolap salt marsh – as foils to reflect whether these initiatives are and can assist the facilitation of city structural change, economic renewal and enhanced urban design and place-making outcomes.

Introduction

Geelong has long been perceived as a 'poor cousin' to Melbourne, yet it offers unique design and environmental qualities and advantages. Named in 1837 by colonial Governor Richard Bourke, Geelong is located on the shores of Corio Bay within the larger Port Phillip Bay and the former offers a relatively deep-water sheltered harbour from the larger windswept Bay. 'Geelong' is a corruption of the Indigenous Wathaurong word *D'jillong* meaning 'land' or 'cliffs' associated, and is increasingly appearing as a term in Geelong-based publications.

Surveyed in 1838, three weeks after Melbourne, Geelong became the essential port for Western District wool export for the burgeoning colony of Victoria. However, due to a failure of entrepreneurship, Geelong failed to capitalise on its accessibility to the goldfields, as an immigration port and gold export port, and thereafter diversified into wool processing, rope making, paper manufacturing in the 1860s-1900. After 1900, while continuing in activities linked to wool, Geelong further diversified into industrial activities linked to cars, aluminium and infrastructure up to the 1960s, and since the 1960s more into service industries including education. Proclaimed as a City in 1910, a collection of small councils in the region were amalgamated in 1993 forming the City of Greater Geelong (CGG) which now encompasses some 200,000 residents with some 250,000 in the Geelong region overall.

Implicit in the above historical sketch are lost opportunities and a lack of innovativeness and creativity. The latter has been stifled by a dearth of funds to underpin and drive projects due to the lack of a buoyant mixed economy, and a fragmented local governance regime often thwarted by Labor party aspirations and allegiances resulting in a dis-co-ordinated voice unable to express strength of purpose as a competitor to the dominant Melbourne business and governance systems. In many ways these negative traits have saved Geelong from the onslaught of suburbia that has engulfed Melbourne, enabling slow growth. But this lethargy is changing.

Methodological Approach

This paper critiques the larger context, and then uses three examples - "Vision 2" in the city centre, the Mega Port proposal, Fyansford Green and the Moolap salt marsh – as foils to reflect whether these initiatives are and can assist the facilitation of city structural change, economic renewal and enhanced urban design and place-making outcomes. Central to the critique is the G21 Alliance and their 'pillars' offer an instrumental performance criteria to test the merit of these proposals within the context of a community-based stakeholder umbrella organisation that has received OCED (2013) praise for its demonstration of what can be achieved through genuine collaboration. The G21 region was one of 11 rural-urban economic development cases studies by the OECD's Directorate for Public Government and Territorial Development is this major research project, and was the only region studied in the southern hemisphere.
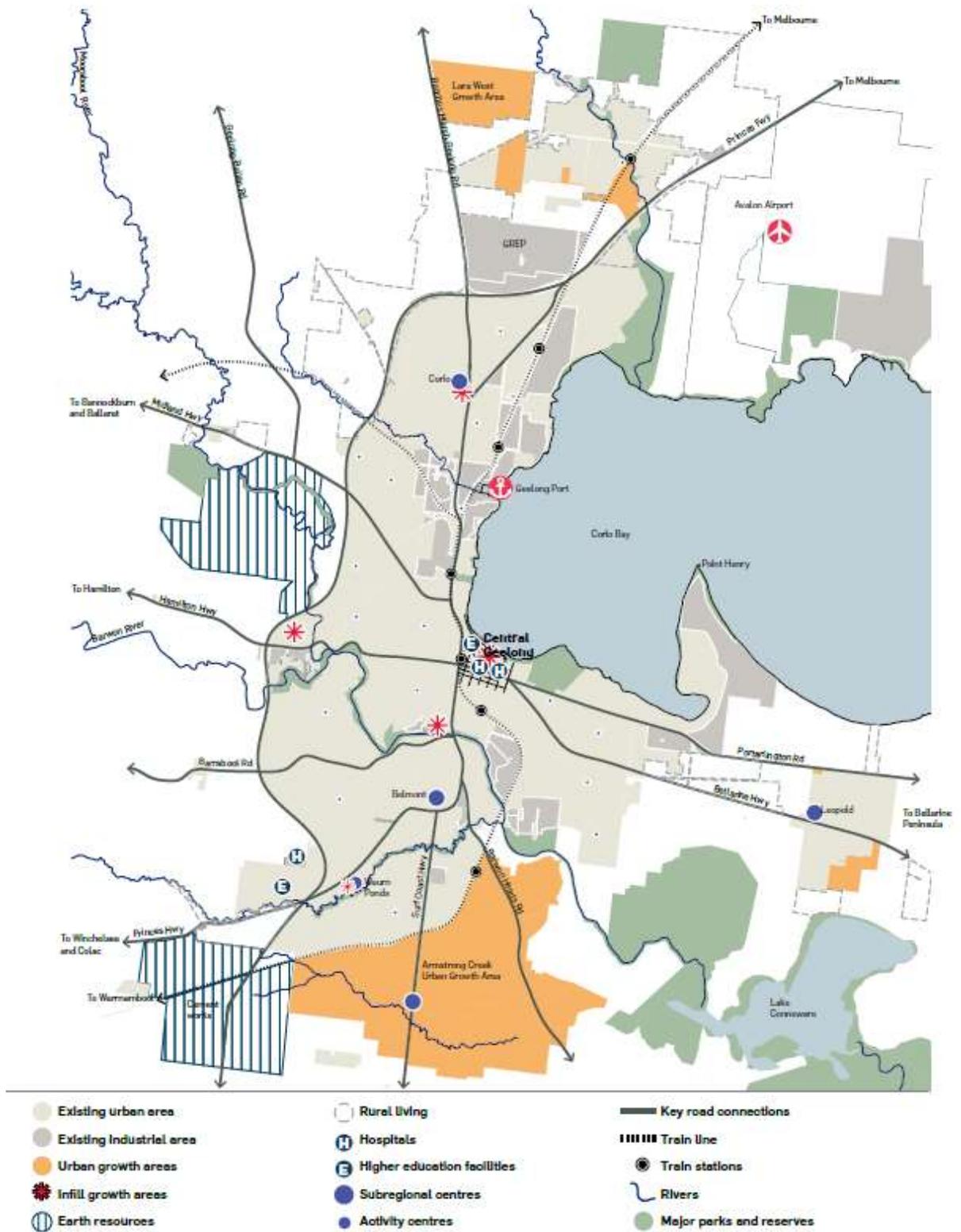
The G21's *Regional Growth Plan* (2013) proposes to manage growth and land-use pressures in the region to 2050. The Plan identifies where future residential and employment growth should take place and the infrastructure required to support it. Foundational strategic work undertaken by G21 councils mapped out a 20- to 30-year supply of zoned and strategically identifying residential and employment land that could support this growth and expansion. Key 'pillars' of the *Growth Plan* (2013) include:
- building on strategic assets and competitive advantages to support and manage growth across the region
- reducing pressures on agricultural areas and natural assets
- reinforcing the importance of Central Geelong as a vibrant and active regional city
- targeting infill and higher-density opportunities within existing urban areas
- planning for employment growth and population growth
- acknowledging the key role that Geelong and the G21 region play in relation to Melbourne, while preserving Geelong's identity as a separate settlement
- identifying the major infrastructure required to support a region of 500 000 and beyond (G21 2013).

