

Frequently Asked Questions

Settlement Strategy and Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Program - Bellarine Peninsula



What is the City of Greater Geelong's role in developing the Statement of Planning Policies (SPP) for the Bellarine Peninsula and Surf Coast Distinctive Areas and Landscapes (DAL) projects?

Council is a key partner in the development of the Bellarine Peninsula and Surf Coast SPP. The project is being overseen and managed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP).

All questions and feedback in relation to the DAL projects can be directed to Places and Precincts, Planning Implementation, DELWP - Email: planning.implementation@delwp.vic.gov.au or Phone: 136 186.

Why are the DAL projects commencing before the Settlement Strategy is finalised?

Council has been working on a Settlement Strategy since late 2016. The draft Strategy was completed in May 2018 and included two phases of public consultation. The Strategy was adopted in October 2018 and sets out Council's adopted position in relation to housing and settlement in the Greater Geelong municipality.

The state government announced the prospect of a Bellarine Peninsula DAL in September 2018 as part of its re-election commitment, stating:

'The declaration triggers a requirement for a Statement of Planning Policy, which will set permanent height controls and town boundaries to protect the environment, landscape and local lifestyle.'

'As part of this process, a re-elected Labor Government will strengthen Torquay's boundary, alongside towns across the Bellarine Peninsula to permanently end the push by developers to expand these towns and ruin the relaxed beach lifestyle locals enjoy.'

The Bellarine Peninsula and Surf Coast DAL projects are now being progressed by DELWP, and is currently in the first phase of community engagement.

How does the timing of the DALs and Settlement Strategy amendment inter-relate?

The planning scheme amendment for the Settlement Strategy is currently open for public comment until 29 July 2019. Submissions will be considered by Council prior to consideration by an Independent Panel, tentatively set down for late 2019.

The first phase of consultation on the DAL is also open now. A draft SPP will be developed in late 2019 and available for comment in early 2020.

While the two projects are running concurrently there are opportunities for each to influence and respond to the other.

What role will township structure plans and other strategies play?

Township Structure Plans, the Geelong Rural Land Use Strategy, Bellarine Strategic Plan, G21 Regional Growth Plan and the Bellarine Peninsula Localised Planning Statement have all involved extensive community engagement and input. These plans and policies represent Council's adopted position on a range of issues relating to settlement planning and the Bellarine.

These plans and policies will inform the development of the Bellarine Peninsula Statement of Planning Policy (SPP). The SPP will ultimately replace the Bellarine Peninsula Localised Planning Statement.

How do the Settlement Strategy principles and directions about setting permanent boundaries for townships within the Bellarine Peninsula relate to the Bellarine Peninsula Distinctive Area and Landscapes program?

The Settlement Strategy seeks to maintain the unique values of the Bellarine Peninsula. Directions to deliver this in the Settlement Strategy include acknowledging the share of housing development on the Bellarine will decrease over time and providing greater certainty on the preferred locations for development across the municipality by pursuing permanent settlement boundaries for townships. Prior to the introduction of permanent boundaries the need for a consultative process is identified.

The declaration of the Bellarine Peninsula and Surf Coast as DALs requires the:

- preparation of a Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) led by the State Government in partnership with local government and Traditional Owners.
- development of a long-term vision and strategies to protect distinctive areas in consultation with local communities.
- introduction for the opportunity for protected settlement boundaries for townships – like Melbourne's urban growth boundary.

The City will partner with DELWP to deliver protected settlement boundaries as part of the DAL consultative process, and to deliver a SPP consistent with the adopted Settlement Strategy.

The DAL process will deliver clear direction in relation to managing increasing development pressure, managing threats associated with climate change and balancing growth with the protection of significant natural, cultural and rural assets.

The City does not intend to run a separate process in relation to protected settlement boundaries established under the DAL process. The DAL process includes a number of phases of public engagement, including an opportunity to make submissions. This will include the opportunity to make submissions on long term (protected) settlement boundaries.

How will the Settlement Strategy and Bellarine Peninsula SPP guide decision making on the Bellarine?

At the end of the Settlement Strategy amendment process policies to implement its key directions will be introduced into the planning scheme. Once in the scheme these directions will inform land use planning decisions for the future, including strategic planning work and planning permits and development applications.

The final SPP will also form part of the planning scheme as an incorporated document and land use planning and development decisions will need to be consistent with the SPP. The SPP also extends beyond local government decision making and will inform decision making by other responsible public entities.