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24th July 2017

Mr Bill Pender
Inquiry Secretary
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Pender,

**RE: INQUIRY INTO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES**

As CEO of G21 - Geelong Region Alliance, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to make a submission to your inquiry into the Australian Government's role in the development of cities.

Background re G21 - Geelong Region Alliance

G21 - Geelong Region Alliance is an alliance of local government, business, industry and community organisations in the Geelong region.

The G21 - Geelong Region Alliance was established in 2002 by five Geelong region municipalities (Geelong, Queenscliff, Surf Coast, Golden Plains and Colac Otway) with the support of the Victorian Government and a wide range of local organisations.

We have over 190 members spanning all three levels of government, non-government organisations, businesses and community groups.

Under the G21 - Geelong Region Alliance we have brought together our region's leaders to develop a high level strategic regional plan, *The Geelong Region Plan: a sustainable growth strategy*, to determine regional priority projects and also advocate for their implementation.

We represent the voice of the G21 region and have a formal role as the Regional Strategic Planning Committee in advising the State and Federal Governments on regional issues and priorities.

The G21 region is one of the two sub-regions under the Barwon South West RDA Committee and from July 2016, the Barwon Region Partnership replaced the former BSW RMF.

The G21 Region

The G21 region covers some 9,000 sq. km and has approximately 309,000 residents.

We are home to Victoria's second city, Geelong, and its suburbs, coastal and rural townships, productive farmland and major tourism attractions including the Great Ocean Road and the Great Otway National Park.

The G21 region also has considerable infrastructure assets including the Port of Geelong, Avalon Airport, road and rail linkages, sporting and cultural facilities.

Our population is increasing at a steady rate: 2% per annum.

Our economy is diverse and in constant transition.

Whilst unemployment in our region is currently consistent with state and national averages, we also have areas of significant entrenched socio economic disadvantage which consistently rate highly on the SEIFA and AEDC indices.

Historically manufacturing has played a major role in the G21 region economy with large employers previously being Ford, Shell, Alcoa, and Qantas.

The closure of Alcoa and the cessation of the maintenance of the Qantas fleet at Avalon has impacted heavily on our workforce. Further, Ford ceased production in October last year.

However, we have seen considerable growth in other employment sectors over the last twenty years especially health, education, public administration, agriculture, retail, construction, agribusiness and hospitality.

Deakin University and Barwon Health are now our major regional employers.

We also have major public administration employers located here including the TAC, NDIA and WorkSafe is relocating to Geelong.

The region is also home to the national headquarters of major retail outlets - Cotton On, Target, Quiksilver and Rip Curl.

Melbourne however remains an important place of employment for some 20,000 G21 region residents.

An important issue for our region is the broadband capacity which is poor in many areas and seriously hinders business development and educational opportunities.

We are also unfortunately considered to be one of the most bushfire prone areas in the world which poses significant recovery infrastructure problems.

Standing Committee's Inquiry

G21 - Geelong Region Alliance appreciates the opportunity to respond to the inquiry focusing on the role of the Australian Government in the development of cities.

Geelong, as Victoria's second city, is the capital city of the G21 region and is the main driver of our region's economy.

It is critically important that the Australian Government joins with other levels of government to provide the policy settings and infrastructure funding to assist with the development of cities.

G21 has particularly welcomed the Australian Government's City Deal policy under the Smart Cities Plan.

The establishment of a City Deal for Geelong and the Great Ocean Road focusing on the visitor economy is a key priority for G21.

The contribution of the Australian Government to the City Deal process, working with the State and local governments has the potential to leverage substantial private sector investment to Geelong and our region.

We also strongly support the policy of relocation of federal government departments and agencies to regional cities.

Our region has benefitted enormously from the establishment of the National Disability Insurance Agency in Geelong along with the ABS Centre for Excellence.

We are very pleased to also acknowledge the federal government's recent announcement seeking bids to further decentralise government administration and strongly support the City of Greater Geelong's bid to have Comcare relocate from Canberra to Geelong.

We also see an opportunity for the Australian Government to assist with the development of cities through the allocation of defence contracts to cities demonstrating the workforce capacity to fulfil them.

