

**PSP 2.0**

**VICTORIA**  
State  
Government

# Greater Avalon Employment Precinct

PRECINCT  
STRUCTURE PLAN

## Pitching Sessions Summary

MARCH 2023

**vpa**  
Victorian Planning Authority

## Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

**The land, skies and waters that make up the Greater Avalon Employment Precinct and its surrounds are Wadawurrung. The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victoria's Aboriginal communities and their rich cultures and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge Aboriginal people as Australia's First People and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely. We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life and how this enriches us. We embrace the spirit of reconciliation and ensuring that Aboriginal voices are heard.**

### **Victorian Planning Authority's commitment**

The Victorian Planning Authority commits to continuing to improve our practices, to better protect and acknowledge Aboriginal values and heritage in our plans, precinct structure plans and strategic documents.

The protection of tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage is an important part of continuing cultural practice, understanding history and recognition of the Traditional Owners of Victoria. Commonwealth and State Acts and Regulations provide protection of places and areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.

The ultimate custodians of Aboriginal cultural heritage are Traditional Owners, including groups formally recognised as Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) which are appointed by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. In 2021 there were 11 RAPs with decision-making responsibilities for approximately 74 per cent of Victoria. Traditional Owner Groups without formal recognition also have a vital role to play as key partners and stakeholders.

Strategic planning for Aboriginal cultural heritage involves a range of different stakeholders including State Government agencies, local government, developers, landowners and community groups.

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Level 25, 35 Collins Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
03 9651 9600  
[vpa.vic.gov.au](http://vpa.vic.gov.au)

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## CONTENTS

Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians .....	2
Introduction .....	4
Background.....	7
Emerging themes .....	11
EMERGING THEME 1 – EMPLOYMENT AND LAND USE .....	15
EMERGING THEME 2 – TRANSPORT .....	17
EMERGING THEME 3 – WATER, ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE.....	18
EMERGING THEME 4 – DESIGN AND INNOVATION .....	19
Next steps.....	20

## Introduction

### What is Pitching?

The purpose of pitching is to provide stakeholders with a chance to discuss opportunities, challenges and aspirations for the precinct. For government agencies, pitching sessions are an opportunity to present relevant background information and policy that will need to be considered when preparing the PSP.

VPA would like to thank all stakeholders who attended and participated at the Greater Avalon Employment Precinct (GAEP) pitching sessions which were held from December 2022 to February 2023.

These pitching sessions marked the beginning of the precinct planning process for GAEP.

The purpose of the pitching sessions was to:

WHAT:	HOW:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand core issues early in the planning process</li> <li>- Foster a collaborative working group of stakeholders</li> <li>- Develop a vision and objectives for the site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invite stakeholders to present their ideas and concerns</li> <li>- Provide a clear, transparent, and inclusive consultation program</li> <li>- Encourage discussion of innovative ideas and alternative processes</li> </ul>

**Ultimately, the pitching sessions will inform the GAEP vision and purpose and development of a future plan.**

### Purpose of this document

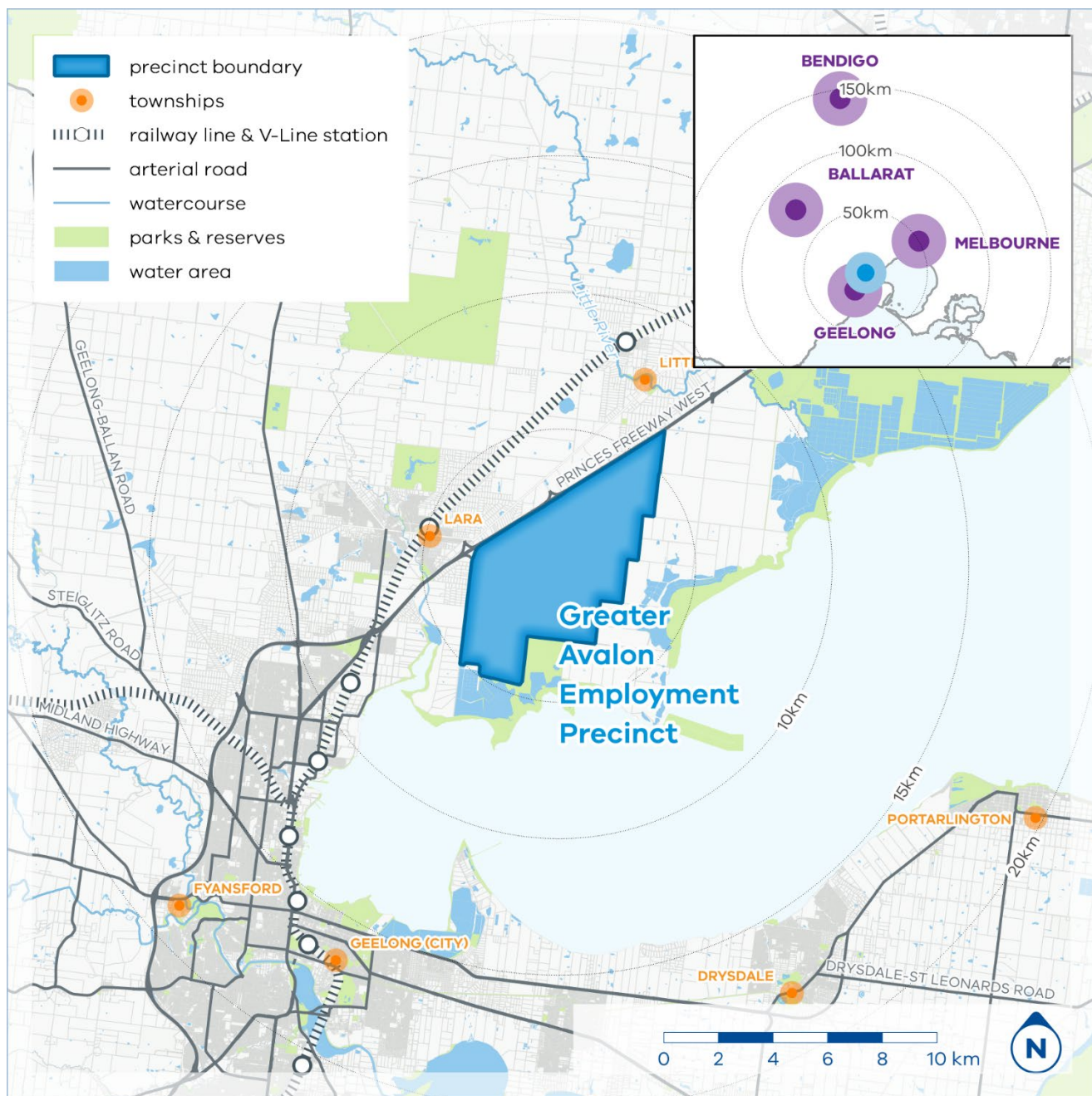
This document is a summary of the information captured during the pitching sessions for GAEP.

