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GG:PS

17 December 2015

Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning  
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Dear

## **PLAN MELBOURNE REFRESH PAPER**

Thank you for your letter received 11 November 2015 in reference to the public consultation and engagement period for the Plan Melbourne Refresh Discussion Paper.

Latrobe City appreciates the opportunity to provide input into Plan Melbourne Refresh.

In March and December 2013, Latrobe City provided a submission to *Plan Melbourne – Metropolitan Planning Strategy* (copy of the letter is attached).

Based on the previous submission, and the content of the current Discussion Paper, Latrobe City provides the following response:

### **Applicability to Regional Victoria**

No changes proposed directly affect Latrobe City as a regional city. However, there are certain aspects of the Plan Melbourne Refresh that are applicable to regional Victoria as a whole. It is considered these themes are relevant more broadly to regional Victoria and as such, it is recommended that *Plan Melbourne Refresh* highlights the importance of these themes at a State level.

These are:

- Climate change as a key concept to be linked throughout Plan Melbourne 2016;
- Criteria for new activity centres and to develop policy and practice notes;
- Protection of agricultural land;
- Implement the outcomes of the Extractive Industries Taskforce through the planning scheme, including Regional Growth Plans to affirm that extractive industries resources are protected to provide an economic supply of materials for construction and road industries;

- Promoting housing diversity;
- Introduce a policy statement in *Plan Melbourne 2016* supporting greyfield renewal and investigate planning scheme mechanisms to achieve coordinated and sustainable renewal of established areas;
- Introduce the Strategic Environmental Principles in *Plan Melbourne 2016* to guide implementation of environment, climate change and water initiatives;
- Better information and guidance for climate hazards and incorporate hazard management criteria into Victorian Planning Schemes; and
- Support integrated planning and building approach to strengthen Environmentally Sustainable Design and encourage green buildings.

### **Support for the Strategies Vision**

Council strongly supports the vision of *the Strategy*, in particular the State of Cities model which will result in improved social, employment and infrastructure linkages between regional and metropolitan Victoria.

Council also considers that the vision of the Strategy could be further enhanced through stronger reference to the role of Latrobe Regional City in the future growth and prosperity for Victoria. In particular, there should be further consideration of the following themes as further discussed in the attached submission:

- I. Latrobe Regional City – National Employment Cluster
- II. Latrobe Regional City – Ready for Population Growth
- III. Latrobe Regional City – Enhancing Existing Partnerships

We strongly encourage that the Victorian Government should recognise the Regional City status of Latrobe Regional City within *the Strategy*. Recognition of Latrobe Regional City's projects and capabilities within *the Strategy*, such as the proposed Gippsland Logistics Precinct and the City's status as a National Employment Cluster, will help provide the exposure required to further develop our City. This recognition at a State Government level will not only strengthen Latrobe City Council's cause to promote this great Regional City but will also strengthen Victoria's economic standing. Further discussion on this position can be found in the attached copy of the original submission from Latrobe City Council.

Latrobe City Council is looking forward to working in partnership with the Victorian Government to realise the shared vision and goals of the *Plan Melbourne – Metropolitan Planning Strategy* and *The Gippsland Regional Growth Plan*.

If you require further information please contact [planning@latrobe.vic.gov.au](mailto:planning@latrobe.vic.gov.au)  
Planning on [03 5961 2200](tel:0359612200)

Yours sincerely

**Attachment:** Latrobe City Council Submission to Plan Melbourne –  
Metropolitan Planning Strategy (December 2013)

Our Ref: 1041986  
Your Ref:  
CW:DD

5 December 2013

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Dear Sir / Madam

**LATROBE CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION TO PLAN MELBOURNE –  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING STRATEGY**

Latrobe City Council appreciates the opportunity to provide comment to Plan Melbourne – Metropolitan Planning Strategy. Please find enclosed a copy of our submission which was endorsed by Council at the 2 December 2013 Ordinary Council Meeting.

If you require further information please contact

Yours sincerely

# Latrobe City Council Submission to *Plan Melbourne – Metropolitan Planning Strategy*



December 2013

## Introduction

Latrobe City Council recognises and appreciates the integration of previous comments contained in its March 2013 submission to *Melbourne – Let's Talk about the Future*. We again appreciate the opportunity to provide comment to *Plan Melbourne – Metropolitan Planning Strategy (the Strategy)*.

Latrobe Regional City is eastern Victoria's employment hub and Gippsland's regional capital. The City is currently going through a period of population growth with projections suggesting that the growth will continue in the longer term. In response to these population projections, the Minister for Planning has recently rezoned approximately 800 ha of residential land within the four main towns of Latrobe Regional City. The directions and initiatives set out in *the Strategy* will be instrumental in ensuring that Latrobe Regional City is acknowledged as being well placed to capture and provide liveable communities for the current and forecasted growth in both the economy and population in the Metropolitan area and Latrobe Regional City.

