

Destination 2020

Strategic Plan 2015-2020



geelongchamberofcommerce
the voice of business

Destination 2020:

The Geelong Chamber of Commerce has a central role to play in achieving economic growth and prosperity by fostering a regional culture of entrepreneurialism through support for local businesses and encouraging the growth of innovative, new businesses within the region.

Destination 2020 is the Chamber's blueprint for delivering tangible and targeted growth to the region.

Key to achieving the plan will be :

- Membership advocacy
- Fostering Collaboration
- Encouraging success



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Foreword



From the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

A robust and successful business community is essential for Australia to have the services, infrastructure and quality of life we all want. It is business that generates wealth through paying

taxes and employing people who also pay taxes. It is these taxes that fund our health and education systems, our police and infrastructure and provide support for those who need a hand.

Australia's network of state and local Chambers of Commerce are essential to give business the support, services and policy framework they need to prosper.

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) is pleased to support one of Australia's most

dynamic business organisations, the Geelong Chamber of Commerce, in its endeavours to deliver regional growth and prosperity to everyone in the Geelong area.

Kate Carnell,
Chief Executive Officer
The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)



From the Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The Policy and Advocacy role of Chambers of Commerce in Victoria is paramount to the success and advancement of Victorian business.

The Geelong Chamber of Commerce has a long and highly regarded track record in its role in representing business in the region.

It has initiated many successful campaigns to ensure business is well represented and the outlook is significantly enhanced.

Policy formulation and advocacy efforts have extended well beyond the region to cover local and state government matters and also direct representation into the heart of the Federal Government in Canberra.

VECCI has enjoyed a close and complimentary working relationship with the Geelong Chamber of Commerce and looks forward to significantly building on this partnership in the future

Mark Stone,
Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI)

Introduction



Destination 2020, the Geelong Chamber of Commerce's Strategic Plan, creates a future for the business community of Geelong shaped by choice, not chance.

For the Geelong Chamber of Commerce, after 160 plus years in existence, 'business as usual' is not an option, and old thinking must be replaced with fresh, innovative ideas.

So, we have challenged our previous objectives, assumptions and philosophies to identify the strategic drivers needed to take us to Destination 2020.

As a result, Destination 2020 expresses the Chamber's values, and its targets reflect our focus on delivering tangible 'outcomes' through the strategic drivers of Membership Advocacy, Fostering Collaboration and Encouraging Success.

These strategic drivers set the foundation for our annual plans, budgets, projects and resourcing of the Chamber, and are the culmination of extensive stakeholder consultation.

We must be mindful, of course, that our strategic drivers have been painted against a backdrop of economic change; the well-advanced transformation of Geelong's traditional manufacturing-based local economy to an economic environment that is built around emerging business and service segments.

The effects of the 2008 global financial crisis continue to have a protracted, adverse impact on many regional businesses. The struggle for survival in business has led many to drastically reduce discretionary costs and overheads in such an environment.

Most membership organisations have struggled to maintain momentum when faced with declining membership numbers. However, we are pleased to report that the Chamber has clearly defied these trends, with membership increasing by 20 per cent in the 18 months to December 2014.

In addition, we have forged and strengthened key partnerships and relationships within the corporate, commercial, industrial, community and government sectors to work and act collaboratively for the collective good of the region.

The Chamber will continue to build on its collaborations and promote the interests of all sectors within the business community, especially the micro businesses and small to medium sized enterprises.

As the 'voice of business' in the Geelong region, it is incumbent upon the Chamber to actively support business; even more so during times of global economic and regional change and uncertainty.

Pursuing economic prosperity will provide a better future for the community of the Geelong region.

There has never been a more relevant and appropriate time than now for the Chamber to take a stand for the business community and be a catalyst for driving positive economic change within the Geelong region.

Kylie Warne
President
Geelong Chamber of Commerce

Geelong - Australia's Economic Barometer

With a population of more than 270,000 people, the Geelong region is Victoria's largest regional centre. Located only 75 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD, the region covers 1,245 square kilometres, comprising country, coastal and suburban areas.

According to local economic development body, Enterprise Geelong, the city is a major centre for investment with more than 16,000 businesses currently operating in the area. It is also home to a highly skilled labour force of 101,040. (2011 Census estimate).