This summary document outlines the key issues and opportunities raised at the pitching sessions in both a written and spatial format and provides attendees with further information regarding what to expect at the upcoming GAEP Vision and Purpose Workshop in March 2023.

**The information gathered in the pitching sessions helped identify the issues, challenges, opportunities, and innovations for GAEP. This document provides a summary of key themes raised during the pitching sessions.**

**FIGURE 1** PITCHING PROCESS





**FIGURE 2** REGIONAL CONTEXT PLAN

## Who attended the sessions?

Pitching sessions were held with representatives from state and local government agencies, key stakeholder groups and infrastructure providers. All precinct landowners were contacted to participate.

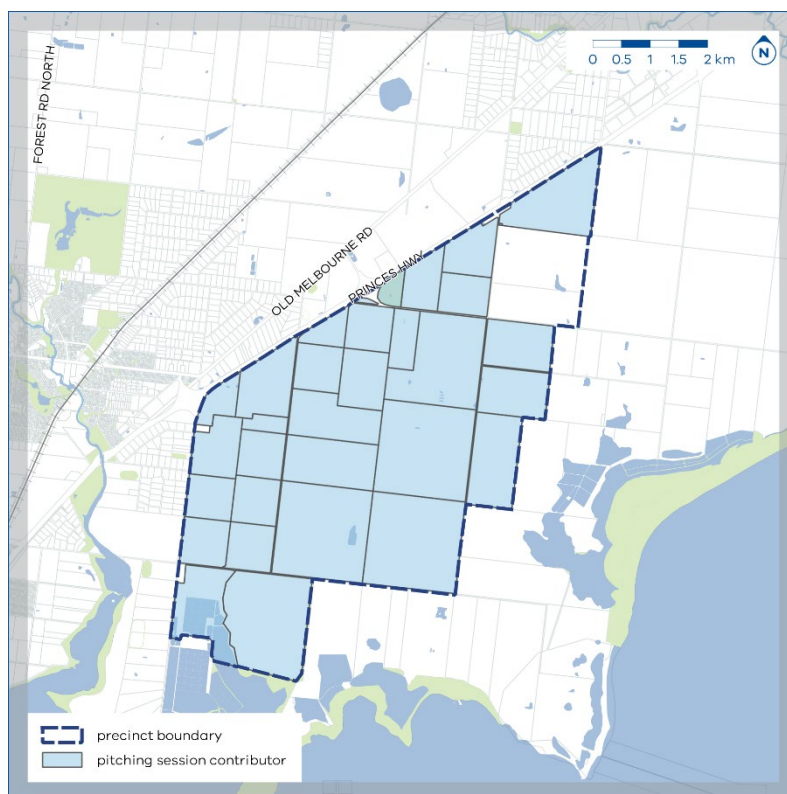
These were held in person and online as individual meetings with the VPA project team.

Attendees included:

- City of Greater Geelong
- Avalon Airport
- Former Department of Transport (now DTP)
- Former Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (now DJSIR and/or DEECA)
- Sustainability Victoria
- Invest Victoria
- Barwon Water
- APA Group
- Private landowners and developers

The following parties provided comments in lieu of a pitching session:

- Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
- Former Department of Environment, Land, Water, Land and Planning – Planning Implementation & Heritage (now DTP)
- Environment Protection Authority



**FIGURE 3** LANDOWNERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PITCHING SESSIONS

## Background

The existing policy context for GAEP establishes state, regional and local roles. In addition, this context establishes land use and infrastructure aspirations for the precinct.

GAEP benefits from its inclusion of Avalon Airport (Melbourne's second international airport), its access to a state significant port, rail and road infrastructure, and its proximity to Melbourne and Geelong.

*Plan Melbourne* identifies Avalon Airport as a place and transport gateway of state significance that will be the focus for investment and growth supporting employment and economic activity.

