



Media Release

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G21 targets region priorities in Canberra

G21-Geelong Region Alliance board members will meet Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Opposition Leader Bill Shorten in Canberra this week (March 22-23), seeking support for priority projects including Great Ocean Road investment.

Commitment to a Geelong Convention and Exhibition centre and the redevelopment of GPAC will also be among major issues for discussion.

A 15-strong G21 delegation will include Chairman Bill Mithen and CEO Elaine Carbines and mayors and chief executives of the region's five municipalities.

They will meet the parliamentary leaders, ministers, shadow ministers and senior advisers covering portfolios including infrastructure, trade, transport, tourism, regional development, communication, social services, environment and innovation and industry.

"We take a united voice and strong purpose," Ms Carbines said.

"We greatly value this opportunity to meet with the parliamentarians and their advisers and provide far-reaching understanding of the projects which matter most to our great region."

The Canberra mission follows a unanimous G21 decision to elevate Great Ocean Road maintenance and management to priority project status.

The heritage-listed road supports a \$2.1 billion regional tourism industry but need for further infrastructure investment and future management has gained urgency during 2016, with more than 120 landslips resulting in extended road closures.

Federal and state governments have committed \$153 million to the road since 2013 but Ms Carbines said significant support for the road would be required into the future.

G21 also supports development of growth of tourism infrastructure enticing visitors to lengthen stays in the region.

“The Great Ocean Road is an international destination of renown and its importance to the regional economy is difficult to overstate, but it is in critical need of renewed maintenance and management focus,” Ms Carbines said.

“Our member municipalities and their communities benefit so strongly from the economic waves it creates. It is a central issue for us.”

Delegates will take the Great Ocean Road case straight to Mr Turnbull, alongside other issues, including a push for City Deal for Geelong, support for Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre and ongoing development of Avalon Airport.

G21 is seeking partial federal funding for a convention and exhibition centre and is seeking State Government money for base design.

The State Government and Deakin University have jointly announced a university-owned waterfront site overlooking Corio Bay as a potential site.

The Federal Government is yet to signal support for the Geelong Safe Harbour project despite more than \$10 million in total having been committed by the State Government, Royal Geelong Yacht Club, Tourism Victoria and the City of Greater Geelong.

The G21 Canberra delegation will represent the City of Greater Geelong and shires of Golden Plains, Queenscliffe, Surf Coast and Colac Otway.

Other topics slated for discussion during the visit include:

- Development of Fort Queenscliff;
- Geelong's Northern Arc renewal master plan;
- Geelong cultural precinct;
- NBN and mobile phone coverage issues;
- Geelong Region Opportunities for Work program, GROW;
- Renewable energy; and
- Climate change.

Meetings with Infrastructure and Transport Minister Darren Chester and Communications and Arts Minister Mitch Fifield will be in Melbourne.

A complete list of G21 priority projects is available at www.g21.com.au

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