Historically, the Geelong region has been dependent on industries such as wool production, gold mining, manufacturing and most recently, heavy industry.

In the post-WWII period, Geelong was best known as the place where Ford made cars, Shell refined oil, Alcoa smelted aluminium and farm machinery company International Harvester manufactured tractors.

When this sector of the economy began contracting in the 1970s, chiefly as a result of tariff reductions and globalisation, Geelong was left facing major challenges and effectively forced to rethink where new and major opportunities might lie.

Geelong and its surrounding areas are currently in the midst of a major transformation and it is now widely recognised that the future strengths and business opportunities within the region will be much more broadly based with key growth in areas such as:

- light industrial manufacturing
- niche industry specialists
- health services
- bio security
- education
- construction
- professional services
- transport and logistics
- information technology
- retail
- tourism
- food and beverage

- agribusiness
- web based home businesses
- government services
- environmental services
- sport and leisure
- outdoor and environmental activities
- renewable energy

Geelong's proximity to Melbourne, its acknowledged liveability and its price advantages have always placed it in an ideal position to attract new residents and investment, and this continues to be the case.

Currently, the majority of registered businesses in the region are privately owned and Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data indicates that more than fifty five percent are home based or sole traders.

The broadening of the region's business base from home based operations to larger public entities across an evolving range of sectors and industries, means now more than ever, the Geelong Chamber of Commerce has a valuable and growing role to play in supporting and representing these burgeoning business interests.

The Geelong Chamber of Commerce

On June 2, 1853 James Harrison, editor and proprietor of the Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer, argued in his editorial that because the Geelong business community lacked a representative organisation, its concerns over issues in Geelong were not being addressed by the government of the day. As a consequence, these issues remained unresolved. He stated that a chamber of commerce was needed if this situation was to be remedied. Nine days later, at a public meeting, the Geelong Chamber of Commerce was established .

For the subsequent 160 years, the Geelong Chamber of Commerce has continuously served the Geelong community as a leading advocate for business and industry in the region and continues to be one of the largest organisations of its kind in Australia.

The Chamber's rich history defines the Chamber as having played an integral role in the development and shaping of modern-day Geelong from its very early links to the Port of Geelong through to current times where the organisation continues to act as an independent, apolitical member-based organisation working diligently to support and grow the interests of business right across the Geelong region.

¹ Hay R, McLean G.A. Business and Industry, Geelong: The History of the Geelong Chamber of Commerce 1853-2005, Teesdale, Sports and Editorial Services, 2006



Destination 2020

Our Role:

The Chamber's role is to inform, support, represent our members and foster influential relationships with government and industry stakeholders on all of our members' behalf, from sole traders through to large public companies.

Our Core Values:

Geelong First

We are unashamedly 'pro-Geelong region' and passionate about making a tangible difference to businesses within the region. A strong business sector provides services, products, opportunities and learnings generating benefits across the entire community.

Responsiveness

We value and serve our members by responding quickly and professionally to their needs.

Innovation

We strive to continually innovate and encourage business best practice.

Leadership

We are visionary and future-oriented in our thinking, decision-making and programming.

Integrity

We behave ethically. We honour our commitments to our members and stakeholders.

The Geelong Chamber of Commerce will be at the heart of achieving regional economic growth and prosperity by fostering a local culture of entrepreneurialism.

Destination 2020:

With a clear vision for prosperity and a mandate for action, the Geelong Chamber of Commerce will be pivotal in achieving regional economic growth and prosperity by fostering a culture of entrepreneurialism, collaboration and success.

This will be achieved by focussing on three key strategic drivers:

- Membership advocacy
- Fostering collaboration
- Encouraging success

STRATEGIC DRIVER ONE

MEMBERSHIP ADVOCACY

Deliverables

1. Providing thought leadership on issues important to the region's business sector
2. Delivering effective and respected representation of all business segments – large and small - to local, state and federal governments
3. Leading the Geelong Regional Industry Participation Scheme (GRIPS), lobbying for local procurement commitments in the private, public and not-for-profit (NFP) sectors
4. Actively participating in regional alliances and special joint stakeholder projects
5. Driving membership growth and diversity in composition