GAEP can leverage the existing and planned state significant strategic transport projects including:

- Avalon Airport
- Princes Freeway
- Melbourne-Geelong Fast Rail Link
- Avalon Rail Link as a potential transport infrastructure project
- The planned Outer Metropolitan Ring Road
- The planned Bay West
- The planned Western Intermodal Freight Terminal
- The Geelong Port

We recognise Avalon Airport land within GAEP is guided by its own masterplan for which the *Avalon Airport Masterplan 2015* is currently being updated. The PSP will need to support the masterplan and consider the interface with the Airport land.

In addition, the VPA is drawing on State Government policy that advocates for the development of the precinct. Some of that policy is outlined below.

## G21 Regional Growth Plan (Geelong Region Alliance)

The *G21 Regional Growth Plan* (2013) is part of a broader State Government led strategy that looks

towards 2050. It provides direction on land use and development across for the G21 region and regional Victoria. Key outcomes that are relevant to this precinct and for the G21 region include:

- Providing a strong economy for the region
- Offering diverse employment opportunities
- Delivering new infrastructure and services to support new and existing areas.

The *G21 Regional Growth Plan* identifies that economic and employment growth in the region should focus on existing core infrastructure nodes such as Avalon Airport.

The *G21 Regional Growth Plan* also features Avalon Airport as a key component of a larger national transport and logistics precinct that includes the Port of Geelong and the Geelong Ring Road Employment Precinct. This means that the precinct will be important for delivering significant transport routes to other key employment hubs.

## Barwon Regional Economic Development Strategy

The *Barwon Regional Economic Development Strategy* (2022) identifies the State Government's strategic directions to further drive economic growth and development in the Barwon region. It recognises the Avalon Airport precinct's significant growth opportunities as an international freight terminal airport. Maximising its potential will enhance the region's ability to export goods nationally and internationally.

The strategy aims to:

- Accelerate the transition to new and high-value manufacturing opportunities;
- Realise the potential of the visitor economy (i.e. Avalon Airport is a key opportunity for increasing visitation to the region);
- Build a sustainable and climate-resilient economy.

## Avalon Corridor Strategy (ACS)

The ACS identified the boundary of GAEP and is the strategic foundation for preparing the PSP. The ACS is a strategic planning document jointly prepared by the City of Greater Geelong and Wyndham City Council to guide land use in the Avalon Corridor. The VPA provided input on the strategy while it was being prepared.

Key objectives of the strategy include to:

- Identify and protect areas with recognised environmental, landscape, heritage and cultural value;
- Protect the operations of the Western Treatment Plant;
- Establish clear boundaries for development.

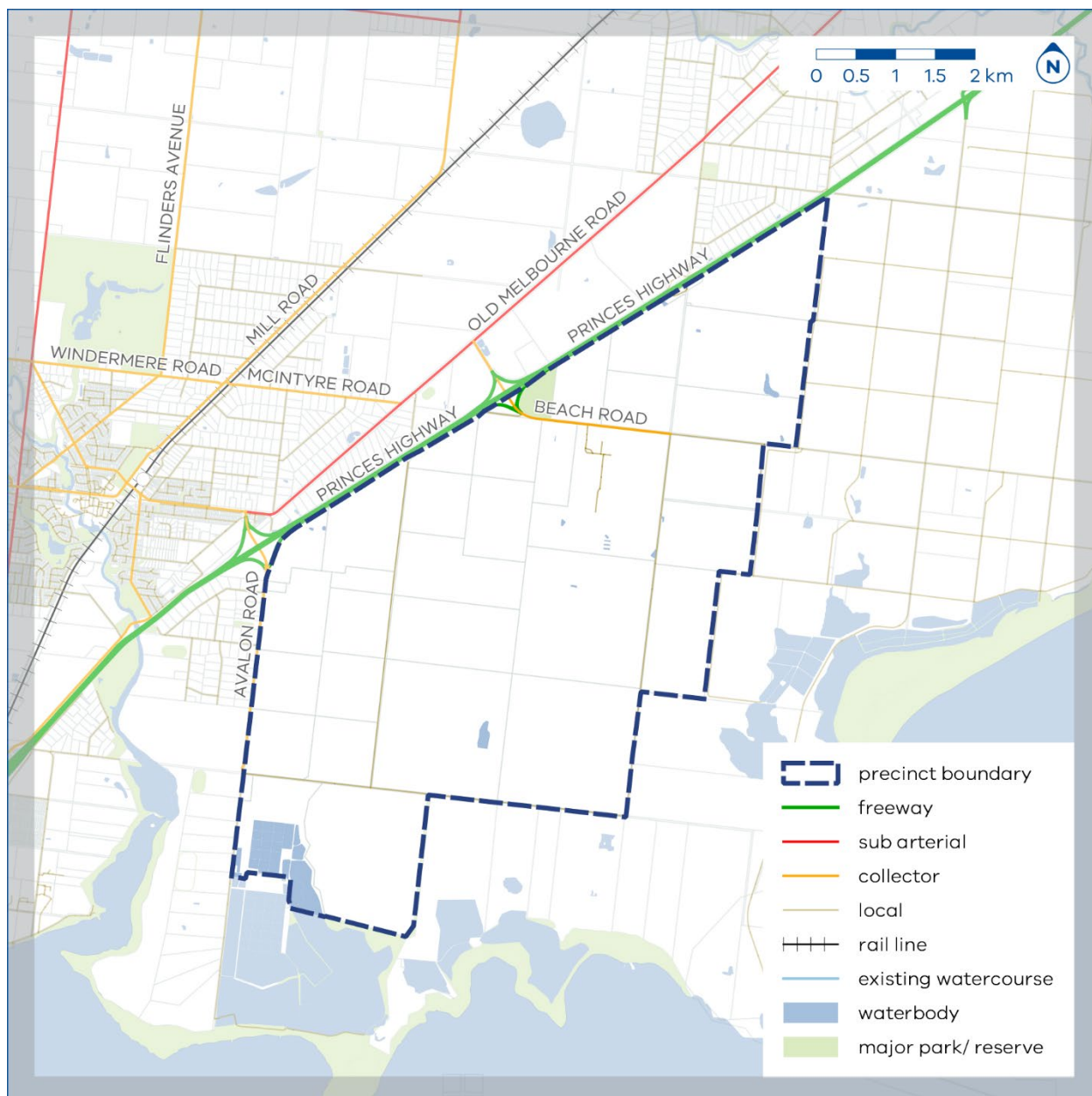
The ACS identifies GAEP as a key area that requires dedicated strategic planning to facilitate development, which enables commercial and industrial uses centred around Avalon Airport. These are to include uses which benefit the transport gateway locational attributes of the precinct. Uses that are incompatible with the functional operation of the airport are discouraged.