These pillars provide an evaluation matrix in which to consider the projects discussed below.

Figure 1 summarises graphically the growth areas and strategic development areas that are forming the focus of policy in Geelong, several of which are reviewed in the body of this paper.

Figure 1
Growth areas and Structural Planning issues for Geelong
Source: G21 (2013: 11)

Legend:
- Existing urban area
- Existing industrial area
- Urban growth areas
- Infill growth areas
- Earth resources
- Rural living
- (H) Hospitals
- (E) Higher education facilities
- Subregional centres
- Activity centres
- Key road connections
- Train line
- Train stations
- Rivers
- Major parks and reserves

Planning and Governance

Historically, the management of urban growth in the Geelong region has involved a regional approach in different forms and aspirations. This has resulted in disjointed experiments with regional planning in an unsustained manner.

Figure 2
The G21 region comprises 5 municipalities. Source: CGG 2013: 2

The City is Victoria's largest municipality with a population of 216,330 (ABS Census 2009) with a regional population of 285,817, sustaining a 1.3% growth rate. Growth rate patterns and the employment profile information are provided in the following Tables.

Table 1
Population Growth 2011-2026

Local Government Area	Population 2009	Population 2011	Planned Additional Population	Total	Area (km²)	Population Density
City of Greater Geelong (CGG)	216,330	215,151	168,531	388,599	1,245	1.58
Surf Coast (S)	25,458	26,493	22,443	48,616	1,553	0.13
Queenscliffe (B)	3,318	3,045	0	3,306	9	3.82
Golden Plains (S)	18,173	18,917	14,603	33,228	2,704	0.06
Colac Otway (S)	21,817	20,578	5,377	27,474	3,433	0.06
Total (Barwon Regional)	**285,817**	**284,193**	**210,954**	**355,287**	**8,944**	**32.45**
Urban Areas		**223,382**				**178**
Rural Areas		**66,895**				**8.7**
Victoria	**5,443,228**					

Sources: OECD (2012), "Rurban background report", unpublished; G21 Geelong Region Alliance (2012) *G21 Region Economic Development Strategy*, ACS Group, www.g21.com.au/sites/default/files/dmdocuments/G21%20Economic%20Development%20Strat egy%20v1.0.pdf; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012), "Reflecting a nation: Stories from the 2011 Census", Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/2071.0Main%20Features12012– 2013?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=2071.0&issue=2012–2013&num=&view= City of Greater Geelong (2009), *Economic Indicators Geelong: Open for Business*, p. 2; G21 (2013), *G21 Regional Growth Plan.* These figures will be reviewed as additional information becomes available, including UDP 2011 data. Only settlements with planned growth are shown. Planned growth capacity in Structure Plans is generally intended to be taken up over a 20 year+ timeframe.

