



Media Release

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Partners united on City Deal focus

KEY stakeholders are united in belief that Geelong and Great Ocean Road investment are integral to a bid for a Federal Government 'City Deal' for our region.

Strategic planning leader G21-Geelong Region Alliance says major projects in Geelong should anchor City Deal allocations alongside critical funding for the region's premier tourist attraction and major economic driver.

"Regional stakeholders have spoken with one voice in support of the strategic focus of this deal," G21 chair Bill Mithen said.

"We have discussed our aspirations in detail with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Assistant Minister for Cities Angus Taylor, Member for Corangamite Sarah Henderson and Victorian Parliamentary Secretary Daniel Mulino and it is clear that investment in the city of Geelong and the Great Ocean Road are major objectives.

"The Great Ocean Road as one of Australia's iconic attractions is strategically central to our transitioning economy. Tourism and the visitor economy offer immense growth potential, but we need investment and infrastructure to support it.

"The structure of a City Deal would allow that alongside funding for major Geelong projects such as a new convention centre, Geelong Waterfront Safe Harbour, Simonds Stadium stage 5 or Geelong Performing Arts Centre upgrade."

Stakeholders including Ms Henderson, leaders of G21 region's five municipalities including the City of Greater Geelong, and Geelong Chamber of Commerce this week united in amplifying support for Great Ocean Road funding being a critical component to a City Deal bid.

G21 chief executive officer Elaine Carbines said a call for a bid to focus only on Geelong-based projects would not achieve the best result and did not align with the existing consensus and negotiations already well underway, including with federal and state governments.

Geelong Chamber of Commerce chief executive officer Bernadette Uzelac said its view was clear.

"The Chamber remains unequivocal in our support of a City Deal for Geelong and the Great Ocean Road and we'll continue to work with all key stakeholders to strengthen our region's economic future," Ms Uzelac said.

Premier Daniel Andrews spearheaded the City Deal push on behalf of the state in December with a letter to Mr Turnbull urging consideration of a Geelong and Great Ocean Road deal focusing on the visitor economy.

For a City Deal, governments at all levels, industry and communities are required to develop collective plans for growth and commit to actions, investment, reforms and governance needed to implement them.

The Federal Government has already signed deals for Townsville and Launceston and is working on another for Western Sydney.

Ms Henderson recently convened a first City Deal working group meeting, attended by G21, local mayors, Geelong Chamber of Commerce, Committee for Geelong, Deakin University, Regional Development Victoria, Mr Mulino and the office of Angus Taylor, Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation.

Ms Henderson said the City Deal bid had evolved from a Smart Cities funding bid launched in April 2016. A visit from Mr Taylor in March 2017 had helped mobilise the recent City Deal workshop.

“Our City Deal workshop, which I chaired, was extremely productive,” Ms Henderson said.

“There is broad consensus that a regional City Deal encompassing Geelong and the Great Ocean Road will deliver the best economic outcomes for our great city.

“While the Turnbull Government is contributing \$50 million to upgrade the Great Ocean Road, we need to continue to drive investment in one of Australia’s leading tourist attractions.

“This is also critical for Geelong’s economic development.”

Ms Carbines said hard work lay ahead ensuring that the region’s City Deal bid is ‘well-argued, realistic and economically sound’.

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