



**SEMMA**

SOUTH EAST MELBOURNE MANUFACTURERS ALLIANCE

# SEMMA Officer South Employment Precinct Structure Plan

Submission to: Victorian Planning Authority public consultation process

27 October 2023

SEMMA is the peak industry association representing over 200 leading manufacturing companies located in South East Melbourne; Australia's most dynamic manufacturing region. We advocate for good government policy and decision making to assist in keeping manufacturing viable in a global context.

As a professional association, it is our business to know everything manufacturing. This means we are familiar with changes that effect industry performance, opportunities and challenges faced by our members day in, day out. We share this intelligence for the benefit of members to give them the greatest chance of ongoing success.

**Our Charter is to:**

- Influence Governments apolitically on manufacturing issues;
- Promote Members' and regional capability both locally and internationally;
- Identify business opportunities and stimulate manufacturing businesses;
- Encourage collaboration between members;
- Collaborate with other institutions such as CSIRO, Universities and government bodies; and
- Commit to corporate, environmental and social responsibilities.

At SEMMA, we also recognise the importance of manufacturing to the community at large, which is why we want all members to be high achievers. High performing manufacturers results in the industry continuing to be a powerhouse of economic development for the region.

Studies have revealed that in manufacturing, for every \$1 million in new or retained output, up to 6-10 equivalent full time (EFT) jobs are provided. Therefore, the multiplier effects from the growth of any one manufacturer has the potential to positively impact business, and as long as the industry is succeeding, then win-wins are experienced all around.

## INTRODUCTION

SEMMA believes the development of the Officer South Employment Precinct Structure Plan will attract business and manufacturing investment, therefore creating employment opportunities and enable the 20minute neighborhood – a necessity in the way we live, work and play in this new work era, to be the new blueprint of modern life in Australia.

## SEMMA supports the SEEC Vision

By 2060:

- The SEEC will support the Southern metropolitan region to remain one of Australia's most **economically significant and diverse regions**
- The region will realise its economic and social potential, improving the lives of **over 1 million residents**, and provide **over 500,000 jobs**

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- SEEC residents will have **diverse local employment options within 20 minutes** of where they live
- The SEEC 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
- Growing and value adding of **agricultural produce, products and services** will be an important export industry and employer in the region
- 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.
- Anchors and gateways will support **population and knowledge-intensive** activities and services, are complemented by a network of activity centres and employment precincts
- 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, whilst 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.

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.

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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, child care, 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.

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

## Conclusion

The South East has been a core driver of economic growth for Victoria. The Officer South Employment Precinct will greatly add to this economic contribution to the region by supplying further industrial land that is needed.

- SEMMA is supportive of the development of the Officer South Employment Precinct. Our people need more jobs closer to home and this precinct has the potential to deliver some of these key employment opportunities.
- SEMMA calls for the development of the industrial land to be prioritized and supported to address the strong demand for industrial land and the need for more jobs in the region.
- SEMMA would like further consideration to be given to the need for enabling transport infrastructure for this precinct – specifically the upgrading and extension of Thompsons Road. The full benefits of this proposed precinct will not be realised without Thompsons Road being upgraded and extended.
- SEMMA welcomes and is supportive of a staged approach outlined in the PSP, this should be retained in the final documents and is crucial to the success of the precinct as it allows time for the region and government to find a funding solution for Thompsons Road project and other enabling infrastructure. However, a staged approach needs to be flexible and developed in collaboration with relevant partners, industry and other stakeholders. If VPA can put the Horizon model into place – SEMMA believes the outcomes will bring a multitude of benefits now and well into 2060.

Honi Walker  
CEO SEMMA

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