The VPA is undertaking the strategic planning for GAEP and carrying out this aspect of the ACS at the City of Greater Geelong's request and under instruction by the Minister for Planning.

## Precinct features

GAEP is located on the traditional land of the Wadawurrung People. GAEP is approximately 3560 hectares in size with 1000 hectares of employment land supply (refer to Figures 2 and 4). It contains the following key features:

- Areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity across the precinct area with recorded heritage places
- Living cultural landscape and views of significance to Traditional Owners
- Historic heritage inventory within the southwest corner associated with the coastal reserve and saltmarsh
- 13 owners across both crown land and private titles
- Existing agricultural use with a former saltwork site at the southwest corner
- Avalon Airport – a major national airport servicing domestic and international passenger and freight flights with curfew-free 24/7 access requirements
- Identified Extractive Industry Investigation Areas (subject to further investigation)
- Existing access to Princes Freeway, a national freight route connecting to Melbourne, Geelong and the regional cities on the west via Outer Geelong Ring Road
- Connectivity to existing Geelong Port (national major seaport) and future Bay West Port via Princes Freeway
- A Public Acquisition Overlay for a future Avalon Rail Link connecting to the Melbourne-Geelong Fast Rail Link
- Existing extensive trees across the precinct area and roadsides with significant species and ecological communities, with an existing Environmental Significance Overlay
- Water features including saltmarsh, creeks and wetland, adjacent to the state-significant wetland and close to the Ramsar wetland
- Areas across the precinct subject to the hazard risk of sea level rise
- Precinct is within the Bushfire Prone Area
- Existing and planned gas and oil pipelines within and adjacent to the precinct
- Surrounding utility infrastructure available for electricity, sewerage, water and gas network planning and connection to the precinct
- Land interfacing the precinct features:
  - North – Princes Freeway
  - East – Melbourne Water Western Treatment Plant
  - Southeast – quarry site
  - South – saltmarsh and coastal reserves
  - West – existing farm land
  - Northwest – Lara rural residential areas



**FIGURE 4** GAEP STUDY AREA

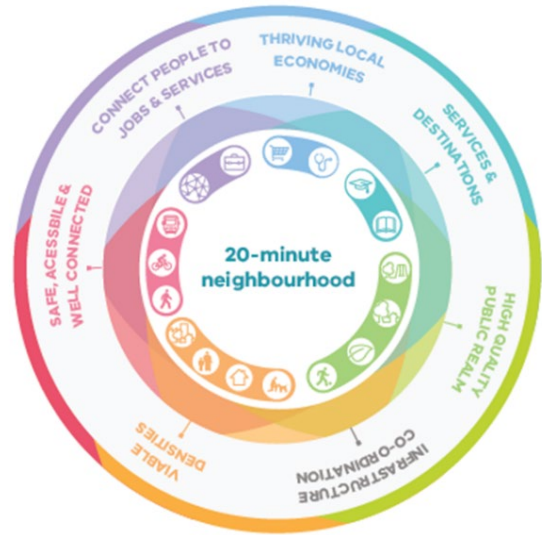
## Emerging themes

The information gathered at the pitching sessions has been analysed and sorted into five emerging themes.

The emerging themes shape the development of the vision and objectives for the precinct. They connect to the eventual land use plan as part of the co-design process.

In addition, GAEP will consider (where relevant) the PSP Guidelines and the seven hallmarks of the 20-minute neighbourhood to understand initial opportunities/constraints and to ensure key metrics are achieved (refer to Figure 5).

Table 1 demonstrates how each emerging theme relates to the PSP Guidelines and the 20-minute neighbourhood hallmarks.

