



SEMMA

SOUTH EAST MELBOURNE MANUFACTURERS ALLIANCE

SEMMA supports Officer South Employment Precinct Structure Plan

27 October 2023

SEMMA has provided a submission to the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) Officer South Employment Precinct Structure Plan (OSEPSP) that supports the South East Economic Corridor Strategic Context Report to 2060.

SEMMA, as the peak industry association representing over 200 leading manufacturing companies located in South East Melbourne supports the VPA's recent plan but reiterates the need for the upgrade and development of Thompsons Road if the plan is to be successful.

SEMMA CEO Honi Walker said, "Upgrading and developing Thompsons Road is essential as it represents a critical piece of infrastructure that can open up Officer South to encourage investment in manufacturing and other essential services, which creates real, long-term jobs – feeding into the VPA's Officer South Employment Precinct Structure Plan (OSEPSP)".

Officer South represents one of the next crucial development phases for the South East region. Developing this infrastructure will support the 20 minute neighborhood – a necessity in the way we live, work and play, to be the new blueprint of modern life in Australia.

The South East continues to be one of Australia's most dynamic manufacturing regions and SEMMA supports the South East Economic Corridor's vision in its report *South East Economic Corridor Strategic Context Report to 2060 (SEEC Report) (PDF)* that by 2060;

- That the South East remains one of Australia's most economically significant and diverse regions and this development can ensure the region will realise its economic and social potential, improving the lives of over 1 million residents, and provide over 500,000 jobs into 2060.
- The South East Economic Corridor will be a nationally significant region for advanced manufacturing and engineering
- The Casey/Cardinia Officer Pakenham State Significant Industrial Precinct will evolve to replace the Southern SSIP as the most significant industrial precinct in Melbourne's South east.
- The Dandenong National Employment and Innovation Cluster will be the largest business district in the region, with the Fountain Gate / Narre Warren Metropolitan Activity Centres offering substantial jobs and services.
- The prosperity of the region's residents, businesses and visitors will be supported by key health and education anchors and transport gateways, such as Port Hastings and a potential SE airport.
- Residents will live in highly connected, attractive and liveable 20-Minute Neighbourhoods

SEMMA supports the Three-Horizon Approach

The 40-year timeframe of the SEEC strategy requires planning for uncertainty and the evolution of employment areas to 2060 and beyond. The SEEC Report seeks to address this challenge by promoting flexibility, while protecting strategically identified future employment land through a Three-Horizons approach:

- **Horizon 1: Consolidate** the existing hierarchy of employment areas and support long term options
- **Horizon 2: Reinforce** and augment a maturing SEEC economy
- **Horizon 3: Transform** the SEEC economy through innovation, major investment and new opportunities.

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Planning should occur in parallel across all horizons, with short, medium, and long-term actions for each horizon, acknowledging the benefits for horizon 2 and three will be realised over a longer period in line with population growth.

SEMMA supports the research conducted by GSEM on the need for industrial land in the southeast. In GSEM's economic impact assessment of the [Thompsons Road Upgrade and Extension](#), it became clear that the opportunity to create local jobs, facilitate population growth and deliver greater net benefit for the region was tangible.

GSEM commissioned SGS Economics & Planning to research employment in the southeast in September 2022. SGS produced the [Greater South East Skills and Employment Analysis](#).

This report showed that:

- Employment in knowledge intensive business services, as well as rates of tertiary education attainment has been historically low in the GSEM region relative to metropolitan Melbourne.
- Male, female, and youth unemployment rates have been higher in the GSEM region than the Greater Melbourne average, particularly for Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia.
- Trends in participation rate are more nuanced, yet a notable finding is that of lower female participation in the region. A lack of local jobs may be a key barrier to female participation in the region – Casey, Cardinia have noticeably lower local jobs per working resident than the Greater Melbourne average.

SEMMA believes that this strong evidence for more jobs in Cardinia and Casey supports the need for the Officer South Precinct to be implemented and the development of the industrial land to be prioritized to meet the needs of the local community.

SEMMA believes that while providing the industrial land and developing the transport infrastructure around the new Precinct there also needs to be investment and planning done into how the land can best be activated and developed to support industries that can provide a range of employment opportunities.

For example-advanced manufacturing, transportation, warehousing, childcare, aged care and other educational facilities supporting the entire work-lifestyle supply chain.

A proposed South East airport is further acknowledgment of the growth and employment opportunities for this region and should also be considered.

"There are many skilled workers in the region unable to find jobs at their qualification levels, consideration should be given to the innovative ways this Precinct could be developed to attract high-value high skilled industries that can bring a wider range of employment opportunities to the southeast", she said.

SEMMA believes these industries will strongly consider being located in this area IF the infrastructure is in place to support them.

ENDS

References:

GSEM Economic Impact and Assessment: Thompsons Road Upgrade

SGS Economics Report Greater South East Skills and Employment Analysis

South East Economic Corridor Strategic Context Report to 2060 (SEEC Report)

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