Table 2

Major Industry Sectors (Barwon Region) 2009

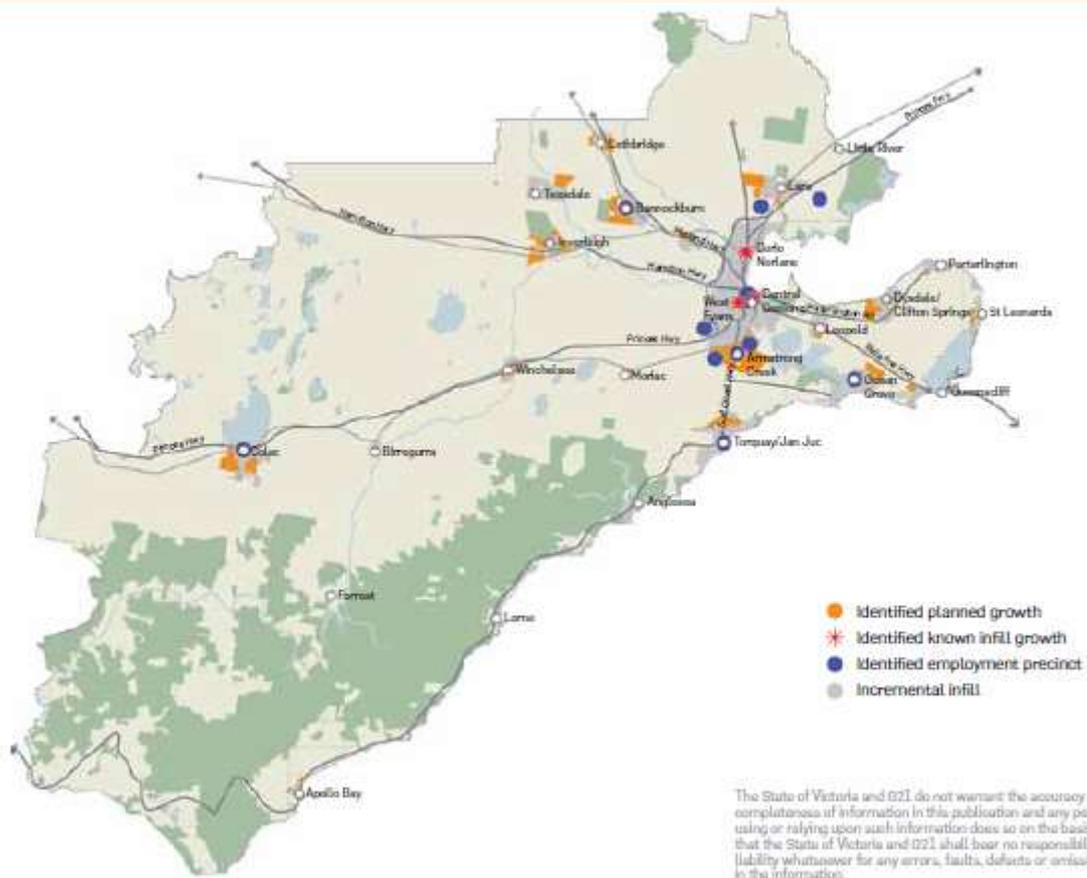| Industry	No. Of Employees June 2009	
Manufacturing	15,505	
Retail Trade	14,887	
Health Care & Social Services	13,228	
Construction	10,249	
Education & Training	9,690	
Accommodation & Food Services	7,562	
Public Administration & Safety	6,363	

Source: City of Greater Geelong (2009), *Economic Indicators Geelong: Open for Business*, p. 3.

Table 3
Major Employers (Barwon Region) 2009-2012

Major Employers	Employees (Full Time Equivalent) June 2009	Employees (Full Time Equivalent) June 2012
Barwon Health	3,498	3,602
Department of Education	3,012	2,398
Deakin University (Waurn Ponds & Waterfront)	1,486	1,596
City of Greater Geelong	1,403	1,446
Avalon Airport	1,275	1,280
Ford Motor Company of Australia Ltd	1,237	1,251
Woolworths	1,012	1,213
Target (Head Office & Retail Operations)	960	946
Catholic Education System	906	927
Karingal Inc	841	693
Transport Accident Commission (TAC)	715	752
Alcoa World Alumina Australia Ltd	668	610
Gordon Institute of TAFE	643	580

Source: City of Greater Geelong (2009), *Economic Indicators Geelong: Open for Business*, p. 3; G21 (2013), http://www.g21.com.au/population-forecasting

Figure 2
Geelong Region Identified Growth Areas. Source: G21 (2013: 25)

The State of Victoria and G21 do not warrant the accuracy or completeness of information in this publication and any person using or relying upon such information does so on the basis that the State of Victoria and G21 shall bear no responsibility or liability whatsoever for any errors, faults, defects or omissions in this information.

Fyansford Green

Fyansford Green Edge is a master plan project that has recently been approved for implementation by the CGG. The essential vision, as prepared by Tract Consultants, is to create a new greenfields community or suburb over 115 hectares with the existing Fyansford hamlet as its "town heart". The existing hamlet consists of a handful of houses, a hotel, reception centre, a small area of industrial uses, and major open space surrounding the Barwon and Moorabool Rivers. The masterplan seeks to address the deficiencies and great potential of the Moorabool River riverine open space area, and to propose measures which enliven the surrounding precinct together with inserting a new residential community.