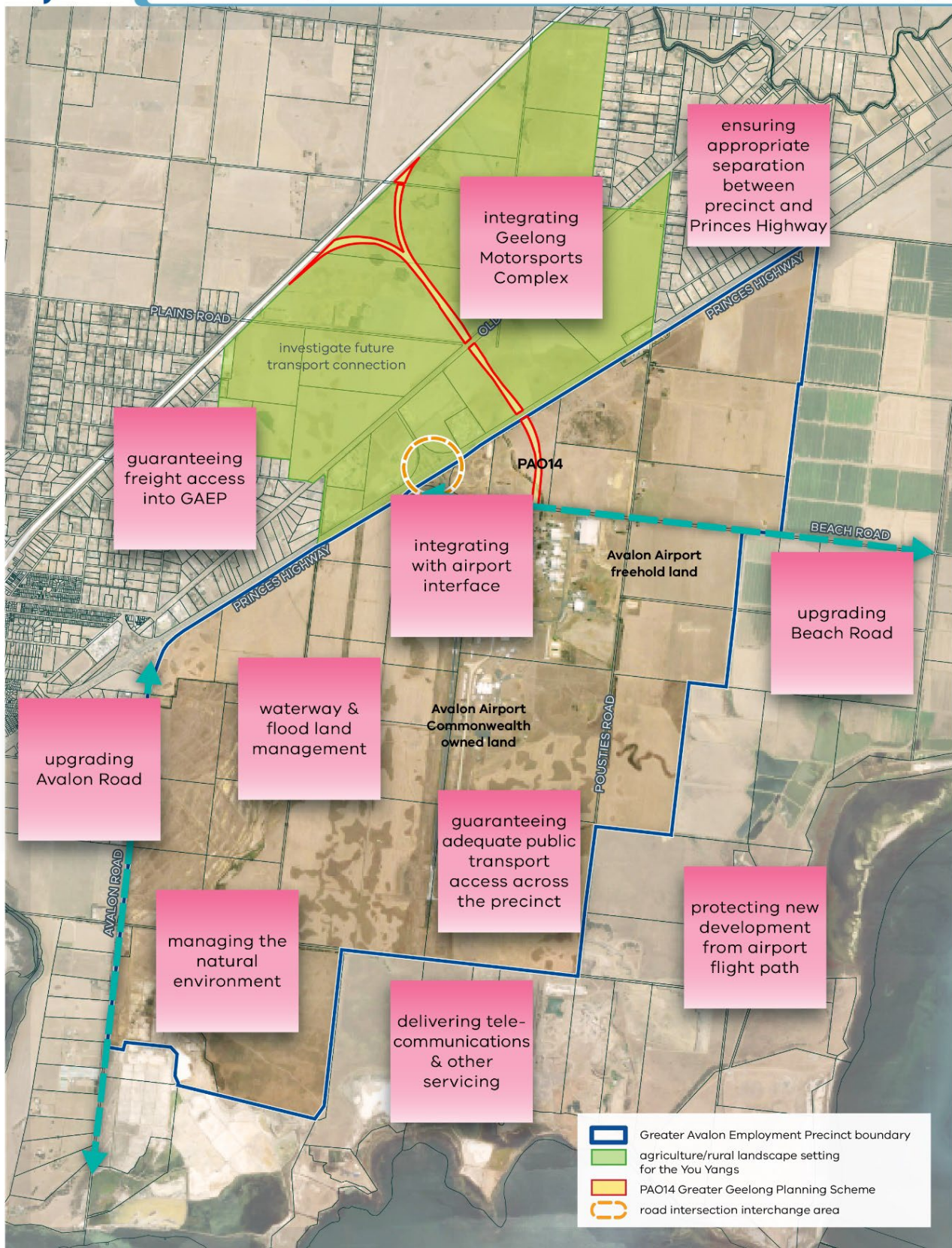


**FIGURE 5** PSP GUIDELINES AND THE 20-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOOD HALLMARKS

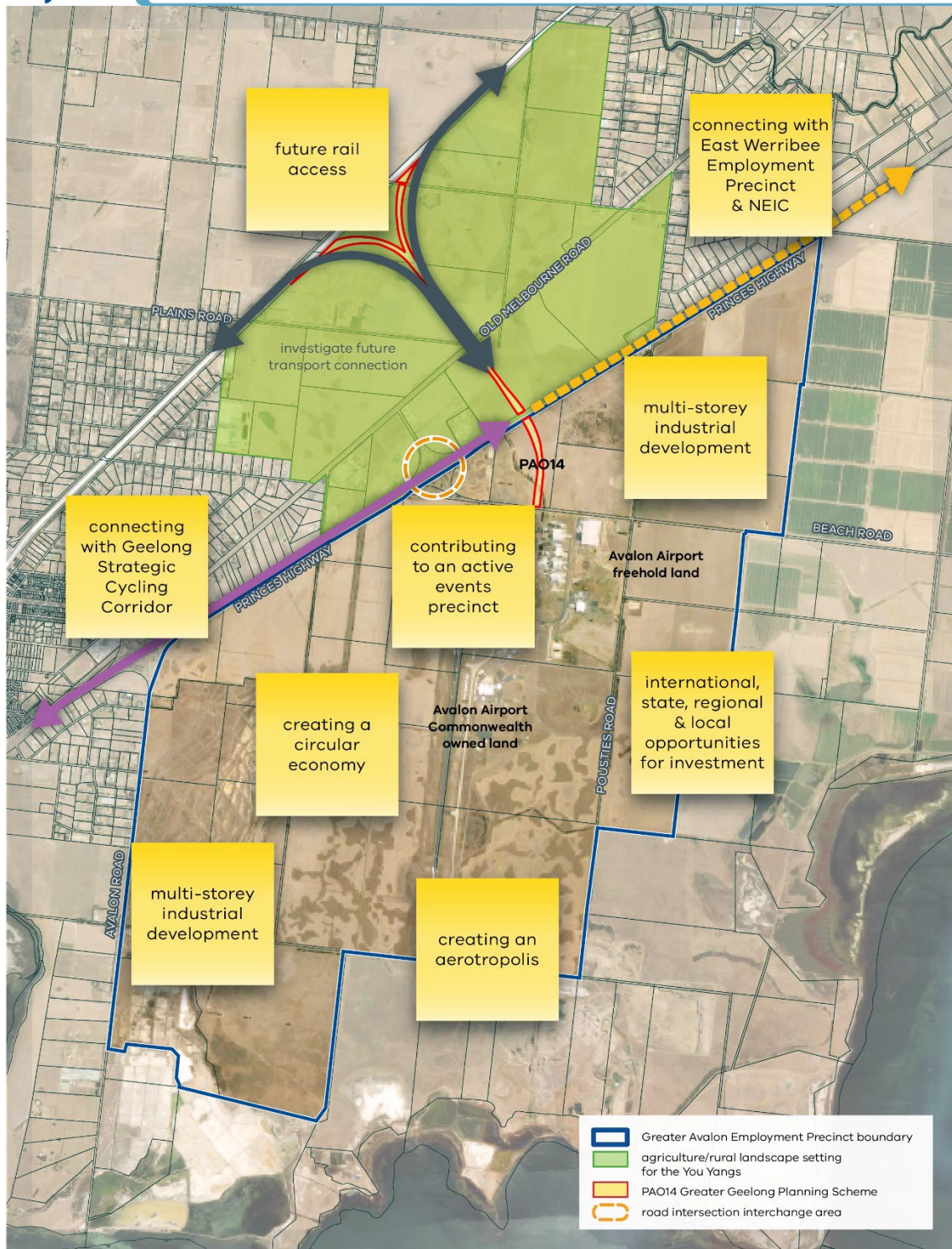
TABLE 1 EMERGING THEMES

**How the emerging themes relate to the PSP Guidelines and the 20-minute neighbourhood**

Emerging Themes	PSP Guidelines and the 20-minute neighbourhood hallmarks
<p><b>EMERGING THEME 1 – EMPLOYMENT AND LAND USE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new state infrastructure based employment precinct for Victoria</li> <li>• Commercial/industrial/airport related businesses</li> <li>• An aerotropolis</li> <li>• Local hubs for workers and visitors</li> <li>• Flexible land use outcomes supporting future advancements in industries</li> </ul>	<div> <div>Connect People to Jobs and Services</div> <div>Thriving Local Economies</div> <div>Services and Destinations</div> </div>
<p><b>EMERGING THEME 2 – TRANSPORT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connectivity to the airport and port facilities</li> <li>• Freight, worker, passenger and event-related movements</li> <li>• Enhanced public transport, cycling and walking connections</li> </ul>	<div> <div>Safe, Accessible and Well Connected</div> <div>Infrastructure Co-ordination</div> </div>
<p><b>EMERGING THEME 3 – WATER, ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holistic water and drainage management, (including protecting the Ramsar wetlands and dealing with sea level rise)</li> <li>• Enhanced and protected cultural heritage and landscape values</li> </ul>	<div> <div>High Quality Public Realm</div> <div>Infrastructure Co-ordination</div> </div>
<p><b>EMERGING THEME 4 – DESIGN AND INNOVATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading-edge sustainability outcomes (including circular economy, zero-carbon, tree canopy targets and more)</li> <li>• High quality built form including new industrial and commercial building typologies</li> <li>• Coordinated and innovative service delivery and infrastructure</li> </ul>	<div> <div>High Quality Public Realm</div> <div>Viable Densities</div> <div>Infrastructure Co-ordination</div> </div>



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PLAN 2: KEY OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