STRATEGIC DRIVER TWO

FOSTERING COLLABORATION

Deliverables

1. Delivering a successful annual Regional Business Symposium
2. Providing vibrant, relevant and well-attended networking events including After 5 and Before 9 events
3. Supporting a thriving Geelong Young Professionals Network
4. Providing connections to resources and members' business services
5. Providing tangible connectivity to local, state and federal government departments and personnel and working collaboratively with other key stakeholder groups within the region

STRATEGIC DRIVER THREE

ENCOURAGING SUCCESS

Deliverables

1. Delivering successful annual Geelong Business Excellence Awards
2. Facilitating small business education programs for new and emerging businesses
3. Facilitating masterclasses for established businesses
4. Developing a calendar of 'high end' events featuring leading national and international expert speakers
5. Enabling access to subject matter experts

1. Membership Advocacy

Currently, it's recognised that there are many organisations operating in the Geelong region, both membership based and privately operated, striving to represent the interests of business within the Geelong region.

Feedback from both the business community and government, suggests that there are many who are unsure which organisation is – or should be - the prime contact for business issues within the Geelong region.

Regular and increasing content distributed via social and traditional media channels confirms there are many players who see themselves as being the 'leading voice' for Geelong businesses.

The Geelong Chamber's number one strategic priority is to firmly establish the organisation as 'the respected, independent voice of business in the Geelong region.'

In order for the Chamber to maintain our position as the leading authority on business issues in the region, we will adopt the following strategy:

- Proactively taking a strong lead on key business-related issues and striving to consistently add a vibrant and relevant voice to any business conversation.
 - Developing a strategic communications plan to clearly articulate its three key strategies and results to members, partners, prospective members and the public.
 - Ensuring our communication plan will drive and maintain the Chamber's position as an acknowledged thought leader on issues facing business leaders, owners and managers in the Geelong region by being proactive in providing relevant editorial opinion pieces, traditional and social media articles and content and asking the challenging questions, at the appropriate time.
 - Continuing to build a strong, respectful and mutually beneficial relationship with the media to further develop and enhance the reputation of the Chamber as the first point of contact for comment on local business issues.
 - Confirming and developing appropriate social media platforms relevant to the needs of members seeking direction, information and learnings.
 - Developing a capability statement as a marketing and promotional tool.
- Reviewing the current Chamber electronic content and updating it to align with, and reflect, this strategy and then continuing to regularly review our content to ensure it is consistently relevant, informative and agile.
 - Continuing to focus on building a stronger and broader membership base to reconfirm and demonstrate the organisation's credibility within the business sector and to key stakeholders, such as all levels of government.
 - Implementing a program of direct action to promote local companies as preferred suppliers under the banner of the Geelong Region Industry Participation Scheme.
 - Engaging in active participation and constructive dialogue with other groups and organisations to enable meaningful partnerships and alliances where appropriate and beneficial.
 - Representing all segments of the existing and potential membership identified as:
 - > Sole traders, home based, micro businesses
 - > Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as defined by the Australian Tax Office (ATO) with less than 20 employees
 - > Private and family owned businesses with 20 - 100 employees
 - > Franchise systems and operators
 - > Large businesses with 100 plus employees
 - > Corporate subsidiaries
 - > Not for profit organisations

2 Fostering Collaboration

For the Chamber to effectively nurture its desired position as the 'the respected, independent voice of business in the Geelong region', it must increase its relevance across a broad range of business areas and strive to be the centre of information, education, networking and cross pollination of the regional Geelong business community.

Operating a business can be a lonely experience, but positioning the Chamber as the major and central repository of information, education and useful business connections, will clearly enhance the Chamber's position as a trusted entity to turn to, for help and advice for any business in the region.

As previously noted, there is currently a significant level of confusion about who is – or should be – the 'voice of Geelong business'.

The significant point of difference for the Geelong Chamber of Commerce is that we have the capacity to reach more businesses, across more sectors and deliver greater tangible support to local enterprises than many other regional groups and organisations.

Destination 2020 is the perfect blue print to achieve this.