In this context, Council strongly supports the vision of *the Strategy*, in particular the State of Cities model which will result in improved social, employment and infrastructure linkages between regional and metropolitan Victoria. We are pleased that the objectives of *the Strategy* align with those of our Council Plan 2013 – 17, including the provision of the best possible facilities, services, advocacy and leadership for Latrobe Regional City, one of Victoria's four major regional cities.

Council also considers that the vision of *the Strategy* could be further enhanced through stronger reference to the role of Latrobe Regional City in the future growth and prosperity for Victoria. The following themes in particular would benefit from further consideration as part of *the Strategy*:

- I. Latrobe Regional City – National Employment Cluster
- II. Latrobe Regional City – Ready for Population Growth
- III. Latrobe Regional City – Enhancing Existing Partnerships

### **I. Latrobe Regional City – National Employment Cluster**

*Initiative 1.5.1 of the Strategy* recognises the desire to facilitate the development of National Employment Clusters and identifies six existing/emerging clusters within the Metropolitan area. This direction is further reinforced through *Initiative 1.6.2* which aims to identify new development and investment opportunities along the planned transport network. *Map 2 of the Strategy* visually represents these complementary outcomes as an 'Integrated Economic Triangle' with an identified delivery timeframe of 2050.

Council supports the principles highlighted within these initiatives, however considers that the focus of *the Strategy* only on National Employment Clusters and associated development within the metropolitan area results in the potential for lost opportunities for

growth and economic prosperity on a state-wide basis. This is particularly the case in relation to Latrobe Regional City.

Latrobe Regional City is recognised as one of Victoria's four major regional centres, along with Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong, and is Victoria's centre for power generation and allied mining and manufacturing industries. Latrobe Regional City is also Gippsland's centre for education and training, retail, business and government services. It is the largest employment hub in Eastern Victoria and with the highest Gross Regional Product (GRP) per capita compared to other Victorian regional cities estimated at approximately \$4.5 billion, and with an annual business turnover estimated at \$10.3 billion, the City makes a significant contribution to the Victorian economy. Employment growth in Latrobe Regional City is strong, and in recent years this growth has exceeded that in other major regional cities.

In addition to Latrobe Regional City's traditional industrial base of mining and associated power generation, a number of alternative industries have emerged including manufacturing, construction, healthcare and retail. The strength of the healthcare and retail sectors reflects Latrobe Regional City's role as Eastern Victoria's regional service centre. The Health Care and Social Assistance sector employs over 3,400 people while the Retail sector provides over 3,000 jobs.

Major projects worth more than \$2 billion are underway or slated for Latrobe Regional City. This includes approximately \$3.7 billion in private investment in new manufacturing, energy generation and logistics developments including and \$112 million in public investment for key strategic projects that will enable strong economic development in the region such as the Gippsland Logistic Precinct (\$10 million funding sought with a total project cost of \$20 million) and Latrobe Regional Airport upgrade and GippsAero facility (\$31 million).

Latrobe Regional City also has a number of established partnerships and a proven track record to deliver positive outcomes for the benefit of Gippsland and Victoria. Examples of this include the work associated with the *Latrobe Valley Industry and Employment Roadmap*; *CarbonNet*; *Clean Coal Victoria (CCV)*; and the *Gippsland Centre for Sustainable Industries (GCSI)*.

The opportunity therefore exists for *the Strategy* to deliver jobs and investment on a scale that extends beyond the Metropolitan boundary. This outcome is complementary to the overall vision of *the Strategy* and all of its key themes/initiatives. In particular, continued population and economic growth of Latrobe Regional City is critical to the success of enhanced facilities at the Port of Hastings and the viability of a third airport to the South East of Melbourne.

Both *the Strategy* and *Victoria – The Freight State* identify the potential for a new rail link between Gippsland and the Port of Hastings. Rail connectivity between Gippsland and the Port of Hastings will allow for low-emission, cost-effective export of brown coal and other derivatives, and as well as other bulk and containerised products. This will provide a strong base for further economic development within the region and across Victoria,

including the development of the planned Gippsland Logistic Precinct. A number of international investors have indicated that connectivity to the Port is a key infrastructure gap which is negatively impacting on long-term investment decisions in the Gippsland region. Thus, there is a real need for the Victorian Government to work in unison with Latrobe City Council to commence planning for this future link.

We therefore recommend that Latrobe Regional City be recognised as a National Employment Cluster within *the Strategy* and that appropriate reference is provided to support this outcome throughout *the Strategy*.