Fyansford is located to the immediate west of Geelong within the Moorabool River riverine corridor, at the foot of the west Geelong / Manifold Heights escarpment that edges the eastern flank of the site. On the western flanks is the Geelong Ring Road that extends northwards and southwards connecting spreading Lara and Werribee and Melbourne CBD to the Great Ocean Road region. The Moorabool River corridor dissects the greenfield land and presents a ready-made landscape and recreational feature that could be a great attraction for new residents.

The masterplan and vision laid out a set of guiding principles to inform and direct the new suburb, and include:

- **A unique and viable town:** A highly accessible people-oriented place which contributes significantly to the life and culture of the Fyansford town.
- **Design Excellence:** A visionary plan where excellence is achieved through process and in the programming of the space.
- **Accessibility:** Prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. Significantly enhance the pedestrian environment to create a safe and enticing place.
- **Image and Identity:** A distinctive aboriginal centre which expresses a unique and viable town.
- **Pedestrian Linkage:** Active edges and strong pedestrian connections beyond its boundaries to viable adjacent precincts.

- **Bold, Water-Wise planting:** More an urban park than a plaza, widely known for its location and river.
- **Conservation and Sustainability:** An urban form which demonstrably shows the new sample of environmental sustainability.
- **Events, Activities & Amenity:** A highly used space which houses a unique suite of programmed activities and attractions

The masterplan strategy has divided the site into four precincts, each with their own distinctive landscape and historical features, and a range of opportunities and constraints for development. This includes the Residential Lower Precinct, Town Centre Precinct, Residential Upper Precinct and the Quarry Precinct. The master design is expressed in Figure 3 below draped over the Fyansford landscape looking south, with the Geelong Ring Road on the right side.

In the context of the G21 pillars, it does not building on strategic assets and competitive advantages but does reduce pressure upon peripheral agricultural areas and natural assets being subsumed by urbanisation by consolidating urbanisation and reinventing a brownfield site thus achieving the infill within existing urban areas.

Figure 3
The Fyansford Green development proposal by Tract as approved.

Moolap Salt Marsh
To the immediate east of the Geelong city centre, and its associated Eastern Park and Botanic Garden, lies the Moolap salt marshes comprising some 460ha. Long owned and occupied by the Cheetham Salt Company, a subsidiary of the Ridley Corporation, it is a tract of land dissected into a series of salt water and salt harvesting ponds to obtain salt, the land has largely ceased salt production, and its future is being considered. Part of the overall land is owned by Ridley and part remains Crown Land (Begg 2012: 1, 4).

Figure 4
**Google image of the Moolap salt pans with Eastern Park to the left and Point Henry
alumina smelter complex to the top right.**
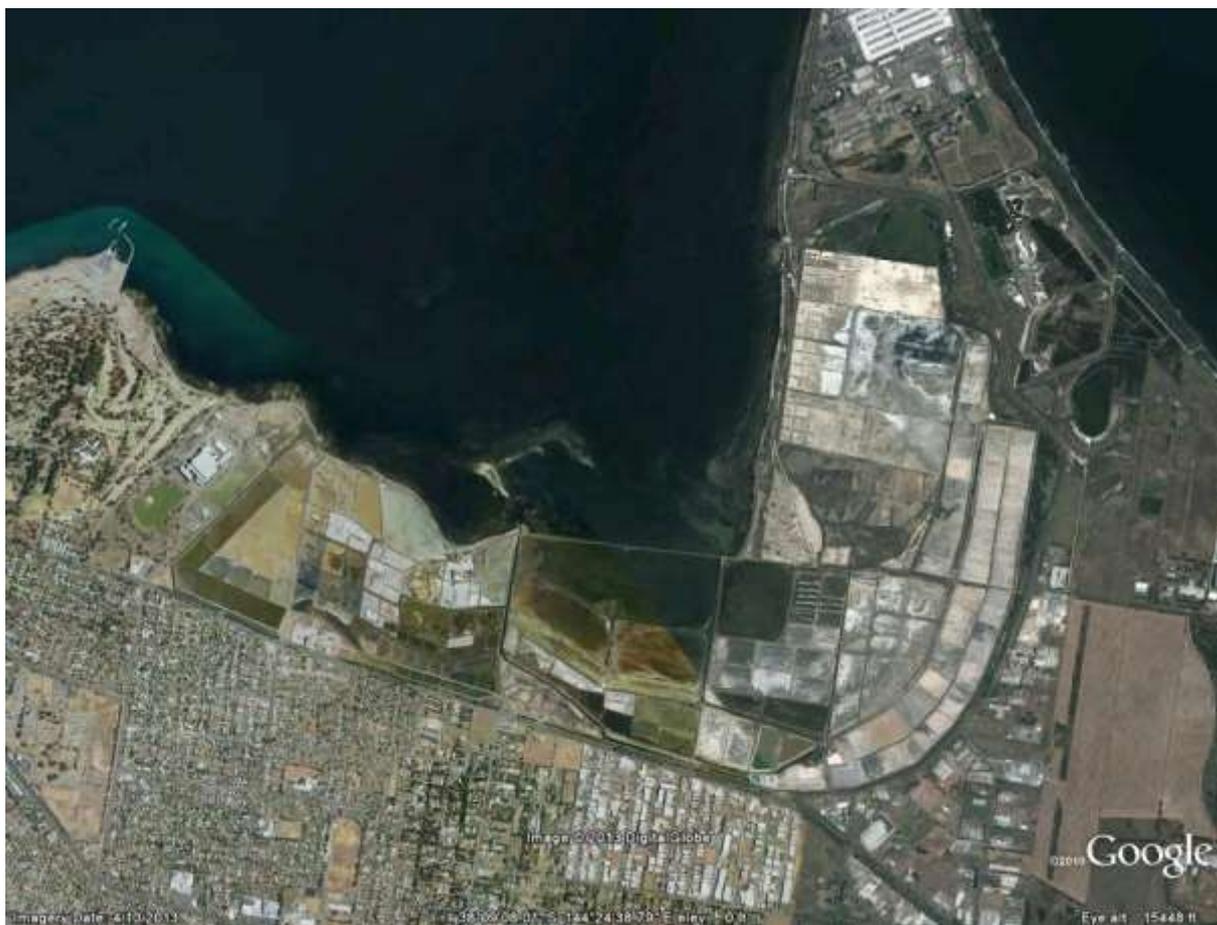
A key consideration, by the City of Greater Geelong, is the capacity of this land to sustain residential development due to its close proximity to the city centre of Geelong and the associated recreation facilities. The land consists of extensive marine salt marshes, including some patches of mangroves, but largely a landscape completely transformed to enable salt harvesting.