## EMERGING THEME 1 – EMPLOYMENT AND LAND USE

The precinct aims to deliver:

- A new state infrastructure based employment precinct for Victoria
- Commercial/industrial/airport related businesses
- An aerotropolis
- Local hubs for workers and visitors
- Flexible land use outcomes supporting future advancements in industries

Existing strategic documents (including the *Avalon Corridor Strategy*) support the need for a new industrial and employment precinct centred on Avalon Airport and identified as GAEP. The intent of GAEP is to enable development opportunities associated with this state significant transport gateway.

GAEP will unlock zoned land for employment and industrial development. It will facilitate land uses compatible with and complementary to Avalon Airport.

### Ideas and opportunities discussed:

- GAEP will play a key role in responding to high demand for employment land in Geelong and Greater Melbourne.
- GAEP will need to balance its land uses with the existing economic hierarchies present in Geelong and Melbourne.
- GAEP will need to consider a variety of planning tools that guarantee diverse employment based land uses with variable lot sizes (including large sites for “super users”) that enable different employment sectors.
- GAEP will need to consider how building heights for specific land uses may integrate with operations of the Avalon Airport runways.
- GAEP will provide further opportunities to boost Avalon Airport as an emerging events precinct.

- GAEP will be complementary to other employment precincts underway in Melbourne’s west, including East Werribee Employment Precinct and East Werribee National Employment and Innovation Cluster.
- Prior to confirming land uses, the VPA will need to understand existing Aboriginal cultural values relating to the site and how to best respond to them while undertaking strategic planning.
- There is a need to understand the potential opportunities and constraints relating to the Princes Freeway to the north of the precinct.
- Future land uses will need to consider the existing Mountain View quarry to the south and how the precinct will connect with its operations.
- Safety Management Study findings require placing compatible land uses close to the existing gas and oil pipelines.