## **II. Latrobe Regional City – Ready for Population Growth**

The Victorian Government has been providing ongoing support for the growth and development of Latrobe Regional City. A total of 800ha of land was recently rezoned (2011-2012) for residential growth. In addition, Council is currently undertaking strategic land use planning work (e.g. *Traralgon Growth Areas Review*) which is intended to provide a growth strategy that identifies additional areas for urban development (housing, retail, commercial and industrial). A *Housing Strategy* and *Planning Scheme Review* are currently being developed to implement the reformed residential zones, amongst other changes, which will also assist delivery of key themes and initiatives within *the Strategy*.

Latrobe City Council has developed a strong working partnership with the Growth Areas Authority (GAA), now the Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA). The GAA has provided assistance to Latrobe City Council through access to their resources and expertise to aid in the preparation of precinct structure plans for Latrobe City's growth areas. A project of note is the Lake Narracan Precinct Structure Plan, which evolved out of the *Latrobe Valley Industry and Employment Roadmap*. The Lake Narracan precinct has been identified as a priority growth area, with an area of over 600ha and affords Latrobe Regional City the capacity to offer alternative lifestyle choices which will have less crowded, lower density housing options.

Opportunity also exists for Latrobe Regional City to expand its supply of services and industries to *the Strategy's* expanding peri-urban areas of Warragul and Drouin, which would further ease the burden of population growth on the Metropolitan area.

*Initiative 6.2.2 of the Strategy* states that in reviewing regional city growth opportunities, the Victorian Government: "...will implement metropolitan type development strategies to optimise their growth potential." Latrobe City Council supports this initiative as it will provide clear policy direction for regional councils, however, Council seeks clarification of the timing and nature of assistance to prepare such a strategy, noting that a similar statement is contained within Gippsland's *draft Regional Growth Plan (GRGP)* to develop a strategy that identifies Latrobe Regional City as a 'single urban system'.

In summary, Latrobe Regional City is ready for growth and Council supports the strategic direction set out in *the Strategy*. We look forward to working further with the Victorian Government to achieve balanced population growth objectives.

### III. Implementation – Enhancing Existing Partnerships

Latrobe City Council actively builds and maintains partnerships with other municipalities, the Victorian Government, industry and community stakeholders. These partnerships ensure a higher quality outcome than what could have been achieved working individually and have been central in assisting Council to identify and facilitate projects within Latrobe Regional City that are vital to the long-term direction of the City. Examples of successful partnerships include:

- *Regional Cities Victoria (RCV):*

Working closely with the Victorian Government, the *Regional Cities Growth Framework* was released by RCV in July 2013 and is designed to support the *Plan Melbourne – Metropolitan Planning Strategy* and Victoria's *Regional Growth Plans*. The *Framework* defines the role of Victoria's regional cities within the notion of a *state of cities* and provides a reference document to which regional cities can use to assist in planning for future growth and development and help identify where to prioritise investment for services and infrastructure.

- *The Latrobe Valley Industry and Employment Roadmap:*

On 11 July 2012, the State Government released *The Latrobe Valley Industry and Employment Roadmap* which addressed the challenges facing the Latrobe Valley economy in transitioning to a Low Carbon Future. The *Roadmap* partnership consisted of a Joint Ministerial Forum which included the Minister for Regional and Rural Development and the Federal Minister for Regional Australia, a Mayoral Reference Group and the Latrobe Valley Transition Committee which included representatives from all levels of Government, and representatives from local industry, education providers and services. The *Roadmap* identified a number of long-term strategies designed to diversify the Latrobe Valley economy and position Latrobe Regional City favourably to capture a significant portion of Victoria's projected population growth.

- *The future of coal and the Gippsland Centre for Sustainable Industries:*

Latrobe Regional City is home to the world's largest single deposit of brown coal, covering an area of approximately 50 square kilometres, and is Victoria's largest natural resource asset. The City's power generation sector currently supplies close to 85% of Victoria's electricity and is a significant contributor to Victoria's economic value. As mentioned above, Latrobe City Council strongly believes it is the host of a National Employment Cluster, given the scale of the industry in the region. While it is expected that some coal-fired power generation plants will close, Victoria in the medium-term will still retain the need for the large-scale reliable power generation provided by our coal-fired plants.

All tiers of government recognise the crucial need to invest in innovation and technology into Latrobe Valley's brown coal resource if we are to ensure that Victoria's electricity

supply is maintained and the future of Latrobe Regional City is secured. This need has led to two initiatives in the region: The *CarbonNet Project (CarbonNet)*, a research project which is investigating the potential for establishing a world class, large-scale carbon capture and storage network in the Latrobe Valley and is managed by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries. The second, *Clean Coal Victoria (CCV)*, is a body established by the Victorian Government and was created to provide strategic planning on behalf of the government and develop expertise to ensure the future development of the state's coal resources.