The land is some 3.5km in length, stretching east-west from the Park to the flanks of Point Henry and its associated alumina smelter complex, which Alcoa anticipates will continue to operate until at least mid-2014. The future of the smelter in Geelong, Victoria, has been under review since February 2013 because of continuing difficult economic conditions for the aluminium smelting industry in Australia. The Point Henry operations input over $300 million a year into the Australian economy, including over $100 million into the Geelong regional economy through wages, salaries and the purchase of goods and services.

To date, the Ridley Corporation has entered into discussions with the City of Greater Geelong council, and both parties are pursuing environmental investigations as to the feasibility of the proposal. So, while nothing has been confirmed or publicly displayed, the spectre of the proposal has harvested initial public debate and interest.

Unfortunately the design exemplar of Sanctuary Lakes has raised its spectre in this debate, and the Geelong Environment Council Inc has vehemently protested the very proposition of losing this wildlife refuge. The Sanctuary Lakes are characterised by the typical canal-development strategy and the complete erasure of any original ecological system. The Council claims, firstly, that the proposal is inappropriate and environmentally unsustainable by Government, because the potential will be lost for both the Moolap and Avalon sites to become integral components of a future Port Phillip and Bellarine Biosphere Reserve, linking these regional Ramsar listed

areas. Secondly, that this is one of the region's remaining wetlands providing habitat for the thousands of migratory waders which fly into this area in summer from the Arctic and Siberia.

In terms of the G21 pillars, this proposal fails to building on strategic assets and places considerable pressure upon its natural assets to the detriment of its competitive advantage.

Vision 2
Vision 2 tackles a future for Geelong, and in particular its city centre. The project involves a suite of community, government, and business stakeholders in Geelong, and is being led by the City of Greater Geelong, the Committee for Geelong and Deakin University. In essence the project seeks to reinvent and drive a major renovation and regeneration of Geelong city centre.


Vision 2 seeks to:
- capitalizie on a global economy
- enable the transition to a knowledge based economy - using education and health sectors as key catalysts
- create a sustainable future - an ecologically sensitive urban environment
- create a distinctive place - building on Geelong's community spirit and amazing physical assets

It consists of several elements - partnership working, project governance, workshops, scenario creation, community engagement and a transparent flow of this information. The process included two workshops hosted by Deakin University during 2012, and a series of community engagement events, such as People-map which was held at the Geelong Riverfest in October 2012. Participants to the workshops were asked to debate the following:
- What can happen to central Geelong, in a physical and non-physical sense, to make it a truly great city?
- What are the 3 main opportunities that catch your eye about Geelong?
- What aspirations can be applied to central Geelong for the future?
- How could this be facilitated?
- How would this impact on people's experience of the city?