Our region is renowned for its research and development capability plus our highly skilled manufacturing workforce and is therefore well placed to secure defence contracts given the opportunity.

G21 Region Planning

We know that our region's population is predicted to rise to at least 500,000 by 2050 and as a result G21 has adopted a precautionary approach to plan for the future accommodation of another 200,000 people in our region.

We have very much integrated land use and infrastructure planning for our region.

I am very pleased to be able to provide you with a range of strategic G21 documents that provide the evidence for our submission and will assist with the development of the Smart Cities Plan.

The documents are:

- *The Geelong Region Plan: a sustainable growth strategy* - launched by Premier John Brumby in 2007 following two years of consultation with the G21 region community.
<http://www.g21.com.au/geelong-region-plan>

The Plan details five key directions for our region:

- Protect and enhance our environment
- Create sustainable settlements
- Strengthen our communities
- Refocus our economy
- Make it happen

It is a high level strategic plan that looks to 2050 addressing the challenges the G21 region will face in the areas of environment, settlement, land use, community strength, economy and the way we make things happen.

- *The G21 Region Community Profile* - launched in December 2014
<http://www.g21.com.au/g21-region-profile>

This is a complete list of the latest data sets for the G21 region updating those used in *The Geelong Region Plan: a sustainable growth strategy*.

- *The G21 Regional Growth Plan* - incorporated into the State Planning Provisions Framework in April 2014.

http://www.g21.com.au/sites/default/files/resources/g21_regional_growth_plan_-_april_2013_-_low_res_o.pdf

The G21 region's population is expected to grow by another 200,000 people by 2050. This plan identifies where the 500,000 projected G21 regional population will live, work and what infrastructure is needed to support a population of that size. It is one of eight regional growth plans across Victoria.

- *The G21 RGP Implementation Plan* - unanimously approved by all five G21 Councils in November 2013.

http://www.g21.com.au/sites/default/files/resources/g21-rgp-ip_implementation_plan_16_dec_13.pdf

This plan identifies the infrastructure projects needed to support a population of 500,000 across the region. These sequenced projects will assist with the diversification of our economy and provide significant opportunities for employment generation.

- *The G21 Economic Development Strategy* - unanimously approved by all five G21 Councils in July 2014.

http://www.g21.com.au/sites/default/files/resources/web_g21_economic_development_strategy.pdf

This strategy identifies key economic "game changers" for the G21 region.

- *The G21 Region Public Transport Strategy* - launched in September 2014.

http://www.g21.com.au/sites/default/files/resources/final_g21_transport_a4_issued_29_07_2014_compact_web_version.pdf

Following eighteen months of consultation with the communities of the G21 region, this strategy identifies the key opportunities to invest in public transport infrastructure and improve service provision across the region.

- *The 2017 G21 Region Priority Projects* - this document lists the thirteen projects which are ready for investment in the G21 region. All projects have been endorsed by G21's five Councils and will provide significant employment opportunities for our people.

http://www.g21.com.au/sites/default/files/basic_page/170621g21priorityprojectsspreadversion21-jun-2017-1425.pdf

- *GROW - G21 Region Opportunities for Work*

<http://grow.g21.com.au/>

In conjunction with Give Where You Live, the region's major philanthropic organisation, G21 has developed a ground breaking initiative to address place based disadvantage through training and employment creation using the collective impact framework.

Give Where You Live has allocated \$2m over ten years to GROW plus we received \$300,000 from the Alcoa Foundation.

The GROW business case was launched in April 2015 and the project has recently received \$1m in funding from the state government.

Over 60 local companies have now signed the GROW compact committing to embed the principles of GROW into their procurement practices.

- *The G21 Affordable Housing Plan - Addressing Disadvantage Through Affordable Social Housing* - launched in April 2016.
http://g21hwbpillar.com.au/sites/default/files/resources/final_affordable_housing.pdf

Released in April 2016, this affordable social housing plan for the G21 region has been a collaborative effort by G21, our five councils and local social housing providers.

It explores innovative models for much needed investment in social housing in order to address the increasing demand in our region.