In addition to *CarbonNet* and *CCV*, a third initiative has been created in the form of the *Gippsland Centre for Sustainable Industries (GCSI)*, based at Monash (Federation) University's Gippsland precinct in Latrobe Regional City. *GCSI* is working to equip Latrobe Regional City and the surrounding region to meet the challenges faced in the wake of Australia's transition to a low-carbon economy. The *GCSI* will allow researchers to work directly with the industry which will enhance Latrobe Regional City's coal economic strength and capability while the City transitions to a low-carbon economy. This approach depends on working in partnership with business, industry, government and community to embrace the potential of sustainability – and the research, innovation and education that underpin it – an approach Latrobe City Council strongly supports.

Together, these initiatives are helping to realise the opportunities afforded to Latrobe Regional City for continued coal-power generation based on low-emissions technology and will have every potential to enhance and capitalise on Latrobe Regional City's National Employment Cluster.

Latrobe City Council strongly supports the visions of the *Plan Melbourne – Metropolitan Planning Strategy* and already has the framework and strategies in place to work in partnership with the Victorian Government to directly respond to a number of Objectives highlighted in *the Strategy* to the benefit of Victoria, Metropolitan Melbourne and Latrobe Regional City.

Given that Latrobe Regional City is itself a polycentric city working within a single urban network, Council strongly supports the State of Cities model and believes that the success of integrated transport and land use planning between Victoria's Regional Cities and Metropolitan Melbourne will depend greatly on the integration between *the Strategy* and the *Regional Growth Plans*.

The reliance on *Regional Growth Plans* to implement *the Strategy's* regional vision must be considered. At present, there is an apparent disconnect between the policy focus of *the Strategy* and Gippsland's *draft Regional Growth Plan (GRGP)*. *The Strategy* refers often to the Regional Growth Plans for direction for Regional Victoria, however the current draft GRGP does not deliver this directly. As a result, the focus of the *draft GRGP* is not considered to be fully reflected in *the Strategy*. We refer to the development of the *Gippsland Logistics Precinct* as an example. The *Precinct* has been flagged as a major project to be developed in both the *Gippsland Regional Plan 2010* and the *draft Gippsland Integrated Land Use Plan draft Issues Paper*, both of which the *GRGP* refers to.

The density of dwellings in growth areas is noted in *the Strategy* to be at an average of 18 dwellings per hectare; however the draft *GRGP* makes no reference to this and instead refers to a lower density trend currently present in Gippsland at an average of 10 dwellings per hectare. Also, *Initiative 2.4.1* refers to the extension of the new VicSmart system to multi-unit developments. It is unclear as to whether this will be applied to regional areas also. When there is a lack of policy, regional councils are required to refer the *State Planning Policy Framework*. It is because of this we see a need to ensure that the clear direction is provided to councils within major regional cities to ensure any unintended policy outcomes are avoided.

Latrobe City Council seeks clarification from the Victorian Government regarding the regional role and functions of the newly-formed Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA): it is currently unclear if the MPA will be providing assistance to regional councils' forward planning regarding *the Strategy* and *RGP's* or whether another authority will be formed specifically for Regional Victoria. In addition, Council seeks clarification of the development of a monitoring framework to assess the implementation of *the Strategy's* Initiatives. At present it is unclear whether this monitoring framework includes regional areas as there is no scope within the current draft *GRGP* to monitor this.

Latrobe City Council looks forward to further developing its partnership with the State Government, in particular the *Metropolitan Planning Authority*, to begin working towards "...shifting the focus of planners from a regulatory mindset under the current system to a facilitative mindset that encourages development consistent with the Directions of the *Strategy* and *Regional Growth Plans*."

## Conclusion

Latrobe City Council strongly supports the visions of *the Strategy*, in particular the State of Cities model which will result in improved social, employment and infrastructure linkages between regional and metropolitan Victoria. Our submission has concentrated on three themes from the perspective of Latrobe Regional City:

- I. Latrobe Regional City – National Employment Cluster
- II. Latrobe Regional City – Ready for Population Growth
- III. Latrobe Regional City – Enhancing Existing Partnerships

We are unwavering in our position that the Victorian Government should recognise the Regional City status of Latrobe Regional City within *the Strategy*. Recognition of Latrobe Regional City's projects and capabilities within *the Strategy*, such the proposed Gippsland Logistics Precinct and the City's status as a National Employment Cluster, will help provide the exposure required to further develop our City. This recognition at a State Government level will not only strengthen Latrobe City Council's cause to promote this great Regional City but will also strengthen Victoria's economic standing.

Latrobe City Council is looking forward to working in partnership with the Victorian Government to realise the shared vision and goals of the *Plan Melbourne – Metropolitan Planning Strategy* and *Gippsland's Regional Growth Plan*.