Figure 5
Vision 2 Consultation and Engagement Process. Source: *Central Geelong Vision2*
(2013: 16).
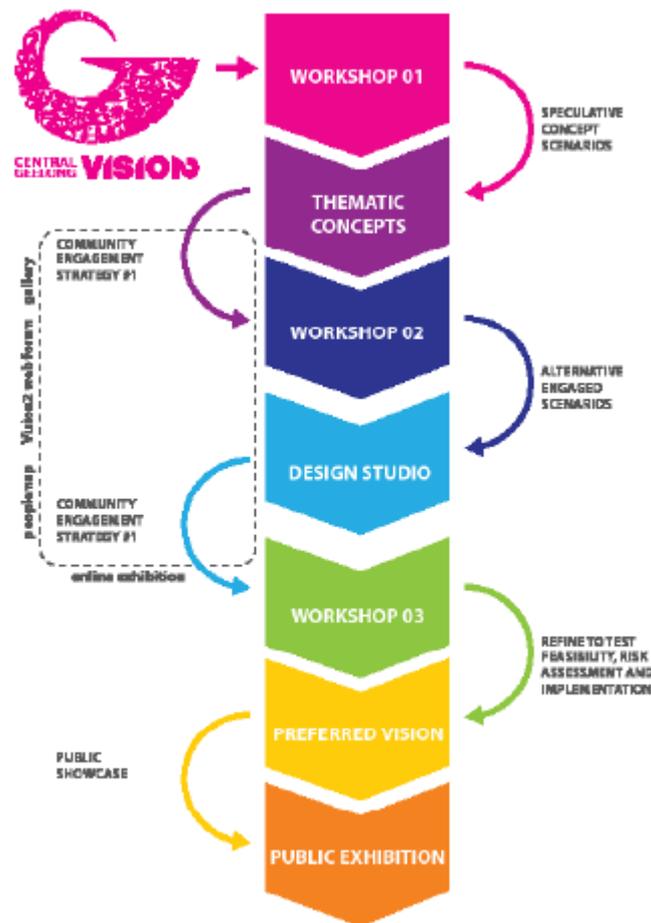
Central within the community consultation process (People map and via the Vision 2 web forum), and workshops 1 and 2, was the community and stakeholder identification of positive and negative aspects of Geelong. This inquiry resulted in the identification of the following key issues, and the synthesis diagram in Figure 6 below:

- **High Vacancy Rates - Poor Quality of Commercial Rental Offer:** high vacancy rates characterised by 12% retail vacancy and 18% office vacancy and of the 46,000sqm of office space 81% is classified as below B Grade Office Space.
- **Poor Diversity of Offer:** market deficiencies, coupled with the lack of rental diversity within the central area fails to attract new businesses.
- **Pedestrian Experience:** the lack of a clear hierarchy between streets in central Geelong leads to poor legibility and confusing wayfinding.
- **Poor Sense Of Arrival**: the sense of arrival in Geelong, whether by car, train or foot, is confusing and an illegible experience.
- **Surrounding Town Centres:** suburban centres are drawing people and their expenditure away from the Geelong city centre due to their attractiveness of offer, convenience and proximity.
- **Sustainable Living:** the health of city's population is related to the lifestyles + habits of its occupants, currently Geelong has higher than average obesity levels.
- **Smart Industry As An Employment Typology:** Geelong's movement away from manufacturing towards education and health is indicated by a steady growth in the employment of professionals and administrative workers.
- **Internal Retail Environments Creating Empty Streets:** "Big box" retail shops with an internalised environment and a lack of public address is creating a privatised public domain which functions only during opening hours. This greatly damages the vibrancy of city street life.

The wider context of the Vision 2 project is what is happening "up the road" in Melbourne as planning decisions by Melbourne and its planners and politicians do directly impact upon Geelong and its region. 'Melbourne, let's talk about the future', was a discussion paper released by the state Minister for Planning to prompt debate around the challenges and ideas

for Melbourne's future. The paper proposes nine principles on how to achieve a sustainable future - economically, environmentally and socially - for Melbourne as it expands to accommodate an increasing and diversifying population. Geelong has been identified in this paper as a strategic regional city, and an enabler for some of the state's wider objectives. Within the body of this paper, 3 key ideas are particularly relevant in the thinking for Vision 2:

- Idea 2: Building national employment and innovation clusters
- Idea 6: A state of cities
- Idea 10: Improving the environmental performance of suburbs