### Other considerations:

Future employment and industrial land uses, their locations, staging of land release and potential lot sizes will be determined after technical assessments have been completed. These will be tested with landowners and other relevant stakeholders at the upcoming co-design workshop.

VPA is engaging with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Cooperation in an ongoing manner to inform the future plan for GAEP.

Cultural Heritage and Historical Heritage Impact Assessments will identify cultural and historic heritage sites of value. This information will be used to determine the future land use. It will help inform future development of the precinct and will be considered in conjunction with the recommendations of the Avalon Corridor Strategy’s Cultural Values Assessment.

In addition, the VPA will undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. This will identify

landscape and visual characteristics within GAEP that should be considered to help influence development of the precinct. This will help to maintain visual amenity and a sense of place as the land transforms.

The Buffer Assessment and Safety Management Study will assess the amenity, safety and human health risks from the existing high-impact activities/facilities within or close to the precinct. The Buffer Assessment will consider the reverse sensitivity impact from the interfaces with residential or other sensitive areas. The findings will inform the recommendations for buffers and help with mitigation strategies to ensure the land use is compatible and supports the growth of future employment land uses.

## EMERGING THEME 2 – TRANSPORT

The precinct aims to deliver:

- Connectivity to the airport and port facilities
- Freight, worker, passenger and event related movements
- Enhanced public transport, cycling and walking connections

GAEP has excellent access to a range of existing and planned state significant transport assets including Avalon Airport, Geelong Port, Bay West (planned), the Melbourne-Geelong Fast Rail Link, the Outer Metropolitan Ring Road (planned), and the Princes Freeway. These provide opportunities to connect GAEP into the freight network.

There is also a need to provide enhanced access for GAEP workers, Airport passengers and event participants. This will include improved public transport and cycle connections to Geelong and Melbourne, and local walking and cycling links.

### Ideas and opportunities discussed:

- GAEP will provide a variety of employment land uses. Freight access to support relevant land uses will be considered as part of the transport network.
- VPA will treat the separation between the precinct and Princes Freeway carefully. We will consider the role of the freeway as state significant infrastructure and its relationship to the precinct's transport network.
- Traffic modelling for GAEP will need to consider the transport networks of other growth areas in Geelong.
- GAEP will need to provide a pathway to upgrade important existing roads within the precinct including Avalon Road and Beach Road.
- There is an opportunity to plan for multiple modes of transport. Planning will seek to integrate clearly identified cycling

routes that have been identified in the Avalon Corridor Strategy and the Port Phillip Bay Trail. In addition, public transport will be important to maximise accessibility to the employment opportunities provided by the precinct.

- Even though government funding is not committed, the importance of the existing Public Acquisition Overlay for northern rail link will be considered as a key opportunity for public transport access to the precinct.
- Further consideration will be given to the role of Melbourne-Geelong Fast Rail Link to support public transport access to the precinct.

### Other considerations:

VPA will be working closely with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) to understand the need for, and possibility of, potential alignment options to explore as part of investigations into freight connection improvements of the area.

In addition, VPA will be undertaking an Integrated Transport Assessment (Phase 2 Study).

## EMERGING THEME 3 – WATER, ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

The precinct aims to deliver:

- Holistic water and drainage management, (including protecting the Ramsar wetlands and dealing with sea level rise)
- Enhanced and protected cultural heritage and landscape values

GAEP is located close to the coastline and a Ramsar wetland, so water and drainage management are key considerations. High quality drainage infrastructure is required to manage stormwater and water quality, and to address coastal flooding risks.

Biodiversity, native vegetation, and ecological values are present within GAEP and will continue to be valued and celebrated as defining elements as the precinct develops.

A Cultural Values Assessment was prepared for the Avalon Corridor Strategy, which identifies several considerations relevant to GAEP including the You Yangs (*Wurdi Youang*) and the Ramsar wetlands. It also identifies that GAEP will need to investigate potential impacts on Wadawurrung living cultural heritage and the natural and avian environment.

### Ideas and opportunities discussed:

- GAEP is a chance to put innovative integrated water management outcomes into practice.
- A holistic approach will need to take place when planning drainage, and other water related infrastructure, to ensure there is appropriate synergy between State Government planned components of the precinct and Avalon Airport's own master planning process.
- Given the importance of tree canopy coverage to provide urban cooling and general amenity, planning for GAEP will need to consider how to best implement

Urban Forestry outcomes in the context of an industrial and commercial precinct.

- Existing environmental values, such as the identified Ramsar wetlands and coastal salt marshes, will need to be understood prior to determining specific land uses in the precinct. In addition to their protection, these sites may present an opportunity to provide amenity for future employees of the precinct.
- Strategic planning for GAEP will need to take the increasing impacts of climate change into account. Of note, the proximity to the coast will mean that sea level rise may impact the precinct.

### Other considerations:

An Integrated Water Management (IWM) Strategy is being developed for the wider Avalon Corridor in collaboration with the City of Greater Geelong, Barwon Water and the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Cooperation. Findings from this report will be used to inform IWM strategies for GAEP and will help inform a site-specific assessment.