In order to achieve its desired role of fostering business collaboration, the Chamber will:

- Conduct specifically tailored networking events to address the varying needs of the different levels of membership with a focus on education and collaboration.
- Maintain the Chamber's signature 'After 5' events and grow the 'Before 9' as the key business and social networking opportunity for members ensuring attendance is appropriate, manageable and the event adds demonstrable value to sponsors.
- Deliver a successful annual Regional Business Symposium.
- Support and further expand a thriving Geelong Young Professionals Network.
- Provide appropriate and relevant connections to resources and members services and provide access, where possible, to local, state and federal government departments and personnel to enhance business opportunities.



3 Encouraging Success

Business commentators and the City of Greater Geelong have been discussing the potential of a new large scale business opportunity to fill the void left by the recent closure of Alcoa and the impending closure of Ford's Geelong manufacturing plant in 2017.

Discussions suggest that the most likely large scale new employer opportunity for the region may be delivered via the relocation of a major government agency or department.

However, given the statistics showing there are 16,000 registered businesses and the Australian Bureau of Statistics data which suggests that the majority of these are small to medium enterprises, it is a widely held view that it will be the SME sector which will provide the greatest opportunity for future employment within the region.

Further, data released by the Australian Taxation Office, shows that a high failure rate of SMEs is primarily due to a lack of business management skills of business owners.

This presents a significant opportunity for the Chamber to be proactive in providing leadership and programs to assist in the development of the business acumen of its members and supporting them to take their businesses to higher levels of performance and success.

This is a role which truly belongs to the Chamber of Commerce ahead of any other local organisation or group.

It should also be recognised however, that given the existing and potential membership ranges from micro and home based operations, to large corporate entities and large professional service firms, it is imperative that the Chamber caters for the needs of its entire range of members to remain relevant, and as a strong basis for future growth.

Encouraging business success is beneficial to all members.

The business environment is changing at breakneck speed and for members of the Geelong Chamber of Commerce, the ability to attend and participate in well structured, targeted and continuous learning options, should be a major advantage and distinct incentive to encourage membership retention.

In order to achieve its desired role of encouraging success, the Chamber will:

- Continue to develop the Geelong Business Excellence Awards as the premier business event in the region, recognising the development and achievements of local business enterprises and operators
- Create appropriately targeted special events designed to appeal to the Chamber's larger members to reinforce the organisation's relevance to businesses beyond the SME sector
- Develop and implement the business improvement masterclass program for established SMEs with five or more employees.
- Continue to foster membership mentoring services via our Small Business Smart Business program and via the Small Business Mentoring service.
- Build a network of specific subject matter experts within the membership, to be available to assist in guiding members to the correct resources, both internally and externally to the organisation.
- Develop strategic industry alliances to broaden the level of expertise available to be accessed by members.
- Review the potential for the organisation to be a host for the Victorian Small Business Workshop programs.
- Conduct an audit of the business skills of the board, officers, volunteer members and staff to ensure the Chamber has an appropriate level and mix of skills relevant to its business advisory and representation role.

Strategic Risks

The strategic priorities outlined in Destination 2020 must be built on a solid foundation of best practice business systems, policies, procedures, contemporary infrastructure and sound governance.

Financial sustainability is not negotiable and is the key driver for all future activity.

It is well recognised that within the regional business landscape, constructive partnerships with key stakeholders – including all levels of government - are essential.

However, the challenge for the Chamber moving forward is to establish a more assertive persona, to lead the debate on critical issues rather than just being seen as one of a number of 'equivalent' interested parties to comment.

For the Chamber to prosper in line with its Destination 2020 vision, it must be increasingly proactive in taking a position of thought and industry leadership.

When appropriately beneficial to the membership, the Chamber should clearly be willing to collaborate with other organisations, but should be mindful at all times of not diluting its mandate to be seen as 'the respected, independent voice of business in the Geelong region'.

In order to mitigate any potential risks associated with the Destination 2020 strategy, the following criteria are critical to the Chamber's future success:

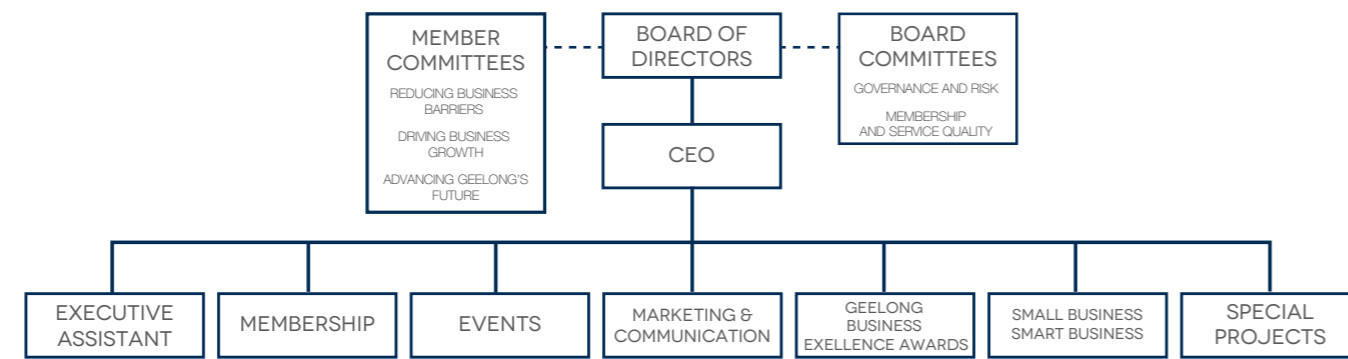
- Political independence and bilateralism.
- Robust financial disciplines ensuring financial sustainability, effectively operating as a 'for-profit' entity in order to drive cash flow back into expanding and supporting future membership services.
- Strong governance and internal policies and procedures.
- A united and appropriately skill based board of directors, subject to regular review.
- An annual Business Plan which is regularly reviewed, updated and measured against key drivers.
- An effective Corporate Partners program that generates a targeted amount of income each year. A commitment to maintaining existing partners and attracting new partners.
- Growth, in both size and composition, of the organisation's membership base. Strategic and targeted programs to deliver a one thousand strong membership base by 2020.
- Robust and regular membership consultation processes.
- Identification of members willing to volunteer their expertise to partner with the Chamber to enable it to reach its objectives, via internal advisory groups or 'pillars' for member participation.
- Proactive and strategic marketing and communication, including digital and traditional media to develop and enhance the Chamber's strong brand reputation and positioning in the community.
- Key focus on employees and team members with the appropriate skills, experience and attitude to support, sustain and grow a membership-focused culture.
- Robust internal policies and procedures systems with regular performance reviews to include areas such as human resources, OH&S, Information Technology and the likes.
- Appropriate collaboration with key stakeholders, including all tiers of Government, industry groups, peak bodies and education providers.
- Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reports that are up to date, clearly articulated and a genuine reflection on performance.
- Robust and effective internal systems and processes that enable effective planning, reporting and monitoring.
- Agreed succession plans and actions.

Service quality guiding principles

The quality of services delivered by the Geelong Chamber of Commerce will be continuously monitored and improved through focussed review, planning and implementation.

A quality service at the Geelong Chamber of Commerce is defined as one which:

- Genuinely values our corporate partners and members.
- Increases our corporate partner and member satisfaction.
- Is responsive, relevant, timely and cost effective.
- Is inclusive of the needs of all key stakeholders.
- Aspires to industry best practice.



The Board of Directors 2014-15 (l-r): Bernadette Uzelac (CEO), Kylie Warne (President), Mark Edmonds (Vice President), Roxanne Bennett, Peter Landers, Julie Hope, David Peart, Norm Lyons. Absent: Joanne D'Andrea, John Fitzgerald, Mark Sanders.

Conclusion

Destination 2020 represents a major opportunity for the Geelong Chamber of Commerce to develop a clear and bold plan for growth and increased relevancy at a time when the region's business community is in the midst of significant reform and change.

To survive and prosper, the Chamber must demonstrate its value and relevance to all sectors of the business community – large and small – in order to achieve our aim of being recognised as the 'the respected, independent voice of business in the Geelong region.'

The key priorities and strategic approach outlined in this strategy should provide the parameters and framework for the organisation to achieve its stated goals over the next five years.

The Geelong Chamber of Commerce has a long and proud history since its inception in 1853 and now the strategy encapsulated in Destination 2020 creates a strong, robust and challenging plan to continue to take the organisation forward.

We're looking forward to the journey!





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the voice of business

Level 2, 10 Moorabool Street
Geelong VIC 3220
P 03 5222 2234
F 03 5222 2235
www.geelongchamber.com.au