Figure 6
Vision 2 future making translation
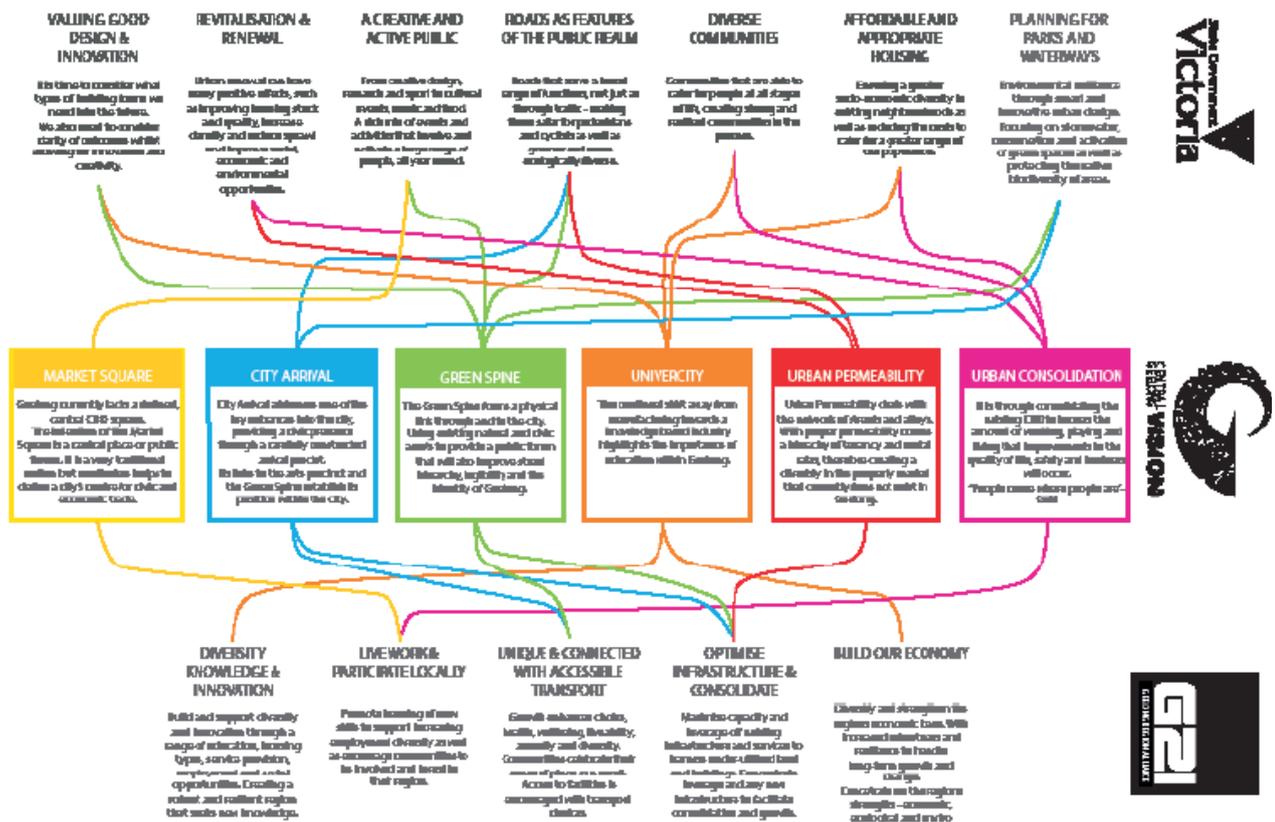
In terms of the G21 pillars, Vision 2 seeks to building on strategic assets by reinforcing the importance of Central Geelong as a vibrant and active regional city, and targeting infill and higher-density opportunities within existing urban areas. While seeking to engage in planning for employment growth and population growth it has not offered a cohesive economic-informed or incentive-driven strategy to address these aspirations.

Geelong Mega Port
While Geelong is located on the shores of Corio Bay which offers a relatively deep-water sheltered harbour from the larger windswept Port Philip Bay, it is hampered by its 12.3m shallow depth of channel.

The existing port comprises berths, piers; and wharves, and cargo handling facilities, on the back up land behind the berths, in addition to specialised berths are provided to handle the different cargo types traded through the port. The commercial shipping berths include: the Lascelles Wharf (3 berths; break and dry bulk); the Corio Quay North and South (4 berths; break and dry bulk); the GrainCorp Grain Pier (1 berth; dry bulk); Refinery Pier (4 berths; liquid bulk); and the Point Henry Pier (1 berth; dry bulk). The Geelong Port Grain Pier (2 berths) is used as the tug base (3 tugs and 2 line launches), and as a layup berth for ship repairs. Adjacent Point Wilson Explosives Pier (2 berths; break bulk) is used in association with the adjoining munitions depot and is owned by the Commonwealth Department of Defence. Cunningham Pier, located immediately adjacent to Geelong city centre, is used primarily for tourist related purposes and occasionally accommodates berthing of cruise liners and naval

vessels. Inbound and out bound import and export patterns of the existing Coro Bay complex are expressed in Figure 7.

Figure 7
Source: Port of Geelong: Port Land Use Strategy
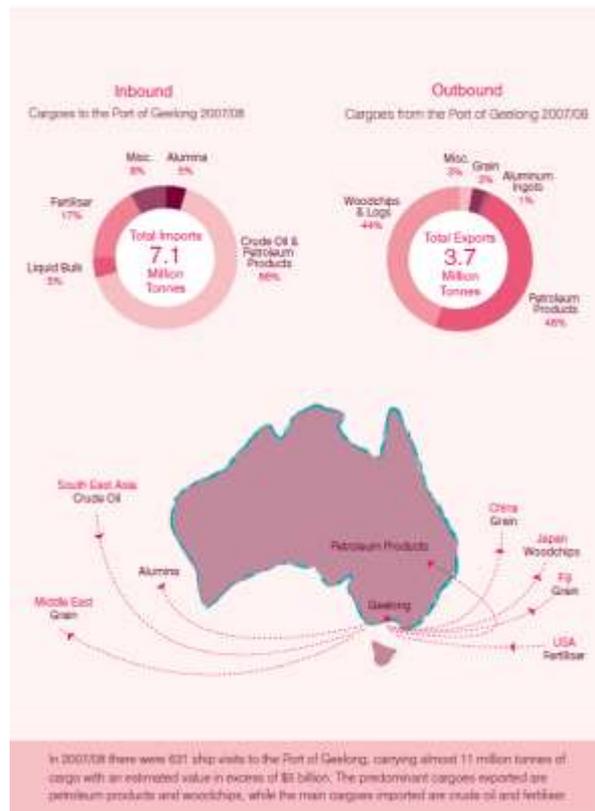
The planning approach applied, embodied in the *Port of Geelong: Land Use Strategy* (2009), drew on the *Geelong Port Structure Plan* (CGG 2007), and involved a two tier strategic planning approach. Tier one dealt with the port as a whole and identified five planning principles and seven strategic directions to guide the future development of the port. These strategic directions included:

1. Provide adequate port infrastructure to meet forecast trade growth until at least 2020;
2. Ensure that an adequate supply of appropriately located and zoned land is available to support the growth of the port and port-related industries;
3. Provide effective transport linkages within the port area and between the port area and the broader freight transport network to service the port's trade needs, with minimum adverse amenity impact on surrounding communities;
4. Define and implement effective land use buffers around the port to protect both the economic future of the port and existing sensitive land uses nearby;
5. Adopt effective safety, security and environmental management practices so that the port and port related activity does not unreasonably impact on the surrounding areas;
6. Enhance the social capital of the port by identifying and utilising opportunities to contribute to community resources and values; and
7. Consider and advocate changes to planning provisions that provide more certainty and transparency for port, industry, and the community in relation to port and port-related development (Victoria 2009, *Port of Geelong Land Use Strategy Report*, iv, 6).

Each strategic direction included a set of strategies and actions directed towards the implementation of the above directions. In particular, Tier Two includes Precinct Plans for specific parts of the 'Port area of interest':
• Liquid Bulk Precinct (Oyster Cove);
• Bulk and Break Bulk Precinct (Lascelles Wharf, North Shore and Corio Quay);
• Dry Bulk Precinct (Grain Piers); and

• Point Henry Precinct (Victoria 2009, *Port of Geelong Land Use Strategy Report*, iv).

In terms of the G21 pillars, the mega port strategy successfully builds on maritime and transportation strategic assets and competitive advantages to support growth across the region, but also identifies and supports the renovation of a key piece of major infrastructure required to support a region of 500 000 and beyond (G21 2013) and thus enable and facilitate employment growth and population growth.

Conclusion
A core vehicle hindering growth and co-ordinated management is governance. Chair of the Committee for Geelong, Michael Betts, has recently concluded that "ambitious plans and projects to take Geelong into the future ... lack ... a delivery mechanism" (Betts 2011: 24). Or to express it another way, it would be beneficial for Geelong to introduce single and double loop learning -- the concept of act/react versus act/react/learn and develop – rather than conventional governance traditions. This conclusion is drawn because Geelong appears to be in a constant state of 'fire-fighting' rather than learning and developing.

An integral vehicle in realising these conclusions is the G21 Alliance. The G21 rural-urban partnership is making a difference by improving public governance and institutional capital, within the region and even beyond it. G21 has enabled regional players in various policy arenas to overcome strong fragmentation incentives. G21 has been able to find a niche, an efficient way to capture funds from the state and federal government and use its position to forge a strong information-sharing process adept at keeping the political class engaged. G21 helps higher-scale authorities "read" localised investment priorities and local political landscapes (Stillwell & Troy, 2000). The partnership has been able to harmonise urban with rural needs and has achieved strong information-gathering abilities. Trust between rural and urban actors in the partnership is strong generates considerable social capital and opportunities for building stronger relationships among participants that carries over into daily work.

Despite these strengths, G21 still juggles 3 main risks, any one of which can undermine its durable structure, utility and operations. The first is the viability of the partnership and its continued acceptance by its partners as a key entity; a so-called "one-stop shop" for any conversation about the region. A second factor involves working to ensure that all partners and interests are satisfied and that an alternative forum does not displace G21 in relevance and role. The 600-member Chamber of Commerce and the Committee for Geelong, a 120-member think tank advocacy group involving CEOs in the business sector, that presently co-operate with G21 as partners but equally can deflect energy and co-ordinated outcomes. The final factor is the risk of losing a funding partner, particularly the City of Greater Geelong. While the internal G21 board assumes equity through "one voice, one vote", the majority of the present technical support for G21 is provided by the administrative staff of the five councils with the City of Greater Geelong providing most of this technical support as well as the funding because to its size and resources; a decision that it should leave would have far-reaching consequences upon the G21.

G21's pillars represent a community-stakeholder derived and owned strategic plan. As this critique has demonstrated various project ably achieve the stated pillars either in full or part. But, clearly private agendas run counter to these pillars, as demonstrated by the Moolap Salt Marsh project, and the fact that the City of Geelong is willing to consider and evaluate a project that conflicts with the pillars is a demonstrated of the governance fragility of G21.

Regeneration and steps forward need an integrated and innovative approach, and not just political governance co-ordination and commitment, if Geelong is attract the 'innovation' tag part of the Vision 2 project has sought to initiate.

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