Dear Mr Coley,

RE: INQUIRY INTO LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN VICTORIA

As CEO of G21 - Geelong Region Alliance, I am pleased to have the opportunity to make a submission into the Committee’s inquiry into local economic development initiatives in Victoria.

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. Membership now spans all three levels of government, non-government organisations, businesses and community groups.

Under the G21 - Geelong Regional Alliance we have brought together our region’s leaders to develop a regional plan, determine regional priority projects and 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.

My submission addresses the following issues as outlined in the Committee’s terms of reference:

• Existing local economic development programs in the G21 municipalities
• The appropriate role of local and state government in generating economic development
• Ways in which municipal councils and the Victorian Government can jointly support local economic development to promote employment and new investment
• Best practice local economic development initiatives

The Geelong Region Plan - a sustainable growth strategy is the culmination of two years’ consultation with the wider G21 community including our five councils, business, industry and community.

Launched in 2007, The Geelong Region Plan has been authorised by each of our five councils and the state and federal governments. It is a high level, strategic plan that considers how we want the G21 region to be by 2050.

There are five key directions incorporated into The Geelong Region Plan:

1. Protect and enhance our environment
2. Create sustainable settlements
3. Strengthen our communities
4. Refocus our economy
5. Make it happen
We have over three hundred people donating their professional expertise to progressing the implementation of *The Geelong Region Plan* across eight themed Pillars:

- Arts and Culture
- Economic Development
- Education and Training
- Environment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Planning and Services
- Sport and Recreation
- Transport

Each of these eight Pillars identifies projects that will in some progress the implementation of *The Geelong Region Plan* - these are known as Pillar Projects and we have currently fifty-three such projects.

If projects are of a high level strategic importance to the G21 region, the G21 Board may consider their designation as Priority Projects. These projects are assessed against triple bottom line criteria and form the basis of our approaches to the state and federal governments for funding in order for them to be implemented. We currently have fifteen Priority Projects:

- Addressing Disadvantage
- Apollo Bay Harbour Redevelopment*
- Armstrong Creek Development*
- Avalon Airport Development*
- Geelong Centre for Emerging Infectious Diseases*
- Geelong Convention Centre*
- Geelong Future Cities Project
- Geelong Ring Road Connections
- Geelong Ring Road Employment Precinct*
- G21 Regional Trails Project
- Great Ocean Road upgrade
- Portarlington Safe Harbour*
- Regional Research and Information Centre
- Transport Links to Melbourne
- Yarra St Pier Redevelopment*

* Denotes an Economic Development Pillar Priority Project

Further to the identification of implementation projects for *The Geelong Region Plan - a sustainable growth strategy*, the G21 - Geelong Region Alliance has undertaken two substantial pieces of work over the last two years aimed at stimulating economic growth in our region:

- The G21 Regional Growth Plan
- The G21 Economic Development Strategy

The G21 Regional Growth Plan (G21 RGP) is in response to the projections that the population of the G21 region will grow from an estimated 285,000 people to 500,000 by 2050. The G21 RGP identifies where residential and employment growth will occur plus the infrastructure that will be needed to support that growth. The draft of the G21 RGP has been adopted by all five G21 Councils and is now awaiting ministerial approval, before being incorporated into the planning scheme.

The G21 Economic Development Strategy aims to diversify the G21 region’s economy so that it is less reliant on one sector, predominantly manufacturing, into the future. It identifies our region’s
strengths and comparative advantages plus five “game-changers” that will accelerate the transition of our economy:

1. The completion of the Geelong Ring Road and connections;
2. The revitalisation of the Geelong CBD;
3. The provision of infrastructure to support growth;
4. The positioning of the G21 region as a global research hub;
5. Adopting a "G21 region is open for business" attitude.

The G21 Economic Development Strategy will also identify the best model through which the region can deliver the transformational projects.

G21 - Geelong Region Alliance is an excellent example of a region working collaboratively to not only strategically plan for the region’s future but also to prioritise investment opportunities for state and federal governments to ensure our Plan is implemented.

Recently the G21 region and our organisation hosted an OECD delegation as part of its investigation into regional partnerships. We were chosen as a case study by the OECD as an exemplar of regional collaboration facilitating local economic development initiatives.

G21 - Geelong Region Alliance would be pleased to assist the Committee’s inquiry further by presenting at a public hearing should members be interested in exploring in more detail our successful model of regional collaboration.

Yours sincerely,

Elaine Carbin
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Enc:

- The Geelong Region Plan - a sustainable growth strategy
- G21 Priority Projects 2012
- G21 Regional Growth Plan
- G21 Draft Economic Development Strategy