VPA will work closely with Corangamite Catchment Management Authority and the City of Greater Geelong to prepare a well-informed drainage strategy that appropriately services the precinct and adopts integrated water management outcomes.

VPA is also undertaking a Flora and Fauna Assessment and Arboriculture Assessment to understand what native vegetation, exotic vegetation and species exist in the area and which areas will need to be protected.

VPA will be undertaking a coastal management survey to understand the risks of coastal erosion and sea level rise on GAEP.

The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be used to explore matters significant to the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners.

## EMERGING THEME 4 – DESIGN AND INNOVATION

The precinct aims to deliver:

- Leading-edge sustainability outcomes, (including a circular economy, zero-carbon, tree canopy targets and more)
- High quality built form including new industrial and commercial building typologies
- Coordinated and innovative service delivery and infrastructure

GAEP is an opportunity to develop a highly innovative employment precinct that applies best practice design and sustainability responses, including encouraging circular economy uses. This innovative approach can extend to the design of buildings and the delivery of infrastructure.

### Ideas and opportunities discussed:

- GAEP provides a unique opportunity to implement innovative design guidelines to guide built form and urban design in multiple fields. These fields include environmentally sensitive urban design, water sensitive urban design and biodiversity sensitive urban design.
- Even though we need to consider airport runways, GAEP has the opportunity to explore diverse built form outcomes such as multi-level industrial buildings.
- Strategic planning for GAEP will provide a unique opportunity to investigate strategies for a circular economy and the necessary planning tools to achieve its implementation.
- Strategic planning for GAEP will need to ensure future workers in the precinct will be granted access to high amenity activity centres.
- GAEP will need to implement the findings of key innovative City of Greater Geelong policy documents, such as the Clever and Creative Strategy, and ensure

appropriate interfaces with the 'Green Breaks' identified in the Avalon Corridor Strategy.

- Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD), Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD), and Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design (BSUD) principles will need to be incorporated.
- GAEP will need to investigate innovative servicing methods that achieve a net zero climate emission output.
- The presence of Avalon Airport could present an opportunity to investigate bespoke funding arrangements for implementing key services and utilities.

### Other considerations:

During the strategic planning process, VPA will be working closely with its agency partners and precinct landowners to understand where innovative ideas can be implemented in GAEP. VPA will also rely heavily on the newly revised PSP guidelines for inspiration and practical measures to implement into the precinct.

## Next steps

### Vision and purpose workshop

The next step in the GAEP process is the vision and purpose workshop (refer to Figure 6). The workshop will be held online and will run for approximately 4 hours. All stakeholders that participated in the pitching sessions and precinct landowners are invited to attend. The purpose of the workshop is to discuss and provide feedback on the initial themes presented at the pitching sessions. The workshop will include interactive activities to validate and develop the GAEP vision and emerging themes.

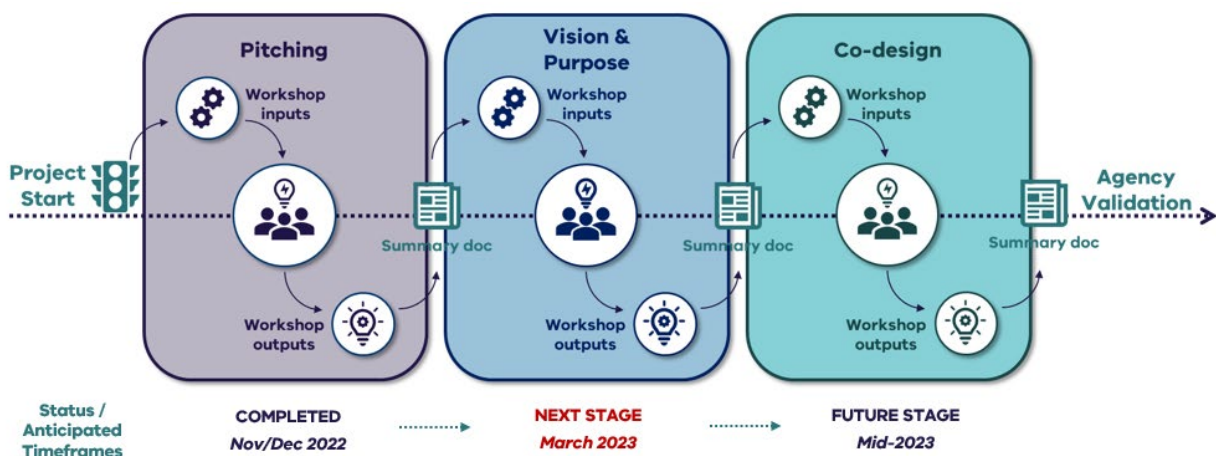
### Technical reports

Various technical studies are being commissioned for GAEP to identify land capability constraints and support early planning decisions.

Phase 1 technical reports include:

- Economic and Scoping Study
- Biodiversity Assessment
- Arboriculture Assessment
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment
- Historic Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment
- Land Capability Assessment
- Buffer Assessment
- Sodic Soil Assessment
- Bushfire Risk Assessment
- Integrated Water Management Study
- Landscape and Visual Amenity Assessment

Two phases of technical reports will be completed for GAEP. Phase 2 technical reports will be undertaken during the co-design process in mid-late 2023. These will be informed by outcomes of the phase 1 technical reports and the co-design process.



**FIGURE 6** GAEP PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW AND ANTICIPATED TIMEFRAMES

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