- *The G21 Region Health and Wellbeing Plan* - unanimously endorsed by the 5 G21 Councils in 2014.
http://www.g21.com.au/sites/default/files/resources/g21_hwb_plan_2013-2017_final.pdf

This four-year strategy seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of the residents of the G21 region by:

- Increasing Physical Activity
 - Promoting Social Inclusion
 - Building the evidence base
- G21 in partnership with Deakin University and the City of Greater Geelong, is developing an infrastructure investment prospectus for our region focusing on:
 - The Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL)
 - Agribusiness education
 - Freight and Logistics Hub
 - Recycled water for agriculture
 - Carbon Fibre manufacture

I would like to expand briefly on the G21 RGP Implementation Plan and the G21 2017 Priority Projects documents.

Both of these documents detail sequenced infrastructure investment opportunities for the G21 region which would stimulate employment.

They have been rigorously assessed across a triple bottom line framework and agreed to by our five G21 Councils.

The G21 RGP Implementation Plan

http://www.g21.com.au/sites/default/files/resources/g21-rgp-ip_implementation_plan_16_dec_13.pdf

This document gives effect to the G21 Regional Growth Plan which details where the expected 500,000 G21 region population by 2050 will live, work and what infrastructure will be needed to service a population of this size.

Around 240 infrastructure projects are identified in the Plan for investment over the next 30 - 40 years.

The projects are listed under five infrastructure themes:

- Transport
- Utilities
- Community
- Business
- Environment

Critical projects that will be catalytic in supporting the region's growth to 500,000 people and stimulate employment growth include:

- Improving transport connections to Melbourne particularly to address the congestion issue on the Westgate Bridge.
- Connection of the Geelong Ring Road to the Bellarine Peninsula.
- Geelong Ring Road and rail freight connections to the Port of Geelong and the Geelong Ring Road Employment Precinct.
- Major upgrades to the Great Ocean Road and key connecting routes to the Princes Highway.
- Geelong Port shipping channel access and berthing improvements.
- Avalon Airport precinct development.
- Establishment of Melbourne's second container facility at Bay West.

Other key projects include:

- Princes Highway duplication to Colac.
- Midland Highway duplication to Bannockburn.
- Upgrades to key transport links from Geelong to growth areas in Armstrong Creek and Torquay/Jan Juc.
- Enhancement of public transport across the G21 region.
- Potable water supply to intensive agriculture opportunities in Golden Plains Shire.
- Redevelopment of the Geelong Performing Arts Centre.
- Redevelopment of the Portarlington and Apollo Bay Harbours.

G21 Priority Projects 2017

http://www.g21.com.au/sites/default/files/basic_page/170621g21priorityprojectsspreadversion21-jun-2017-1425.pdf

The five G21 Councils prioritise investment opportunities which align with *The Geelong Region Plan* each year for government's consideration.

The level of agreement around these priorities is an enormous strength for our region and assists state and federal governments to identify their investment priorities.

The 2017 G21 Priority Projects are:

- Addressing Disadvantage
- Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area
- Avalon Airport including international terminal
- Central Geelong Revitalisation
- Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre
- Geelong Cultural Precinct including the redevelopment of GPAC and the Geelong Gallery
- Geelong Secondary Schools and Community Digital Hub
- Geelong Ring Road Connections to the Bellarine Peninsula and the Port of Geelong
- Geelong Waterfront Safe Harbour
- Great Ocean Road including increasing the visitor yield to our region
- G21 Regional Motocross facility
- Portarlington Safe Harbour
- Regional Rail Connections

Conclusion

G21 hopes that the federal government can see that our region, through G21, has worked together to proactively plan for our future by identifying infrastructure and social change projects.

The evidence for these projects are identified in submitted documents including the G21 Regional Growth Plan Implementation Plan, the 2017 G21 Priority Projects and our GROW project.

G21 strongly encourages the Standing Committee to take the time to digest these considered strategies which will provide a focus for your consideration of the role of Australian Governments in the development of cities.

Thank you very much for providing G21 with the opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry into the Australian Government's role in the development of cities.

Elaine Carbines
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER