



Neighbourhood
Economics



SGS
Economics
& Planning

State of the Economy and Opportunities

In Norlane and Corio



About This Report

This report has been commissioned by Neighbourhood Economics. Jointly prepared alongside SGS Economics and Planning, this report forms part of a broader suite of reports exploring the neighbourhoods of Norlane and Corio in the postcode 3214. Together, these reports seek to understand these neighbourhoods through a socio-economic lens, while situating them in the wider Geelong regional economy. The fundamental purpose of this work is to begin identifying opportunities for place-based economic transformation.

This report should be read alongside:

- **One Place, Two Stories:** Insights from engagement with anchor institutions and neighbourhood residents
- **Community Wealth Building – What Will it Take:** An examination of structural challenges to this work, and the Community Wealth Building framework.
- **A Postcode, not a Destiny:** A high-level summary with recommendations.

Acknowledgements

We meet on Wadawurrung Country. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these lands, paying respect to Elders past and present. We recognise the loss of lands and culture, knowing the consequences for people and community. We also honour the long history of Wadawurrung peoples as the original traders, knowledge-holders, and economic designers of this place – cultivating exchange, stewardship, and relationships of reciprocity long before colonisation. In seeking to foster community-driven economic growth, we first acknowledge the ongoing connections of First Nations people to these lands, their waters, and the local community, and we recognise that sovereignty has never been ceded.

We want to acknowledge our partners at SGS Economics and Planning for their rigorous analysis, rich insights, and grounded economic expertise. We also gratefully acknowledge the Greater Melbourne Foundation for their generous support. Their belief in this work has been instrumental in bringing it to life.

Contents

- 1. Introduction 3
- 2. Demographic and Economic Profile 4
 - 2.1 Introduction 5
 - 2.2 Demographics 6
 - 2.3 Socio-Economic Status 10
 - 2.4 Housing 17
 - 2.5 Jobs and Economy 21
- 3. Business and Community Activity and Perspectives 30
 - 3.1 Introduction 30
 - 3.2 Commercial and Retail Areas 30
 - 3.3 Industrial Areas 32
 - 3.4 Community Infrastructure 33
 - 3.5 Business Owner and Operator Perspectives 35
- 4. ‘Future Casting’: Norlane and Corio’s Economic Prospects in Context 39
 - 4.1 Introduction 39
 - 4.2 Future Population, Households, and Housing 39
 - 4.3 Future Employment 42
 - 4.4 Key Economic Prospects 45
 - 4.5 Key Industry Sectors 48
 - 4.6 Emerging Trends and Economic Disruptors 54
- 5. Conclusion 57
 - 5.1 Insights and Implications 57
 - 5.2 Opportunities for Place-Based Economic Development 58
 - 5.3 Next Steps 62

List of Tables

Table 1: Population 2011, 2016, 2021	6
Table 2: Population Age median and mean, 2011 and 2021	7
Table 3: Car dependence and usage, 2021	9
Table 4: Location of residents 5 years prior, 2021	13
Table 5: Median Weekly Personal Income (\$).....	14
Table 6: Median house prices, 2014-24	20
Table 7: Median weekly rent and household income, 2021	20
Table 8: Employment ‘self-containment’, 2011-21	24
Table 9: Industry of employment, 2011-21	25
Table 10: Industry of employment, place of work, 2024.....	26
Table 11: Occupations of resident workers, 2021	27
Table 12: Worker distance from place of residence, 2016	28
Table 13: Population forecast.....	39
Table 14: Household forecast.....	40
Table 15: Greater Geelong employment forecasts (place of work), 2024.....	44
Table 16: Broad Land Use Categories	64
Table 17: ‘Main street’ retail centres (floorspace square metres)	66
Table 18: ‘Big box’ retail centres (floorspace square metres).....	66
Table 19: ‘Bulky goods’ and dispersed retail centres (land area square metres)	66
Table 20: Large lot strategic industrial precincts - orange precincts.....	67
Table 21: Light industrial / Urban Services precincts – red precincts.....	68
Table 22: Key aspirations and programs, G21 Geelong Region Plan 2050.....	73
Table 23: Relevant strategic directions, objectives and major initiatives, CoGG Council Plan 2025-2976	

List of Figures

Figure 1: Norlane, Corio, North Shore (Suburbs and Localities)	5
Figure 2: Population growth rates 2011-21	7
Figure 3: Household types, 2021.....	8
Figure 4: Proportion of residents who speak a language other than English at home, 2021.....	9
Figure 5: Share of residents with an education qualification, 2021	11
Figure 6: Labour force participation rate, 2011-21	12
Figure 7: Unemployment rate, 2011-21	12
Figure 8: Median weekly personal income, 2021.....	13
Figure 9: Median salaries and superannuation, 2021-22	15
Figure 10: Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage, 2021	16
Figure 11: Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage, 2021	16
Figure 12: Housing structure types, 2021	17
Figure 13: Household tenure, 2021	18
Figure 14: Households owned (including with mortgage), 2021	19
Figure 15: GVA of ANZSIC 1-digit industries, 2010.....	22
Figure 16: GVA of ANZSIC 1-digit industries, 2024.....	22
Figure 17: The evolving workforce, 1961-2021	23
Figure 18: Proportion of residents who own a business, 2021.....	29
Figure 19: Proportion of businesses by number of employees, 2021	29
Figure 20: Community and infrastructure areas in Norlane, Corio and North Shore.....	34
Figure 21: Northern and Western Growth Areas Plan	41
Figure 22: Greater Geelong employment forecasts, 2024.....	43
Figure 23: Commercial and industrial zoned areas in Norlane, Corio and North Shore	63
Figure 24: Commercial areas in Norlane, Corio and North Shore.....	65
Figure 25: Industrial areas in Norlane, Corio and North Shore	67
Figure 26: G21 Region Plan 2050 strategic framework.....	72
Figure 27: Greater Geelong economic development framework	75

Norlane and Corio's Rise and Fall: A Short History

The suburbs of Norlane and Corio are located to the north of the City of Geelong.

While having different characteristics, they are united in being referred to as Geelong's northern suburbs. They abut Corio Bay and have proximity to the Geelong Port.

They also share similar demographics and socio-economic characteristics and are ranked 1st and 4th respectively for highest levels of socio-economic disadvantage in Victoria of places with a population of 4,000 or more. However, this is a long way from when Norlane and Corio were a part of the post war manufacturing economic force that propelled the Geelong and Australian economies.

Norlane and Corio were established from the mid-1920s when housing started to be built for workers at the newly established Ford factory. Ford's main criteria for the location of this new assembly plant were that the facility had to be in or near a decent-sized town with a good supply of labour, and it had to have a deep-water port for getting the kits into the country by ship.

In 1929, not long after the opening of the Ford Factory in Norlane, Corio Distillers opened a large-scale whiskey distillery in Corio. By the end of that year the distillery was producing an extraordinary 500,000 gallons of whiskey a year and by 1938 production was at around 12 million gallons of whiskey and another 5 million gallons of Gin. This made up around two thirds of the Australian whiskey trade and half of the gin market with the Corio Distillery being regarded as one the biggest in the southern hemisphere.

Other large-scale manufacturing followed with International Harvester establishing its Australian Head office and manufacturing line in Norlane in 1939. By 1947 this became one of the largest iron foundries in the Southern Hemisphere and by 1950 the factory was producing 300 tractors a month.

In 1949 Shell Oil company announced it would construct an oil refinery in Corio. With over 1,000 workers required to build the refinery, prefabricated housing was built on 60 acres close to the site, which later became known as the Shell Estate. The refinery opened in 1954 and was the first post war oil refinery in Australia.

What was critical to Norlane and Corio, but also Geelong, during this time of rapid industrialisation and population growth were the creation of secondary, supply chain industries such as iron foundries, textiles, cement, fibro plaster, fertilisers and glass. It is estimated that over 10,000 workers were employed in these secondary industries.

Norlane and Corio rapidly expanded during this period of industrialisation benefitting from the formation of the Victorian Housing Commission. The Commission, established in 1938 with the task of reclaiming inner Melbourne city slums, broadened its remit to include providing houses for workers and returning WW II soldiers. This expansion was assisted in 1945 when the Federal Government started providing funding under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreements.

The Commission built 20 estates in Corio between the late 1950s and mid 1970's while just under 2,500 dwellings were built in Norlane. Of those, approximately 1,200 were prefabricated houses from the Commission's Holmesglen factory.



From the 1970s, Commission housing became increasingly means tested meaning those living in the dwellings were more likely to be from a very low socio-economic background and recipients of income support.

A process, often referred to as residualisation occurred whereby social housing tenants who have the means often choose to exit this tenure, leaving behind neighbourhoods comprised of those with least resources and opportunities.

Today, 18.4% and 9.2% of households in Norlane and Corio respectively are social housing. This is compared to a 2.5% Victorian average and 2.6% G21 regional average.

As globalisation, free trade and economic reform took place world-wide, Australia's manufacturing sector found it harder to compete. A steady decline of the larger manufacturers in Norlane and Corio saw each of them slowly reduce their employees until eventually they closed.

With a declining agricultural market and a cut in tariffs International Harvester were no longer able to compete and closed their Norlane operations in 1982. Corio Whiskey soon followed as a decrease in import duty on foreign whiskeys saw it fall from favour with the market and eventually closed its operations in 1989.

Through Federal Government support, Ford remained in operation longer, but this assistance gradually diminished, leading the Norlane factory to shrink and ultimately close in 2016. In response, successive governments, both state and federal provided significant funding to help the region transition.

From the 1980s onwards, programs ranging from retraining allowances and redundancy packages to regional investment funds were rolled out, with the most substantial interventions occurring after the Ford closure. However, while estimates suggest tens of millions of dollars flowed into Norlane and Corio over four decades, this assistance was often fragmented, time-limited, and focused on short-term adjustment rather than long-term regeneration.

As a result, the scale of support was ultimately insufficient to counteract the profound loss of secure employment and the deepening cycle of socio-economic disadvantage that became entrenched in these communities.

While the broader Geelong region has experienced significant economic growth and diversification since the closures, including expansion in health, education, and advanced manufacturing, this prosperity has not been evenly shared. Norlane and Corio have largely been left behind, with entrenched disadvantage persisting despite the city's wider renewal.

The factors affecting Norlane and Corio are complex and multi-generational. However, high levels of social housing and its residualisation over time, macro-economic policy shifts and reform that have led to the demise of significant manufacturing businesses, and a stagnation of real, above-inflation increases to income support benefits between 1994 and 2021 cannot be underestimated and are part of their narrative.

1. Introduction

Neighbourhood Economics (NE) is undertaking an Economic Opportunity Mapping project focussed on Norlane and Corio in the northern Geelong area.

The communities in Norlane and Corio are amongst the most disadvantaged in Victoria. The aim of Neighbourhood Economics' work is to bring a 'hyper-local' focus to address the entrenched disadvantage of these communities and offer hope and pathways for meaningful economic re-engagement. Tackling disadvantage in Norlane and Corio will be critical to supporting the region's broader economic transition.

The approach draws inspiration from community wealth building (CWB) principles. CWB is a people-centred approach to local economic development that aims to redistribute wealth and empower communities by enhancing local ownership and control over economic resources

NE has identified the following outcomes from this project:

- Clearly articulated economic opportunities for the region
- A nuanced understanding of critical barriers
- A compelling argument for change

SGS Economics and Planning (SGS) worked with and assisted NE to undertake part one of this study, analysing the history, and the state of the economy in these two suburbs. This study will inform the next stages of engagement with business and community.

The content of this report covers:

- Demographic and economic profile
- Business and community activity and perspectives
- 'Future casting'; Norlane and Corio's economic prospects in context
- Conclusions

2. Demographic and Economic Profile

Overview

Norlane and Corio, once thriving worker suburbs in Geelong's north integrated with the city's industrial economy, have experienced a prolonged period of economic and social transformation leading to communities with entrenched disadvantage. The combined population in Norlane and Corio was about 24,000 in 2021 and recent population growth has been modest, with a 5% increase between 2011 and 2021 (compared to 29% across Greater Geelong). The population is notably younger – median ages of 35 in Corio and 37 in Norlane, compared to 39 in Greater Geelong and 40 in the wider G21 region – reflecting younger families and single-parent households seeking affordable housing. The suburbs are also more culturally diverse, with over 30% of residents speaking a language other than English at home, roughly double the regional average.

Despite this diversity and youth, socio-economic indicators paint a stark picture. Educational attainment is low, with fewer than 20% holding post-school qualifications, and workforce participation lags at 45–50%, well below regional levels. Unemployment remains high, Today, there are more resident workers (8,227 in 2021) than there are jobs in the area (7,454 in 2021). People who both reside and work in Norlane and Corio are typically in lower-paid service sectors, or in construction, and only 22% of residents work within these two suburbs, highlighting a growing disconnect between residents and nearby employment available.

Median incomes are around 40% lower than the regional average, and superannuation balances are 70% below neighbouring areas, reflecting limited asset accumulation. Housing remains relatively affordable, but over half of Norlane households and 40% in Corio rent, meaning that the advantages of home ownership for wealth accumulation are typically not available.

The legacy of the building of post-war worker housing means that almost a fifth (18.4%) of all households in Norlane and one in ten (9.2%) in Corio are in social housing – compared to only 3.1% across Greater Geelong. Norlane and Corio have 39% of all of Greater Geelong's social housing. The stock has become residualised, typically occupied by long term unemployed adults, households with entrenched disadvantage, or new migrant arrivals. Norlane and Corio have become destinations for households needing last resort housing. Socio-economic indices place both suburbs in the bottom decile for socio-economic disadvantage, in stark contrast to Greater Geelong's eighth decile.

Together, these indicators reveal a community facing disadvantage, shaped by structural economic shifts, with low education attainment and employment, and constrained housing mobility. The communities in these suburbs are not sharing in the benefits that have arisen through Geelong's recent population growth and economic change.

2.1 Introduction

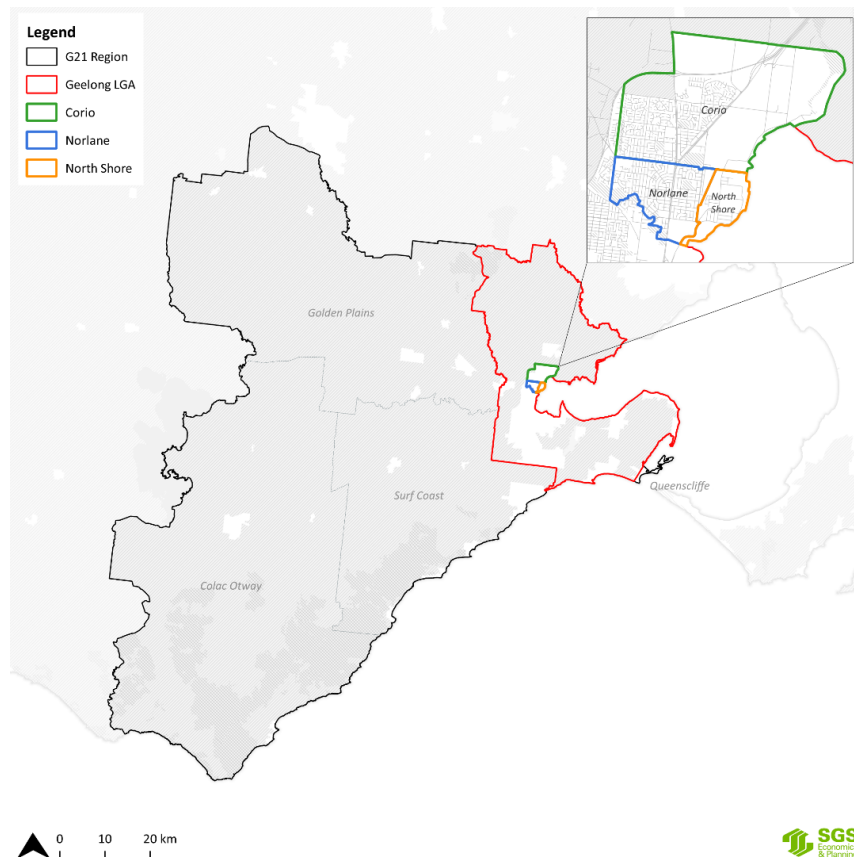
This section contains a demographic and economic profile of Norlane and Corio covering:

- population, age, household type
- economic status of residents including education levels, occupational profile, labour force participation, unemployment, incomes and savings, and overall socio-economic status
- housing growth, types and tenures
- jobs and economic opportunities including industry of employed residents, proximity to job opportunities, business and entrepreneurship.

It reports historical change (mostly covering recent censuses 2011, 2016, 2021) and compares Norlane and Corio with the Greater Geelong LGA and the G21 Region (Colac Otway, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast LGAs). Data for North Shore – adjacent to Norlane and Corio and containing major industrial precincts - is often included but it is home to a very small population and doesn't feature much in the commentary. The relevant geographies are shown below.

The Census of Population and Housing is the primary source. Other sources are noted. The last census was 2021, and while it is almost 5 years old there has not been material changes to demographics, housing and in the local economy that would make any findings or conclusions not relevant.

Figure 1: Norlane, Corio, North Shore (Suburbs and Localities)



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

2.2 Demographics

Overview

Norlane and Corio exhibit a distinct demographic profile marked by modest population growth, a younger age structure, and greater social diversity compared to Greater Geelong and the G21 region.

Between 2011 and 2021, their combined population grew by just 5%, significantly below the 29% growth seen across Greater Geelong which included the growth in new suburbs. The median age in both suburbs is lower – 35 in Corio and 37 in Norlane – reflecting an influx of younger families and single-parent households seeking more affordable housing, in contrast to slightly older populations including incoming retirees in some surrounding areas.

Family structures differ notably, with fewer traditional two-parent families and a higher prevalence of lone-person and single-parent households often associated with financial stress. Norlane and Corio are also destination suburbs for migrants relative to Greater Geelong or G21 as a whole. Over 30% of the people who live in Norlane and Corio speak a language other than English at home – more than double the regional average.

Transport access is a challenge: while car dependence for work is high, car ownership is significantly lower, limiting mobility and access to employment.

These factors collectively point to a population that is younger, more culturally diverse, and facing greater socio-economic constraints than the broader region.

Modest population growth

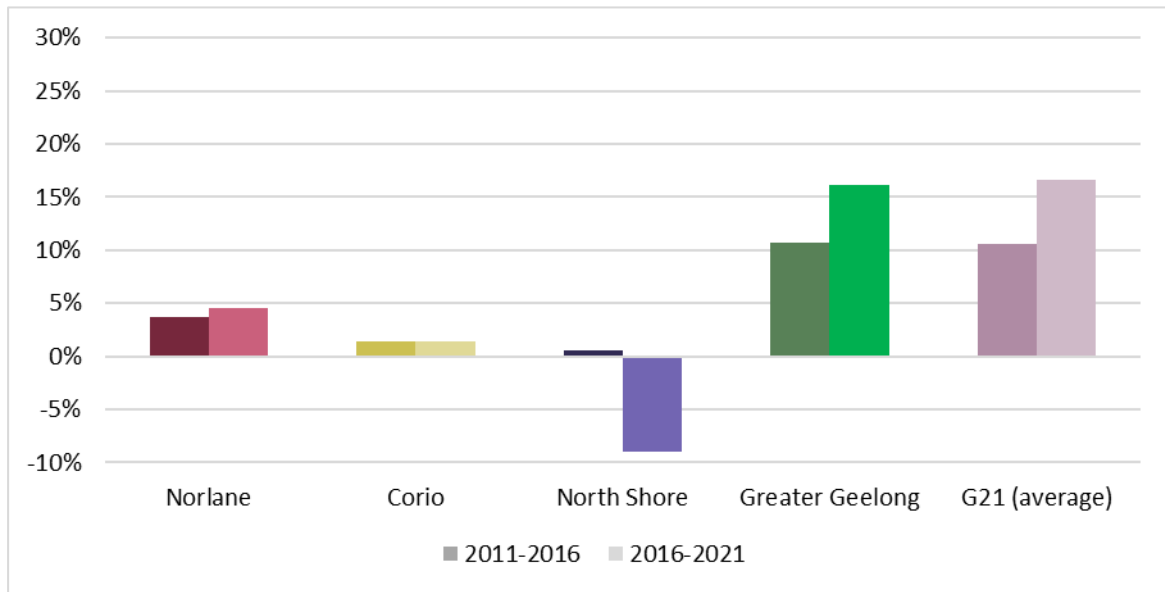
The combined population in Norlane and Corio was about 24,000 in 2021, up by about 5% or 1,091 people from 2011. This is modest growth compared to Greater Geelong where new suburbs contributed to growth of over 29% or 60,000 people in 10 years.

Table 1: Population 2011, 2016, 2021

Location	2011	2016	2021
Norlane	8,014	8,308	8,682
Corio	15,074	15,292	15,497
North Shore	355	357	325
Colac Otway	20,347	20,971	22,423
Golden Plains	18,772	21,687	24,985
Greater Geelong	210,873	233,426	271,057
Queenscliffe	2,998	2,854	3,276
Surf Coast	25,868	29,402	37,694
G21	278,858	308,340	359,435

Source: ABS Census

Figure 2: Population growth rates 2011-21



Source: ABS Census

A typically younger population

In 2021 the population skewed slightly younger in Norlane and Corio than the main comparator regions. The presence of approximately 800 borders at Geelong Grammar School affects results for Corio (median 35) but Norlane also had a younger median age (37) compared to Greater Geelong (39) and G21 (40). The median age declined in Norlane between 2011 and 2021 (39 to 37).

The younger age profile is likely due to newly arriving families looking for cheaper housing opportunities, and single parent families including in public housing. In addition, retirees will be more prominent in the comparator regions (particularly in G21).

Table 2: Population age median and mean, 2011 and 2021

Location	Median 2011	Median 2021	Mean 2021
Norlane	39	37	40
Corio	34	35	38
North Shore	39	45	44
Greater Geelong	39	39	41
G21	40	40	41

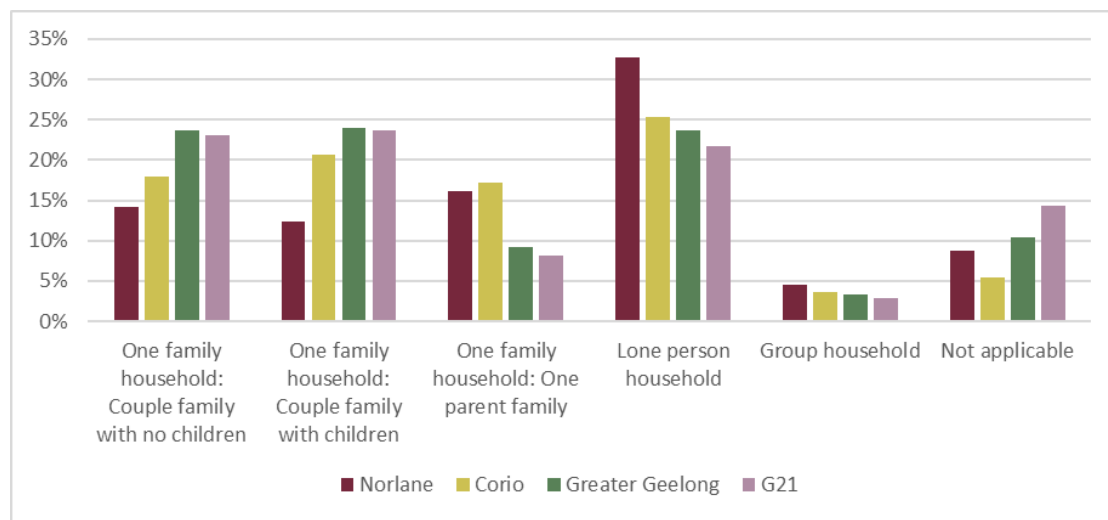
Source: ABS Census

Fewer ‘traditional’ families, more one parent families and lone person households

In 2021 there was a lower share of ‘traditional’ two parent families – particularly in Norlane (16%) but also Corio (21%) compared to Greater Geelong and G21 (both 24%).

Norlane and Corio had an over-representation of often ‘in-stress’ lone person households, and particularly one parent families. Lone person households were 33% of households in Norlane and 25% in Corio compared to 24% in Greater Geelong and 22% in G21. One-parent families were 16% in Norlane and 17% in Corio compared to 9% in Greater Geelong and 8% in G21.

Figure 3: Household types, 2021



ABS Census

Source:

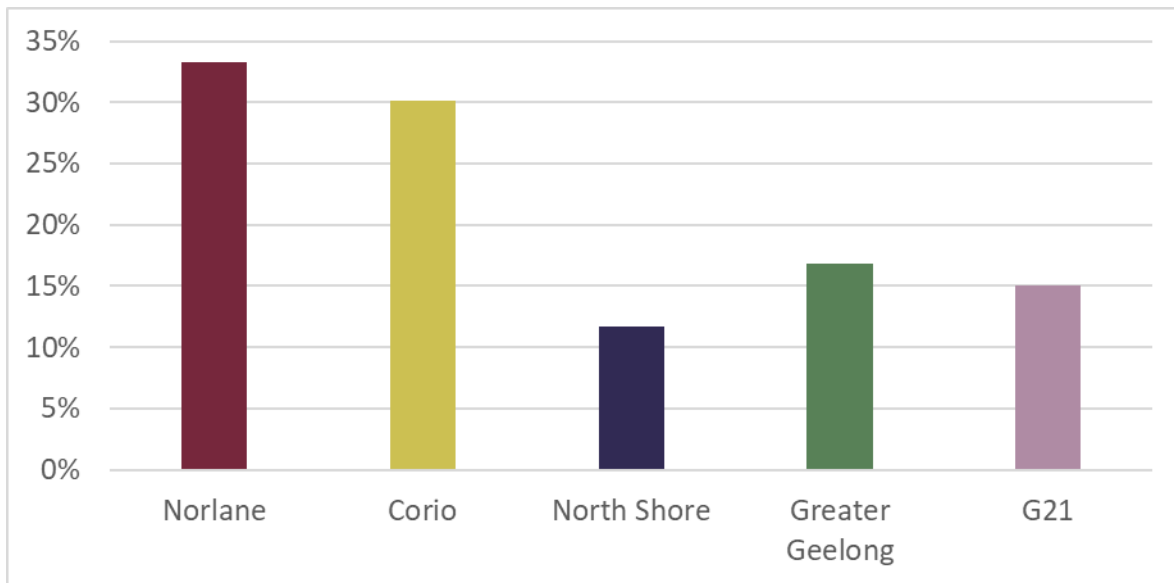
A destination for migrants

Norlane and Corio are likely destinations for migrants ‘starting out’ in life in Australia – given relatively lower cost housing including social housing in which they are likely to be over-represented compared to English speakers. In the 10 years to 2021, 1500 people on humanitarian visas settled in Greater Geelong¹.

A significantly higher proportion of Norlane and Corio residents (33% and 30% respectively) speak a language other than English at home, when compared to the Greater Geelong and G21 (12% to 16%).

¹ Source: Department of Home Affairs, Last 10 Financial Years by Migration Streams. <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/settlement-statistics/4/>

Figure 4: Proportion of residents who speak a language other than English at home, 2021



Source: ABS Census

Car dependence for work but also significant share without cars

Norlane in particular (83% of households with a car), but Corio as well (91%) have lower rates of car ownership than North Shore, Greater Geelong and G21 regions (93% to 95%).

This is indicative of lower incomes (households simply can't afford to run a car) but also indicates that a significant share of households in Norlane and Corio will have limited access to opportunities that rely on walking or public transport (which is relatively scarce).

Car dependence for work journeys is high but the proportion of people who drive to work is slightly lower in Norlane and Corio than in the comparator regions. In combination these factors represent a constraint on the ability of Norlane and Corio residents to access work opportunities – particularly given that jobs are increasingly dispersed across Greater Geelong and beyond.

Table 3: Car dependence and usage, 2021

Location	Proportion of households with motor vehicles	Proportion of workers that drive to work
Norlane	83%	95%
Corio	91%	96%
North Shore	93%	93%
Greater Geelong	95%	97%
G21	95%	97%

Source: ABS Census

2.3 Socio-Economic Status

Overview

Residents of Norlane and Corio experience significantly lower socio-economic status compared to Greater Geelong and the broader G21 region.

Educational attainment is markedly lower, with fewer than 20% holding any qualification and only 11–13% having a diploma or bachelor's degree, versus 28% in Greater Geelong and G21. Workforce engagement is also weaker, with participation rates at 45% in Norlane and 50% in Corio, well below the 59–61% seen regionally. Unemployment remains stubbornly high, with rates around 12-20%, compared to ~5% in Greater Geelong.

Median weekly incomes in Norlane and Corio are about 40% lower than regional averages, and superannuation balances are disproportionately low—around 70% below neighbouring suburbs—reflecting limited asset accumulation.

IRSAD scores, of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage, place Norlane and Corio in the bottom decile for socio-economic advantage. This reflects the low income and many people in unskilled occupations. This is in stark contrast to Greater Geelong's eighth decile ranking which reflects a relative lack of disadvantage and greater advantage in general. While the population is relatively stable, with fewer residents moving in or out, recent arrivals to the Geelong Region tend to have higher incomes, likely influenced by post-COVID migration trends to locations beyond Metropolitan Melbourne with high environmental amenity.

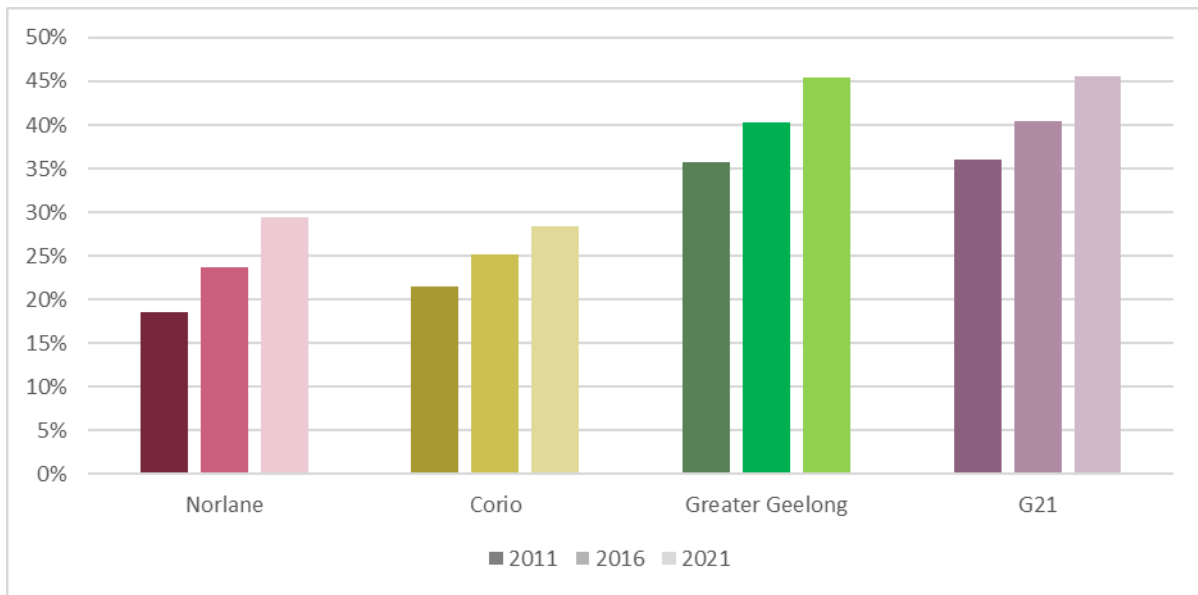
Overall, entrenched disadvantage, low education, precarious employment, and limited wealth define the socio-economic landscape of Norlane and Corio.

Much lower educational status

While the share of the population with educational qualifications has been increasing in Norlane and Corio and at similar rates to GG and G21, less than 30% of the population in Norlane and Corio had an educational qualification in 2021 – compared to about 45% in both Greater Geelong and G21.

In 2021 only 13% and 11% of the Norlane and Corio population had a bachelor or diploma level of education, compared to 28% in both Greater Geelong and G21.

Figure 5: Share of residents with an education qualification, 2021



Source: ABS Census

Less workforce engagement

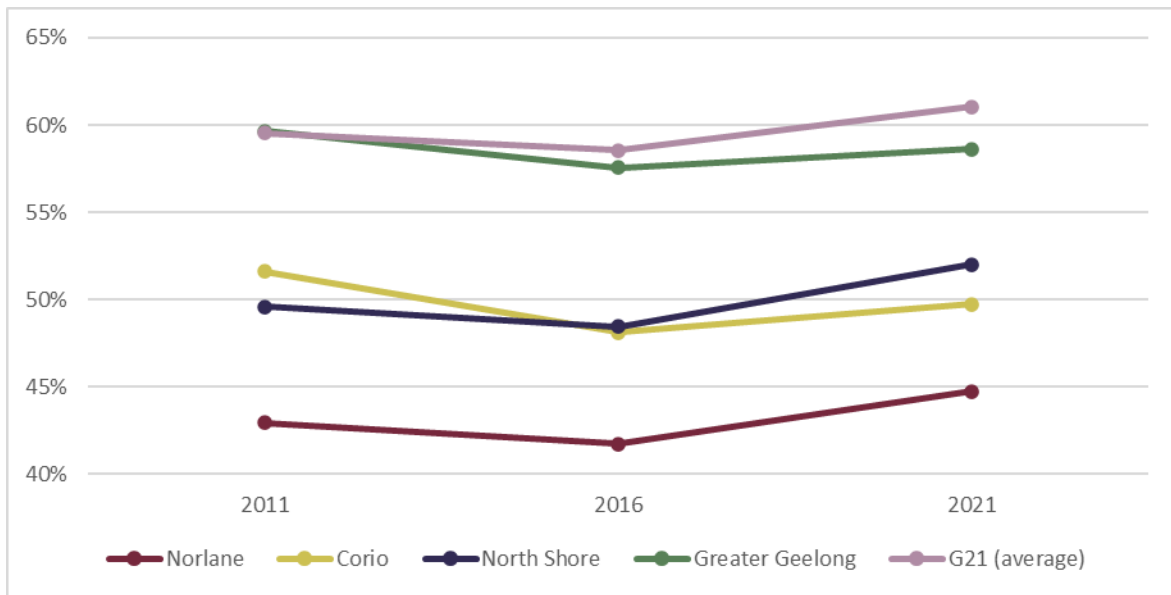
The Geelong region felt the flow through impact of the Ford closure with a big peak of unemployment in 2016 (the census was conducted less than a month after the last car was produced) – but the Norlane and Corio workforce were particularly affected, with participation rates declining and unemployment rates peaking.

In 2021 the participation rate was only 45% in Norlane and 50% in Corio, compared to 59% in Greater Geelong and 61% in G21. Unemployment has been stubbornly much higher in Norlane and Corio (10.4% and 8.6% in 2021) compared to GG and G21 (4.4% and 4.0%).

Additionally, since 2021, the unemployment rates of Norlane and Corio have once again heightened, while Geelong has remained stable. For the June quarter of 2025, Norlane saw an unemployment rate of 20.5%, and Corio saw a rate of 12.4%, compared to Greater Geelong’s 4.6% (the same as it was in 2021). The economic benefits of COVID-19 period for Greater Geelong have been maintained in the years since, but not so for Norlane and Corio.²

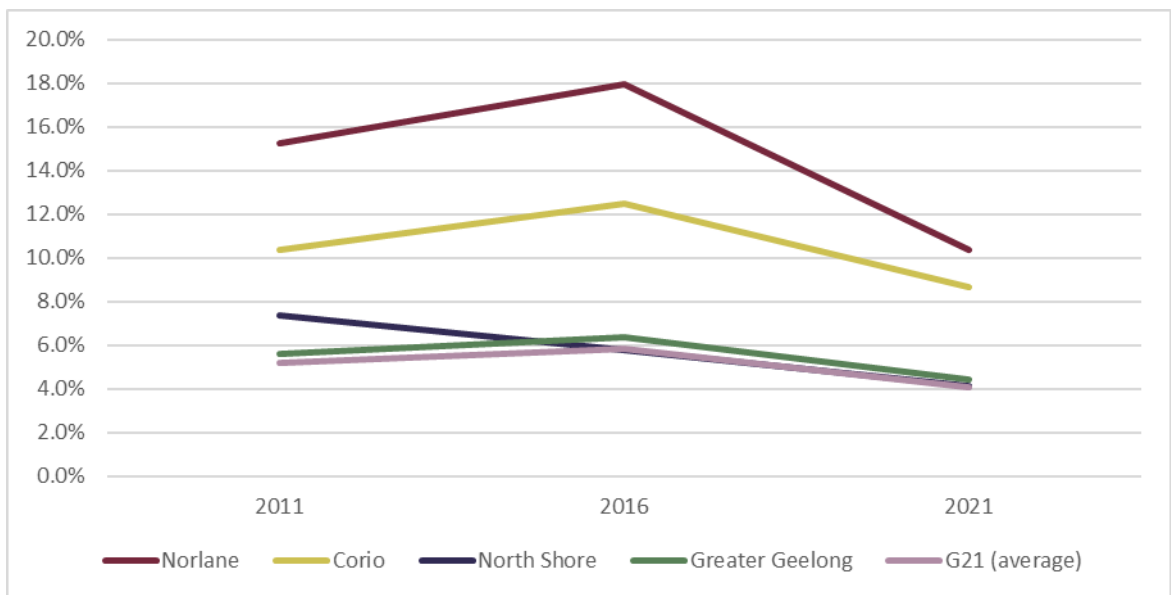
² <https://www.dewr.gov.au/employment-research/resources/salm-smoothed-lga-datafiles-asgs-2025>

Figure 6: Labour force participation rate, 2011-21



Source: ABS Census

Figure 7: Unemployment rate, 2011-21

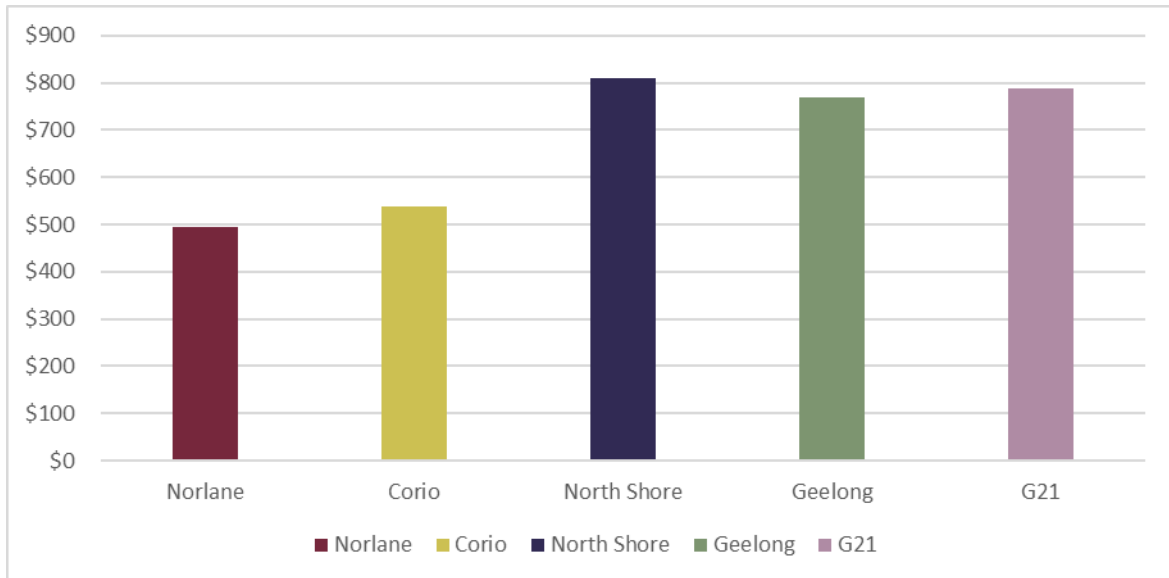


Source: ABS Census

Much lower relative incomes

Median incomes in Norlane and Corio (around \$500 per week) were about 40% lower than in Greater Geelong and G21 (both almost \$800 per week) in 2021.

Figure 8: Median weekly personal income, 2021



Source: ABS Census

Lower rates of residents moving in and out of the area

In 2021 Norlane and Corio had a higher proportion of residents that were living in the same place as they were 5 years earlier (59% and 63%), when compared with Greater Geelong and G21 (55% and 56%).

Table 4: Location of residents 5 years prior, 2021

Location in 2016	Norlane	Corio	North Shore	Greater Geelong	G21
Same as in 2021	59%	63%	56%	55%	56%
Elsewhere in Australia	36%	32%	40%	42%	41%
Overseas	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%

Source: ABS Census

Incoming residents have relatively higher incomes

In 2021 recent movers (lived somewhere else 5 years ago) were a smaller share of residents in Norlane and Corio than in Greater Geelong and G21.

However, the incomes of people who have lived in the same location for more than 5 years were lower than those who moved into the area since the last census (either international or domestic migration) across all selected geographies in 2021. This could be due to the timing of the 2021 census – when outmigration to regional areas from relatively wealthier Melbourne residents had been occurring for a year or so.

Table 5: Median Weekly Personal Income (\$)

Geography	Same as 5 years ago	Residents who moved within the last 5 years	Average
Norlane	400-499	500-649	494
Corio	400-499	500-649	537
North Shore	650-799	1000-1249	810
Geelong	650-799	800-999	769
G21	650-799	800-999	787

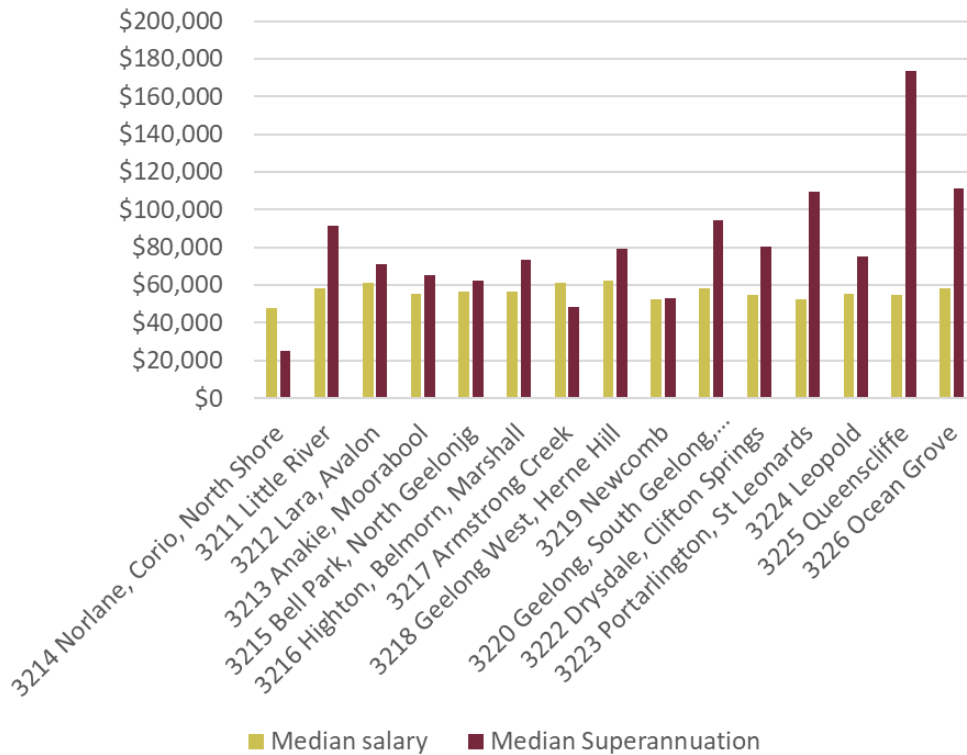
Source: ABS Census

Lower income but much lower superannuation savings

The 2024 median annual income for residents in Norlane and Corio (postcode 3214) is significantly (~20%) lower than the surrounding postcodes - \$48,000 compared to a range from about \$52,500 to \$61,500.

The median superannuation balance (\$25,000), however, is closer to 70% lower than for taxpayers in nearby and surrounding suburbs. This is indicative of much lower wealth and assets in Norlane and Corio – a result of underemployment and more precarious work.

Figure 9: Median salaries and superannuation, 2021-22



Source: ATO Tax statistics

As discussed earlier in this report, Norlane and Corio both have younger populations than their surrounding suburbs. Younger populations would generally be expected to have lower incomes (marginally), and lower savings (significantly). A younger population could explain some of this lower income and wealth.

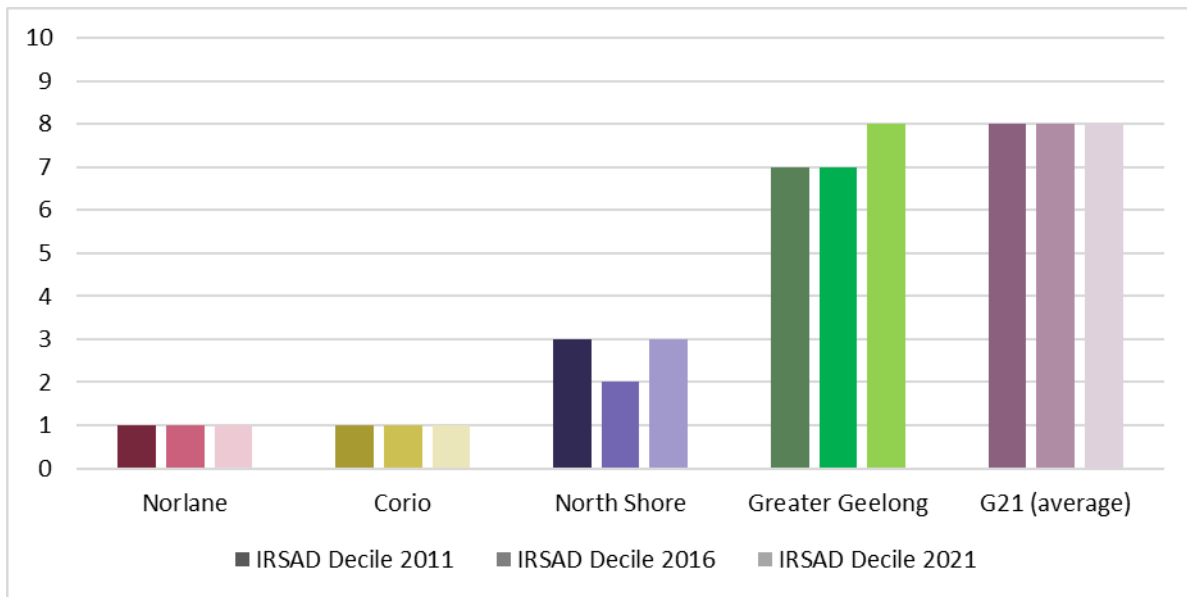
Relatively significantly disadvantaged

The IRSAD (Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage) is a part of the SEIFA indexes created by the ABS. It illustrates the entrenched socio-economic disadvantage faced by Norlane and Corio residents.

Both Norlane and Corio rank significantly below the surrounding suburbs, with an IRSAD score consistently in the bottom or first decile. This is despite Greater Geelong as a whole (which include Norlane and Corio) ranking much higher, in the seventh decile.

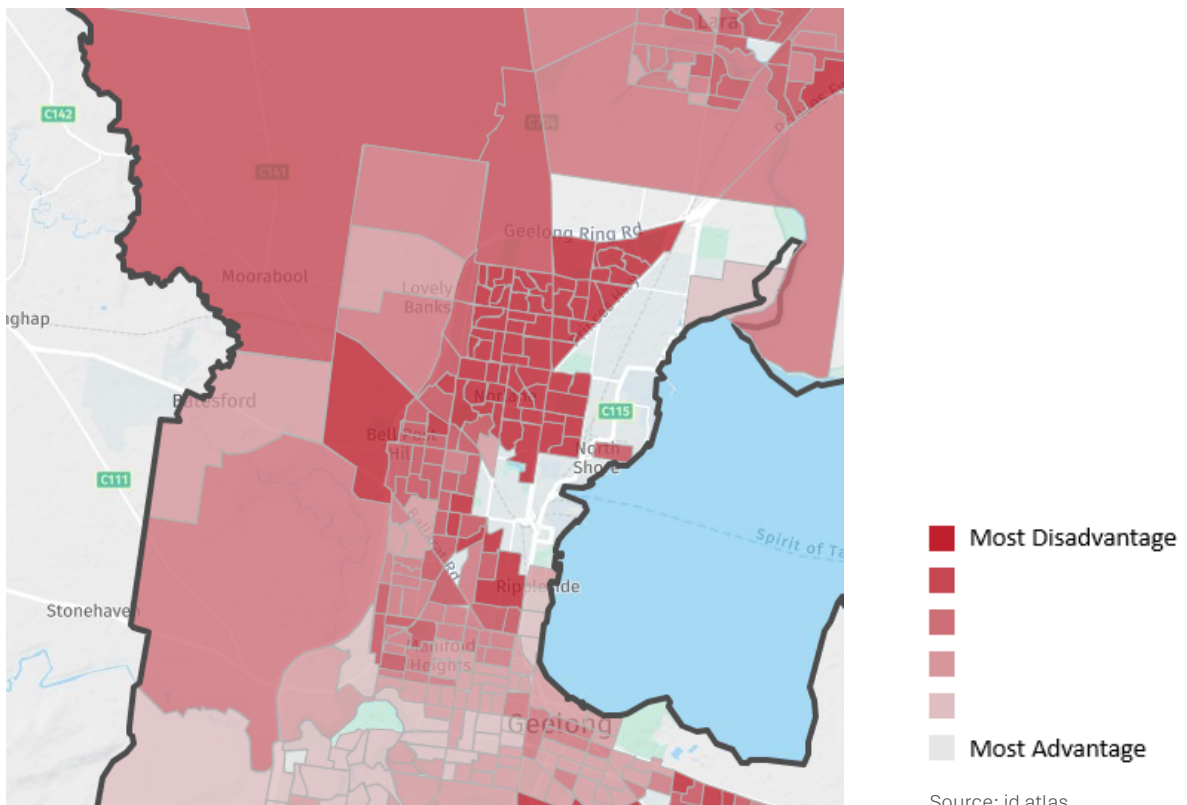
From 2011 to 2021, Greater Geelong increased its ranking over time, while Norlane and Corio remained stuck in the bottom decile. Parts of Greater Geelong are increasing their advantage, areas that are already well off are becoming more so, while suburbs with relatively disadvantaged residents are being left behind.

Figure 10: Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage, 2021



Source: ABS Census

Figure 11: Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage, 2021



Source: id atlas

2.4 Housing

Overview

Housing in Norlane and Corio is mostly separate houses, with modest growth of 808 dwellings between 2011 and 2021. Norlane has a notably higher share of attached housing (15%).

There is a higher proportion of social housing concentrated in these suburbs – 18.4% of households in Norlane and 9.2% in Corio – compared to just 3.1% across Greater Geelong. This legacy stems from their origins as worker suburbs, but today the stock is largely occupied by disadvantaged or migrant households.

Renting is prevalent with over 50% of Norlane and 40% of Corio households rent, versus under 30% in Greater Geelong. Home ownership is declining, limiting wealth accumulation. While house prices have doubled over a decade, they remain low, restricting the housing mobility of residents, who can't readily sell and move to another location easily. Renters face affordability pressures, with Norlane households spending 28% of income on rent, above the regional average.

These dynamics reflect entrenched disadvantage and limited housing-led opportunity in both suburbs.

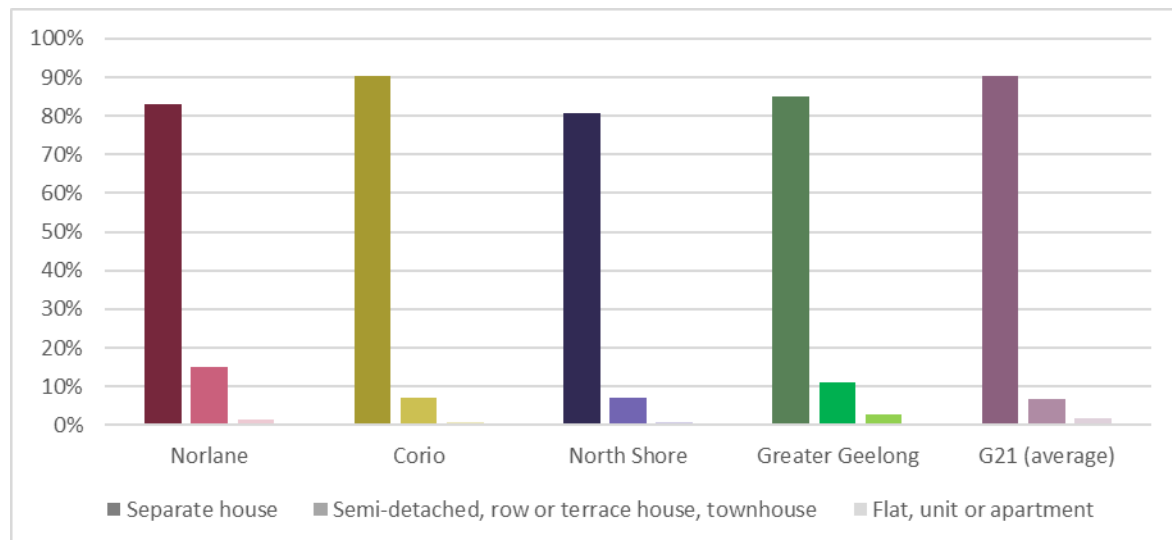
Separate houses

The number of dwellings in Norlane and Corio grew by 808 between 2011 and 2021 – about 80 per year.

In 2021 housing type profile was similar in N/C to the comparator regions – with more than 80% of houses being separate houses.

However, there is a higher share of 'attached' houses in Norlane (15%) compared to the other regions.

Figure 12: Housing structure types, 2021



Source: ABS Census

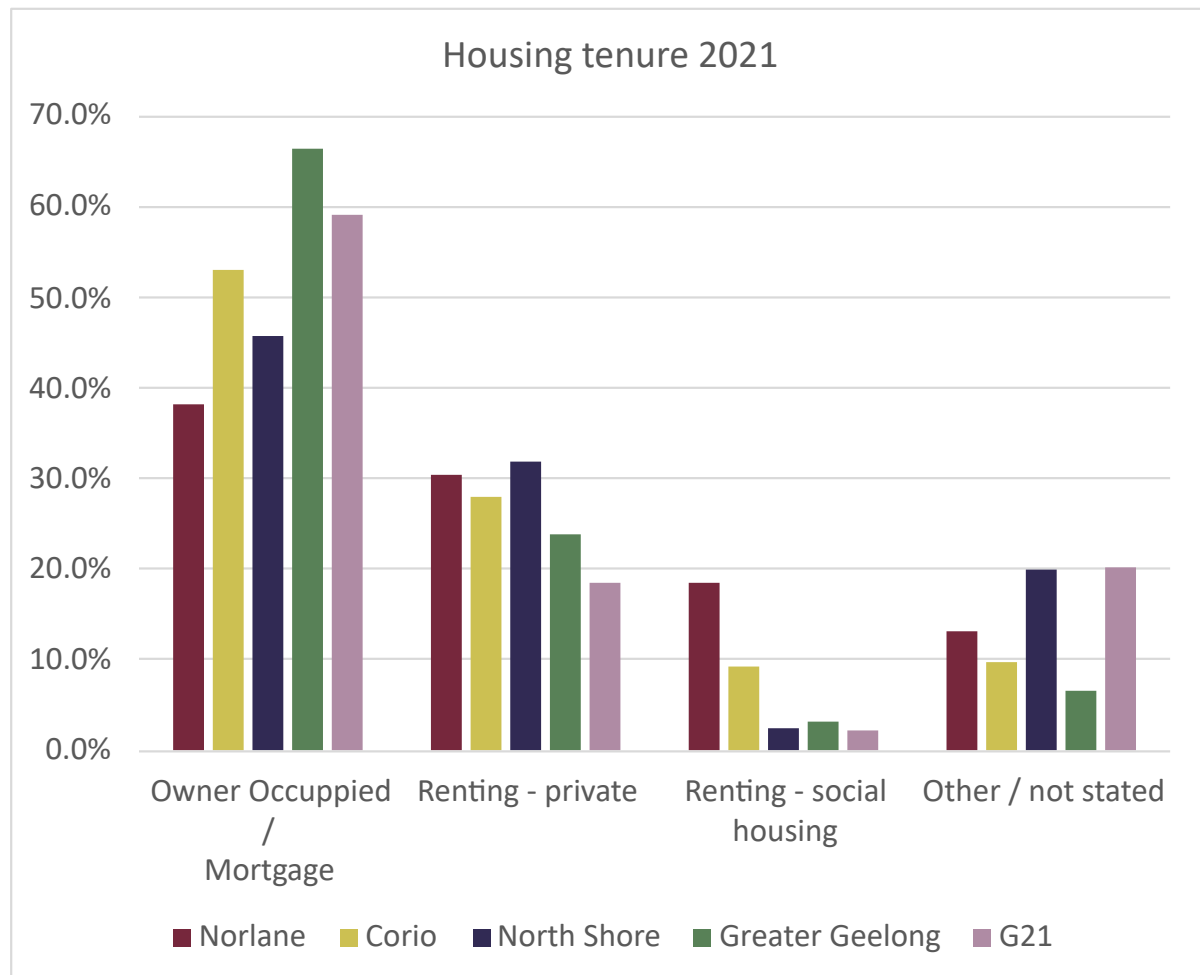
High shares of social housing

Almost a quarter (18.4%) of all households in Norlane are in social housing. Corio has almost 1 in 10 households (9.2%) in social housing. Greater Geelong as a whole has only 3.1% of all households in social housing. This compares to 2.5% across Victoria, and 2.6% in the G21 region. Of all households in social housing in Greater Geelong some 39% – more than 1 in 3 – are in Norlane or Corio.

Norlane and to some extent Corio were originally developed as worker suburbs, with investment in public housing for Ford and other factory workers. The social housing legacy remains but the housing is no longer mostly occupied by local workers. The stock has become residualised and may be typically occupied by long-term unemployed adults, or households with entrenched disadvantage or new migrant arrivals.

Because the social housing stock is concentrated in these suburbs means that Norlane and Corio are destinations for ‘outsiders’ needing last resort housing.

Figure 13: Household tenure, 2021



Source: ABS Census

High rates of renting, low and declining home ownership

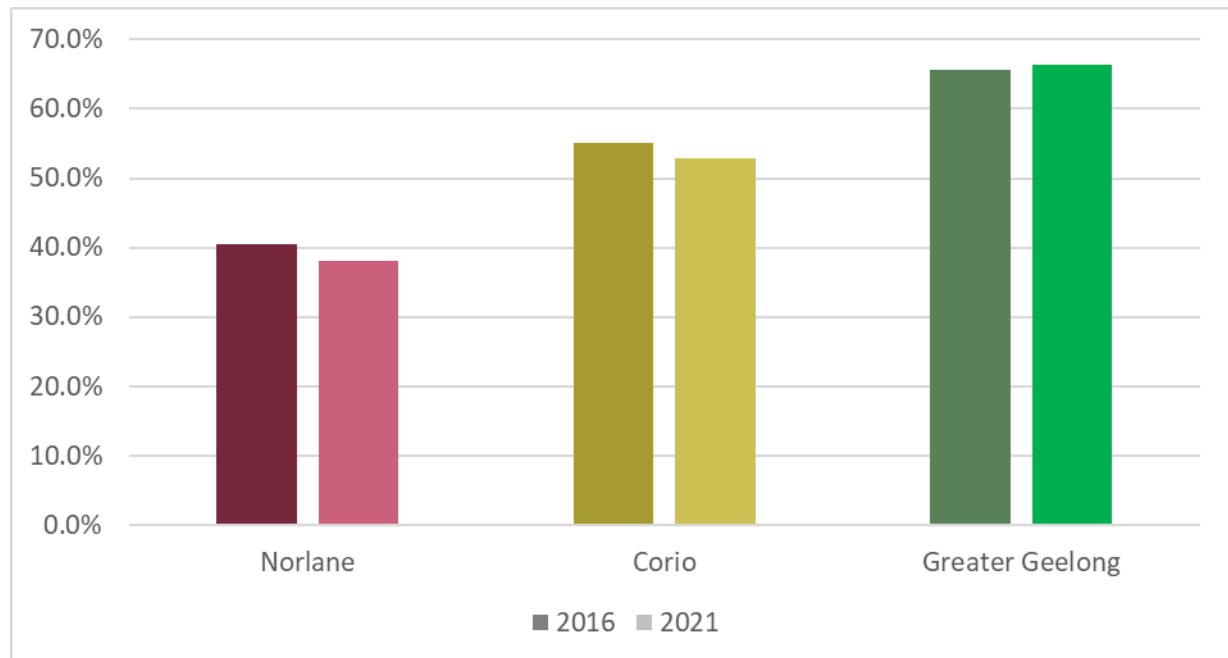
When social housing renting is added to private rental housing it can be seen that over 50% of Norlane households are renting, with 40% in Corio. The rate of renting is under 30% in Greater Geelong as a whole.

Residents in Norlane and Corio own fewer of their own homes outright, or even with a mortgage, compared to the comparator regions.

The share of households who own or have a mortgage has declined between 2016 and 2021 in both Norlane (40.4% to 38.1%) and Corio (55.1% to 53.9%) while it rose across Greater Geelong as a whole (65.7 to 66.4%).

The dependence on renting means firstly that there is an outflow of housing related wealth outside of Norlane and Corio but secondly, that wealth accumulation through housing is much lower in Norlane and Corio. Households without residential capacity are ‘stuck’.

Figure 14: Households owned (including with mortgage), 2021



Source: ABS Census

House prices low, though have risen

House prices in Norlane (median \$455,000 in 2024) and Corio (\$480,000) have gone up at a similar rate to other areas in Geelong, and even other parts of G21 (doubled over 10 years to 2024).

Relative house prices, however, remain low in Norlane and Corio. There are 3 implications.

- homeowners in Norlane and Corio have accumulated some wealth.
- this increases the divide between owners and renters
- Norlane and Corio prices aren't 'catching up' to elsewhere so housing market mobility is still limited. Accumulating housing wealth isn't necessarily a 'ticket to opportunity'.

Table 6: Median house prices, 2014-24

Growth 2014-2024				
Suburb	2014	2024	\$ Change	%
Corio	\$242,000	\$480,000	\$238,000	198%
Norlane	\$215,000	\$455,000	\$240,000	212%
Geelong	\$512,000	\$991,500	\$479,500	194%
Colac	\$235,000	\$481,000	\$246,000	205%
Queenscliff	\$695,000	\$1,687,500	\$992,500	243%
Whittington	\$262,000	\$500,000	\$238,000	191%
Torquay	\$580,000	\$1,200,000	\$620,000	207%
Newtown	\$620,000	\$1,220,000	\$600,000	197%

Source: Valuer General Victoria

Rental costs high as a share of income

Rental costs, while lower on average in Norlane and Corio, are disproportionately higher as a share of median weekly income than in comparator regions. Households in Norlane paying median rents on median incomes in 2021 were paying 28% of their incomes on housing costs – compared to 22% in Greater Geelong as a whole.

Remember these figures report median rents and median incomes across all households. Rents will be in a tighter band than incomes. Renting households with lower incomes will typically be paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

Table 7: Median weekly rent and household income, 2021

Geography	Median Rent	Median weekly income	Rent % of median weekly income
Norlane	\$250	\$909	28%
Corio	\$280	\$1,152	24%
North Shore	\$310	\$1,327	23%
Greater Geelong	\$346	\$1,592	22%

Source: ABS Census

2.5 Jobs and Economy

Overview

Access to jobs and economic opportunities in Norlane and Corio has declined over time, shaped by a rapid decline of local manufacturing and broader economy structural shifts.

Manufacturing once dominated the economy, employing over half of Geelong’s workforce in 2010, but fell to 20% by 2024.

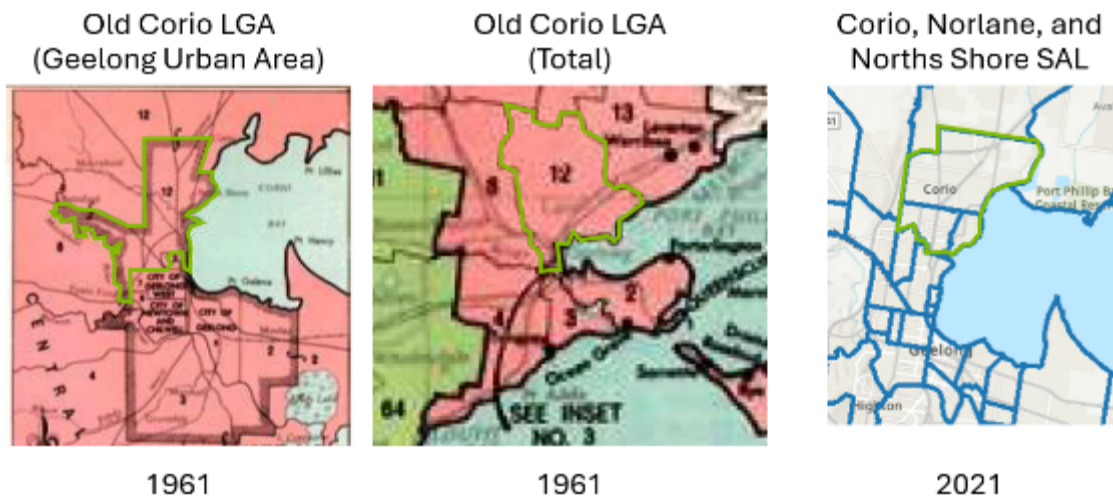
In the Norlane and Corio area, manufacturing employment dropped from 30% in 1961 to just 9% in 2021. Female participation in paid work has increased but remains lower than in Greater Geelong. Today, most employment is in non-manufacturing sectors, often lower-paid trades and services.

There are more resident workers (8,227 in 2021) than there are jobs (7,454 in 2021), and less residents work locally (22%), indicating growing disconnect between local labour and jobs markets. Workers from Norlane and Corio travel longer distances – median 9.11 km – than those from central Geelong. Business ownership is also low, with over 70% of businesses owned by non-residents.

These trends reflect reduced self-sufficiency and limited access to nearby employment opportunities.

Geographies have shifted through time

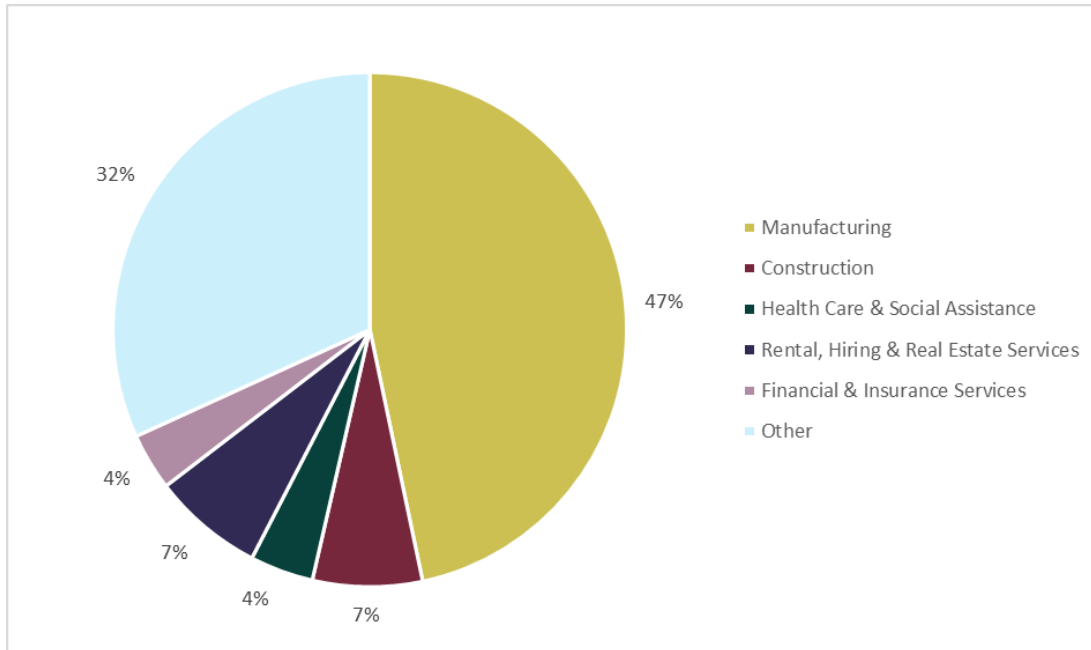
Today’s Norlane and Corio areas were once part of a ‘Corio’ local government area whose boundary shifted through the years since 1961.



Share of manufacturing employment in Geelong has more than halved over 15 years

Almost half of Geelong’s workers were employed in manufacturing in 2010. This had fallen to 20% in 2024 following the structural shifts in the economy experienced nationally over the past 50 years. Employment in Construction has partly ‘taken its place’ – up from 7% to 19% of employment over these 14 years.

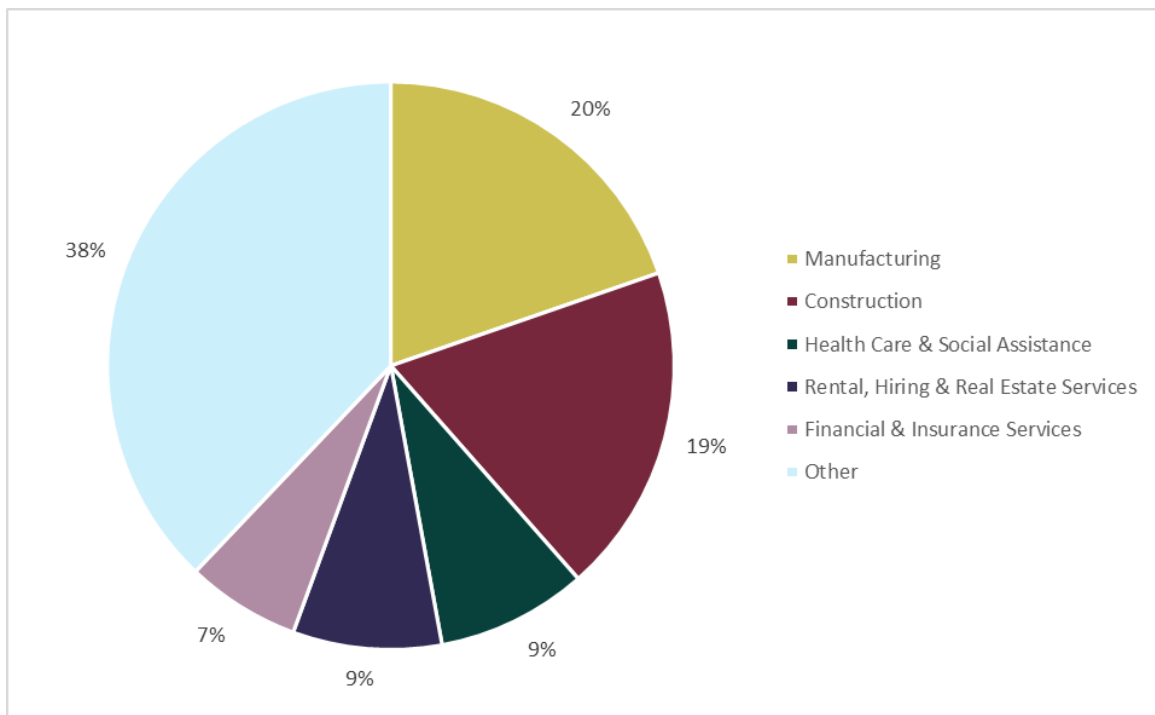
Figure 15: GVA of ANZSIC 1-digit industries, 2010



Source:

REMPPLAN

Figure 16: GVA of ANZSIC 1-digit industries, 2024



Source: REMPLAN

Manufacturing employment has significantly declined, females slower to join the paid workforce

Notwithstanding these shifting geographies the data illustrates changes in employment of residents in the Norlane and Corio area (or ‘Corio’ here) and wider Geelong area over 60 years.

Manufacturing employed 30% of males in ‘Corio’ and 22% of males in Greater Geelong in 1961. This had declined to 9% in ‘Corio’ and 6% in GG in 2021.

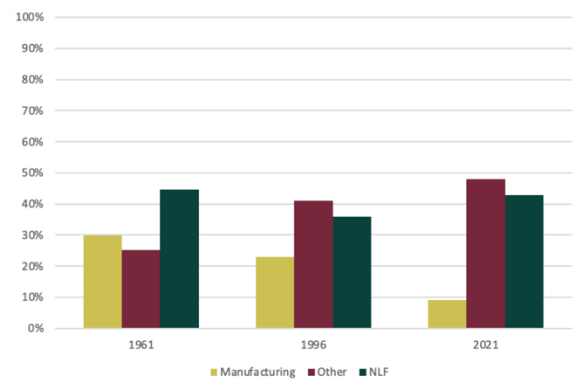
The data recorded those who were ‘Not in the Labour Force’ (NLF) which are those not in paid employment and includes children.

Women have not made as strong a transition to the paid workforce in ‘Corio’, as they have in Greater Geelong. More than 80% of females were NLF in ‘Corio’ in 1961. This had decreased to just above 50% by 2021 – but still well above the 40% NLF in Greater Geelong.

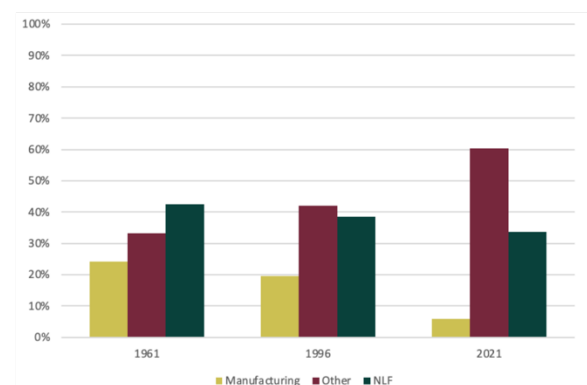
‘Other’ (non-manufacturing) employment has grown proportionally in this period, to around 45% in Corio, and around 60% in Greater Geelong. For a given worker in these areas, it is now far less common for workers to be employed in the manufacturing sector.

Figure 17: The evolving workforce, 1961-2021

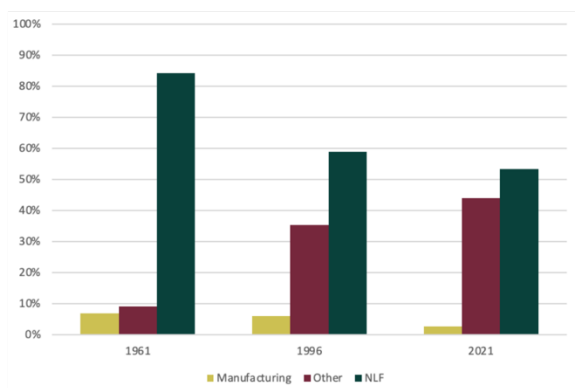
Corio - Male



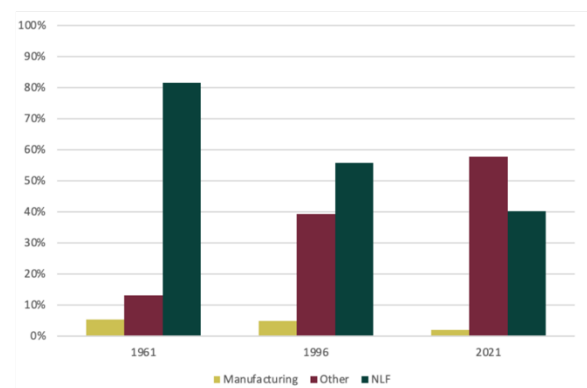
Greater Geelong - Male



Corio - Female



Greater Geelong - Female



Source: ABS Census

Less local jobs than local workers, few jobs for locals

With the long run decline in local manufacturing jobs by 2021 there were more resident workers living in the Norlane and Corio area (8,227) in 2021 than there were jobs (7,454). However, local jobs have been ‘on the rise’ with a quite significant increase of almost 40% from 6,880 in 2011. The area is ‘reconsolidating’ as an employment hub.

However, only 22% of the resident workers also worked in the Norlane and Corio area. This share was similar in 2011 and 2016.

There is a disconnect between place of residence and place of work for resident workers.

Table 8: Employment ‘self-containment’, 2011-21

Employment self-containment	2011	2016	2021
Resident workforce	8,651	8,783	10,190
Jobs in area	6,880	7,390	9,548
Resident workers in local jobs	1,857	1,880	2,279
Share of resident workers in local jobs %	21%	21%	22%

Source: ABS Census

A shift to services and construction from manufacturing employment for residents

Services employment has steadily overtaken manufacturing for the residents of Norlane and Corio.

In 2011, manufacturing employed 20 per cent of the population in both suburbs – by 2021 it was less than 10 per cent in Norlane and just over 10 per cent in Corio.

This decline was offset by increases in employment in health care and social assistance, construction and education and training.

Given the low levels of skill in the Norlane and Corio workforce, these are lower-paying, lower-quality, less-secure jobs such as child- and aged-care and delivery driving – likely in the gig economy.

Table 9: Industry of employment, 2011-21

Geography	INDP	2011	2016	2021
Norlane	Manufacturing	18%	10%	9%
	Construction	8%	8%	10%
	Retail Trade	13%	13%	12%
	Health Care and Social Assistance	11%	15%	16%
Corio	Manufacturing	18%	13%	11%
	Construction	8%	8%	11%
	Retail Trade	14%	13%	12%
	Health Care and Social Assistance	11%	12%	13%
Greater Geelong	Manufacturing	11%	7%	6%
	Construction	10%	10%	11%
	Retail Trade	13%	12%	11%
	Health Care and Social Assistance	14%	15%	17%

Source: ABS Census

Table 10: Industry of employment, place of work, 2024

ANZSIC 1D	Corio	Norlane	North Shore	Geelong	G21
Construction	16%	7%	19%	12%	12%
Manufacturing	13%	11%	31%	6%	7%
Wholesale Trade	13%	1%	13%	3%	2%
Education & Training	13%	8%	0%	11%	10%
Retail Trade	12%	17%	6%	12%	11%
Health Care & Social Assistance	7%	23%	1%	20%	18%
Accommodation & Food Services	5%	12%	1%	7%	8%
Public Administration & Safety	4%	5%	1%	6%	6%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	3%	7%	11%	3%	3%
Other Services	3%	3%	2%	4%	4%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	3%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Administrative & Support Services	3%	3%	11%	3%	3%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	2%	1%	1%	6%	6%
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Information Media & Telecommunications	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Arts & Recreation Services	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%
Financial & Insurance Services	1%	1%	0%	3%	2%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	0%	0%	1%	1%	3%
Mining	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Count	5,977	2,543	1,527	125,047	155,135

Source: ABS Census

Trades/low-paid services bias in occupations

With the decline of the manufacturing industries in Norlane and Corio, the occupational breakdown has shifted. There are fewer labourers, technicians and trade workers, and a growing share of community and personal service workers.

The growing occupations are generally higher skilled than the shrinking occupations. This change is in part informed by the disconnect between residents and workers, as residents cannot easily access the still large proportion of industrial employment in their region.

Table 11: Occupations of resident workers, 2021

Occupations	Norlane and Corio			Greater Geelong		
	2011	2016	2021	2011	2016	2021
Labourers	23%	23%	21%	11%	10%	10%
Technicians and Trades Workers	17%	15%	16%	16%	15%	14%
Community and Personal Service Workers	13%	15%	16%	11%	13%	14%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	14%	14%	15%	7%	6%	6%
Sales Workers	12%	11%	9%	11%	10%	9%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	9%	9%	8%	13%	12%	11%
Professionals	7%	8%	9%	20%	21%	23%
Managers	5%	5%	6%	10%	11%	12%

Source: ABS Census

A longer journey to work now, except less likely to work in central Melbourne

With the decline in manufacturing jobs and other nearby employment opportunities at Ford and in local industrial areas residents in Norlane and Corio must travel further to find work.

Residents in Norlane and Corio typically travel longer distances to work than those in other suburbs of Geelong e.g. median 9.11 km travel distance for workers in Norlane and Corio compared to 3.59 for workers in central Geelong. Resident workers in Norlane and Corio are however less likely to work in central Melbourne than those in other suburbs. In 2021, for most residents in the suburbs of Geelong, the proportion working in central Melbourne increased (3.1% to 3.4%), while Norlane and Corio saw a minor decrease (1.4% to 1.2%). This highlights a ‘disconnect’ from higher order job opportunities which would warrant commuting to Melbourne for.

Even further travel distances for workers coming from outside

To reach the jobs in Norlane and Corio workers from other suburbs travel even further to get to work (than Norlane and Corio workers).

Workers to the 7,454 jobs in Norlane and Corio travelled a median distance of 10.45 kilometers to work. Workers in central Geelong travelled a median distance of 8.29 kilometers.

Table 12: Worker distance from place of residence, 2016

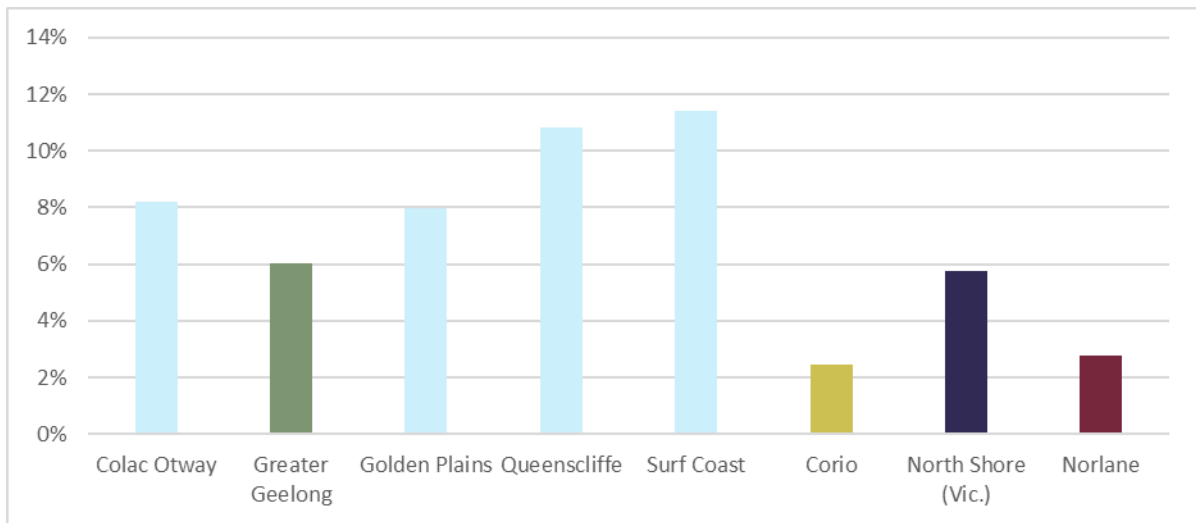
SA2	Median commuting distance (kms)
Lara	15.85
Corio - Norlane	10.45
North Geelong - Bell Park	10.03
Newcomb - Moolap	8.75
Geelong	8.29
Highton	6.59
Grovedale	6.39
Geelong West - Hamlyn Heights	6.17
Newtown (Vic.)	5.67
Belmont	5.63
Leopold	4.50

Source: ABS Journey to work study

Fewer business owners and smaller businesses

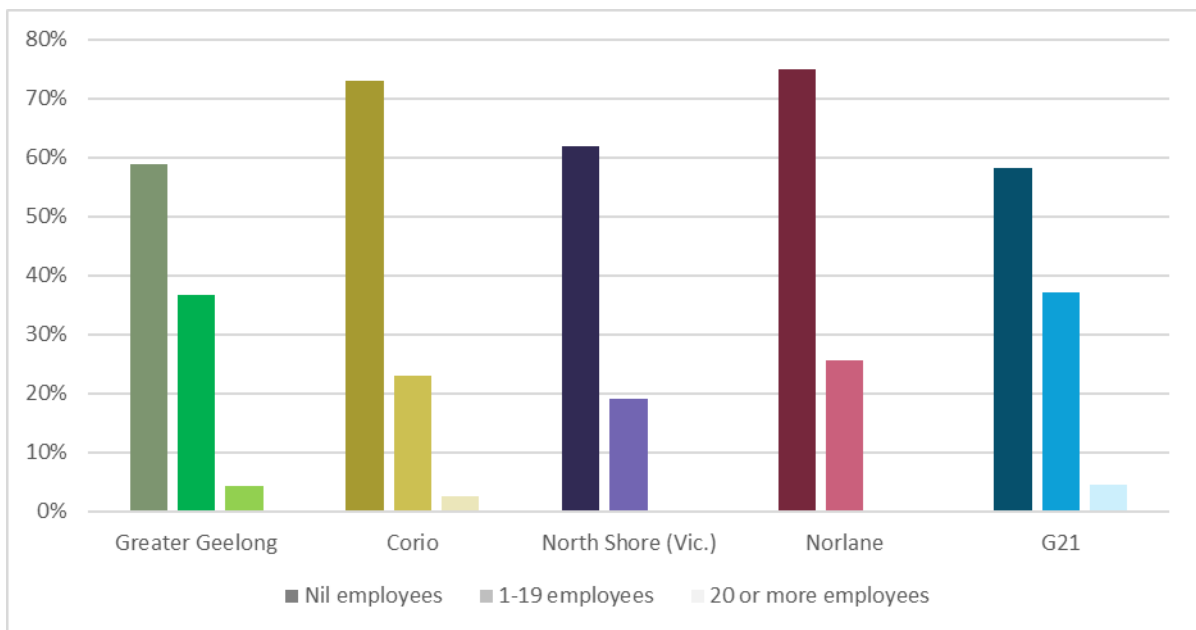
Residents in Norlane (about 2.5%) and Corio (just over 2%) have much lower rates of business ownership than residents in Greater Geelong as a whole (6%) and in G21 (7%). Small businesses in Norlane and Corio typically employ much fewer people than in surrounding areas – over 70% of businesses in Norlane and Corio have nil employees (typically just under 60% elsewhere) while just over 20% employ 1-19 employees (typically just less than 40% elsewhere).

Figure 18: Proportion of residents who own a business, 2021



Source: ABS Census

Figure 19: Proportion of businesses by number of employees, 2021



Source: ABS Census

3. Business and Community Activity and Perspectives

3.1 Introduction

This section contains a profile of the business and community activities in Norlane and Corio. The land use of commercial, industrial and community uses are profiled, as well as capturing perspectives of business owners and operator. The profile draws on mapping and an on-foot audit of main street retail, big box retail along with bulky goods and dispersed commercial areas.

Norlane and Corio, and the neighbouring North Shore area, host industrial and port areas, including the old Ford Factory, that were once so central to Geelong's economic development in the 20th century. Smaller industrial precincts are located near to the larger scale industrial sites. The suburbs also contain a mix of 'main street' local shopping precincts, 'bulky goods' areas and a big box shopping centre (Corio Village and Bellpost). As Norlane and Corio were developed, a stock of community and social infrastructure assets were also developed, including primary and high schools, a swimming pool and recreation centre and clubs for community activities.

The detailed data and mapping is provided in Appendix A which includes Figure 20 with the location of the industrial and commercial areas. Commercial and industrial uses were identified by whether they were vacant or not, and their 'broad land use' category (shown in Table 13 Appendix A).

This analysis reveals indicators or 'economic health', and a baseline of the effective 'stock' of local commercial and community assets. The findings present an opportunity to activate and improve performance of local retail uses, while connecting businesses in the industrial precincts to play a greater role in the local economy.

3.2 Commercial and Retail Areas

Overview

The commercial and retail land uses in Norlane and Corio provide for both big box retail and main street shop fronts.

The retail clusters in Norlane and Corio offer around 27,000 square metres of floorspace, but face significant vacancy rates – averaging 16%, with some centres like Labuan Square, Alkira Avenue, and Donnybrook exceeding 40% vacancy rates. These high vacancies contribute to a sense of decline, blight and diminished community safety. The engagement with local businesses, aligns with the findings of audit. There is a disconnect between landlords and business operators, additionally, business operators do not typically have connections with the local community.

In contrast, big-box retail centres such as Corio Village and Bell Post Plaza are trading successfully, with low vacancy rates and recent investment activity. These centres provide for local retail and some services for the catchment's convenience needs. Bulky goods and dispersed retail areas, particularly along major roads, serve a broader regional catchment, with The Boulevard emerging as a key precinct.

The analysis in this section was informed by a two phased approach, firstly the commercial and retail areas were mapped, and then an on foot land use audit was completed in August 2025. The locations that were mapped and audited are shown in Figure 21 Appendix A.

Main streets that are underutilised, with high vacancies and limited investment

Norlane and Corio contain approximately 27,000 square metres of retail floorspace in main street retail locations. The 8 main streets contain a mix of small supermarkets, fast food and cafes, personal services, and clothing stores.

In retail centres, vacant floorspace of around 5% is considered acceptable, allowing for churn and change. Where vacancies are above 10%, the centre would be underperforming.

About 16% of this floorspace is vacant, reflecting an overall underperformance. However, the vacancies vary markedly across the centres. About a quarter of floorspace in Labuan Square was vacant, and many occupied premises only open occasionally. 40% of floorspace was vacant in both the Alkira Avenue and Donnybrook shops. These three centres are 'blighted' and with shuttered and inactive shopfronts become unsafe as community precincts.

Recent investment in big box retail centres that provide local and convenience shopping

There are two successfully trading 'big box' retail centres where most local and convenience shopping for Norlane and Corio residents occurs. Vacancies are modest. Corio Village was recently purchased by external institutional investors Charter Hall for \$146m³. Bell Post Plaza was recently sold to a 'local investor' for \$20.58 million in their 'maiden retail deal'⁴.

Growth in bulky goods regional retail on major roads

There are also some 'bulky goods' and dispersed isolated retail centres, mostly located on arterial and major roads providing good access to a regional catchment of shoppers. The Boulevard is developing as the principal bulky goods precinct in northern Geelong, with limited vacant land.

³ <https://www.news.com.au/finance/real-estate/melbourne-vic/charter-hall-swoops-on-major-geelong-shopping-centre-in-146m-offmarket-deal/news-story/af802eaed8c313f2ee5956845265c521>

⁴ <https://www.burgessrawson.com.au/news-insights/real-estate-agency-founder-sells-geelong-shopping-centre/>

3.3 Industrial Areas

Overview

The industrial land use across Norlane, Corio and North Shore area historically central to Geelong's economic development. The region hosts major industrial and port facilities, including the former Ford factory, alongside smaller industrial precincts.

The industrial activity remains strong with lots of activity and new investment. Northern Geelong is home to large-scale strategic precincts near the port, including sites occupied by Viva Energy, and the redeveloped Ford factory. The Geelong Ring Road Employment Precinct has grown rapidly, benefiting from faster road access along the freeway to Melbourne. While these businesses are in the region, they are disconnected from the local workforce and economy.

Smaller industrial precincts in Norlane and Corio are active and diverse, with new investment in strata buildings and workshops. These precincts provide light industrial and urban services along with new manufacturing. While some land remains vacant (5–20%), none of these areas are considered underutilised – they play an important role in supporting both large industries and regional businesses.

The industrial areas are distinguished as large lot, strategic precincts as well as smaller lot, services precincts. The areas are highly connected and well positioned on the edge of metropolitan Melbourne, near to Geelong city centre with good access to the road and sea transport infrastructure.

Regionally significant industrial lands a focus for new investment

Northern Geelong is the heartland of industrial activity in the region. The large lot users around the port and coast include the Viva Energy and heavy industrial uses, along with the site of the old Ford Factory nearby, being renewed as a light industry hub.

The Geelong Ring Road Employment Precinct (GREP) has developed rapidly over the last 10-15 years and enjoying access to the freeway connecting it north to Melbourne. This is being positioned as Geelong's largest designated industrial precinct, a modern high amenity area with new warehouses and office spaces. It is providing space for national and local business.

These large lots are within strategic precincts in Geelong's industrial and enterprise economy.

Smaller light industrial precincts with a mix of uses

These contain a wide mix of users and are lively and active. There are pockets of new investment in strata buildings and workshops. Vacant land is typically from 5% through to 20% but none of these precincts are underutilised or blighted. They play a vital role in the Geelong industrial services economy, providing support for nearby large industrial users but also for businesses and residents across the region.

3.4 Community Infrastructure

Overview

Norlane and Corio both contain community infrastructure assets that are critical for economic development. Sporting, recreational and community infrastructure, along with health and education infrastructure plays a role in workforce and skills mobility, in shaping population health and therefore productivity outcomes, and in influencing the decisions of business and industry.

While regional level facilities are typically located in Geelong, the local level infrastructure presents opportunities to increase community connection and provide services tailored to changing local needs.

The distribution of community infrastructure assets are shown in Figure 20 which includes community centres, health, early years, education library and sports and leisure facilities. These were identified through a desktop analysis using City of Greater Geelong Council's Community Directory⁵, the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority's (ACECQA) national register list⁶ (for early years assets), and the Australia Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) national register list⁷ (for education facilities).

Sporting, recreational and community infrastructure

Sporting and community facilities contribute to the local community's quality of life and overall wellbeing, providing a range of social, environmental and economic benefits. These facilities represent a notable portion of Norlane and Corio's asset portfolio, and include:

- The Corio Library – offering various child-focused programs and services, community rooms for hire and other amenities and services.
- Community and youth centres - including the Cloversale Community Centre, Rosewall Community Centre, Cultura North Community Hub, Norlane Community Centre, the Fort Youth Centre, Croatian Community Centre, Yooringa Seniors Community Centre and more. These facilities accommodate a wide range of social, cultural and employment activities such as celebrations, conferences, meetings and events.
- Sport and recreation facilities - including the Norlane Aquatic Recreation Centre, Corio Community Sports Club, Esplanade Leisure and Recreation facility, and numerous outdoor spaces that support local sports such as hockey, rugby, soccer, cricket, athletics, and baseball.

⁵ City of Greater Geelong (2025), *Community directory*, <https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/directory/default.aspx>

⁶ ACECQA (2025), *National registers*, <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/national-registers>

⁷ ACARA (2025), *Australian schools list*, <https://asl.acara.edu.au/>

Figure 20: Community and infrastructure areas in Norlane, Corio and North Shore



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

Health and education infrastructure

Community health facilities and hospitals play a vital role in local economies, serving as large employers, collaborating with local businesses and supporting community connection. Neither Norlane nor Corio contains a hospital, with the nearest facilities being the St John of God Hospital and University Hospital, both located in Geelong.

Catering to the needs of the local community are several community health facilities (excluding private medical centres and GPs), including: the Corio Community Health Centre, the Corio Maternal and Child Health Centre, Barwon Health Corio (a community health centre), the Norlane Maternal and Child Health Centre, the Geelong Medicare Mental Health Centre and Barwon Health North.

Barwon Heath North⁸ is a \$33M investment by the Victorian Government in urgent care, medical imaging, pathology, pharmacy, midwives' clinic, consulting suites and renal dialysis for communities in Geelong's northern suburbs located in Norlane. This investment had a focus on providing an alternative to GP access and taking pressure off University Hospital Geelong's emergency department.

Education institutions also act as key drivers of economic and social development. Across Norlane and Corio, there are approximately 12 primary, secondary and combined educational establishments. Northern Bay P-12 College is a multi-campus school in the northern suburbs of Geelong, Victoria that was created in 2011. It has four Prep-to-Year-8 campuses, and a combined Senior 9-12 campus in Corio, on Goldsworthy Rd, which was opened in 2024. It is an amalgamation of nine original sites foundation schools that included Flinders Peak Secondary, Corio Technical School, Corio Bay Secondary College, Corio Bay Senior Secondary College, and Norlane High School that all required significant upgrades. Northern Bay College also hosts the Geelong Industry Trade Training Centre (GITTC), manages Family and Early Learning Centre, and has a School Camp site – Staughton Vale Outdoor Education Centre.

At the tertiary level, institutions have the capacity to attract local and international students, researchers and industry partners, fostering local innovation and skills development. While neither Norlane nor Corio contains a TAFE of university campus –these facilities located nearby in Geelong – Norlane is home to the Geelong Industry Trade Training Centre. This is a purpose-built trade training centre facility which provides vocational training opportunities to secondary school students in the northern suburbs of Geelong, as noted above.

3.5 Business Owner and Operator Perspectives

Overview

Business interviews identified an industrial and retail economy in Norlane and Corio that is largely disconnected from the people who live there and the neighbourhoods in which they operate. A large majority of businesses and the properties on which they operate were owned by external capital sources creating an outward flow of value.

Larger scale industrial businesses are based in Norlane or Corio due to historical economic factors, industrial zoned, inexpensive land and transport connections. These businesses mostly do not have strong connections to the place.

Local businesses provide limited employment opportunities with most workers travelling from outside of Norlane and Corio to attend work. This creates an identifiable economic disconnect between the economy and place.

Some local business leaders expressed an appetite to support more local employment opportunities but found themselves stuck in difficult labour markets and without enough support to assist the employment programs required. Despite this, there are informal community networks that support job-seeking and in some cases job recruitment activities. This social capital along with the willingness of some business leaders to engage locally provided a glimpse that could be built upon.

⁸ Barwon Health North <https://barwonhealthnorth.org.au>

A diverse mix of local retail and industrial businesses

A series of interviews were undertaken with businesses across Norlane and Corio to understand their role in the local economy. The interviews examined business types, scale, ownership structures, labour needs, and the broader economic and social contribution to the neighbourhoods.

Small retail businesses

Eight small street-front retailers were interviewed across local shopping strips. These businesses typically:

- operate food, small-format supermarket, health, and personal service offerings
- employ between one and seven staff
- are privately owned
- operate individually, although some belong to buying or marketing groups to improve purchasing power and brand awareness
- rely on local neighbourhood customers for most of their trade

One retailer also operated a significant wholesale arm from their retail premises, and another provided additional in-home services.

Large industrial firms

Six larger businesses were also interviewed across the major industrial precincts. These firms operate in:

- manufacturing of engineered and prefabricated steel components
- large scale food production
- automotive component supply
- energy supply and distribution

Turnovers range from \$20 million to several hundred million dollars and ownership structures were a mixture of:

- 100% private ownership
- 100% ASX listed
- Mixed structures of public and private shareholders

All interviews were conducted on site and included tours of floorspace, workshops and factory floors, providing direct insight into daily operations.

Lack of integration between ownership of property, business and place

Across all businesses interviewed:

- all individual or corporate business owners reside outside of the local area
- none of the small retailers owned the land or buildings they occupy
- all landowners are based outside Norlane and Corio

Because of the ownership and capital structures, capturing and retaining value within Norlane and Corio is extremely limited. Rents, profits and capital gains are an outward capital flow limiting internal wealth generation, local community and economic development, local neighbourhood re-investment, and asset retention and growth.

Employment patterns

Businesses employ local residents, but at low levels which generally aligns with section 2.5 of this report that showed 22% of the local residents that are in employment, work in Norlane and Corio. Of the businesses interviewed:

- 14% of the workforce lived in Norlane or Corio
- 24% of small retailers' workforce were local residents
- industrial firms employed mostly workers from outside the area

This reflects the limited integration of local labour markets with local employment opportunities and reinforces the broader disconnect between the local economy and place.

Disconnect between the economic activities and the place

The industrial economy in Norlane and Corio is active and commercially successful. The local retail economy is less so excluding the big box centres of Corio Village and Bell Post Shopping Centre.

Larger industrial firms are often located in the area due to low land costs, historical land availability, road, rail, air and port access and proximity to Melbourne.

Like most local businesses, smaller retailers rely heavily on local residents for markets and sales but mostly do not reinvest returns into neighbourhood regeneration, market development or employment opportunities thus limiting local multiplier effects.

Value that is created within Norlane and Corio leaks via capital flows, investment returns, profits, employment opportunities, rents and asset revaluation.

Neighbourhood connections

Working at odds to the economic disconnection were examples of informal social connections from which residents and sometimes businesses were the beneficiaries.

Interviews revealed:

- several examples of word-of-mouth job referrals
- family and friendship networks that assisted residents to find employment
- some employers preferring the trusted local networks they had developed over formal recruitment processes
- some small businesses acting as places of resident and community connection.

Some business leaders expressed a desire and interest to see economic and social change within Norlane and Corio. Some had participated in employment programs in the past and would be willing to again.

However, they described difficult and tight labour markets, increased business costs, high regulatory and safety environments and non-negotiable capital returns as significant challenges.

These business leaders were unclear how to match their community ambitions, with difficult business conditions and tight fiscal management. They were receptive to ideas and different ways of assisting the community providing those opportunities also met their business goals.

4. ‘Future Casting’: Norlane and Corio’s Economic Prospects in Context

4.1 Introduction

This section looks to the future. It begins by reviewing published forecasts at a small area level of population and economic growth with a 20-year outlook. Greater Geelong and the G21 region have been the focus of many state and local policies seeking to capture and build on economic growth. A review of these documents provides insights into the broader economic trends in the region.

The demographic and economic profile found that Norlane and Corio, being disconnected from the broader regional economy, have seen relatively little benefit from the historic economic growth in Greater Geelong. This future casting provides the context for seeing how the strengths in the current demographic and economic characteristics can be leveraged for benefits to the communities in Norlane and Corio.

4.2 Future Population, Households, and Housing

Overview

Geelong has a lot of population and housing growth planned for the next 30 years. Over this period, Geelong’s population and household count will roughly double, bringing new economic opportunities for growth.

The planned growth will see 60% in infill, with the remainder greenfield development in the Northern and Western growth areas.

The Victoria in Future 2023 (VIF23) are the official Victorian state government projection of population and households. It is forecast that Greater Geelong will grow from 270,932 people in 2021 to 367,666 people in 2036. This is 96,700 more people, or 35.7% growth on the 2021 figures. Greater Geelong is projected to have population growth significantly higher than the Victorian wide projection of 28.7%.

Table 13: Population forecast

Geography	2021	2026	2031	2036	2021-36 growth rate
Greater Geelong (C)	270,932	301,366	334,576	367,666	35.7%
VIFSA Bell Park-Corio District)	43,137	44,952	49,364	56,962	32.0%
G21	316,380	350,740	387,475	424,153	34.1%
Victoria	6,547,822	7,181,626	7,802,503	8,427,079	28.7%

Source: Victoria In Future 2023

The VIFSA district Bell Park – Corio District includes three SA2s: North Geelong - Bell Park, Corio - Lovely Banks, and Norlane. It is forecast to grow slower than its surrounding suburbs, and indeed the entirety of the G21 region. It is projected to have 12,000 new residents in the 10 years 2026 and 2036. The majority of this is likely to be greenfield development, in the North and West Growth Areas.

There is a similar story to be found in the household growth projections.

Table 14: Household forecast

Geography	2021	2026	2031	2036	2021-36 growth rate
Greater Geelong (C)	120,823	136,989	152,589	168,089	39.1%
VIFSA Bell Park-Corio District)	18,903	19,958	21,949	25,123	32.9%
G21	155,907	175,221	193,993	212,731	36.4%
Victoria	2,810,790	3,088,490	3,367,301	3,657,814	30.1%

Source: Victoria In Future 2023

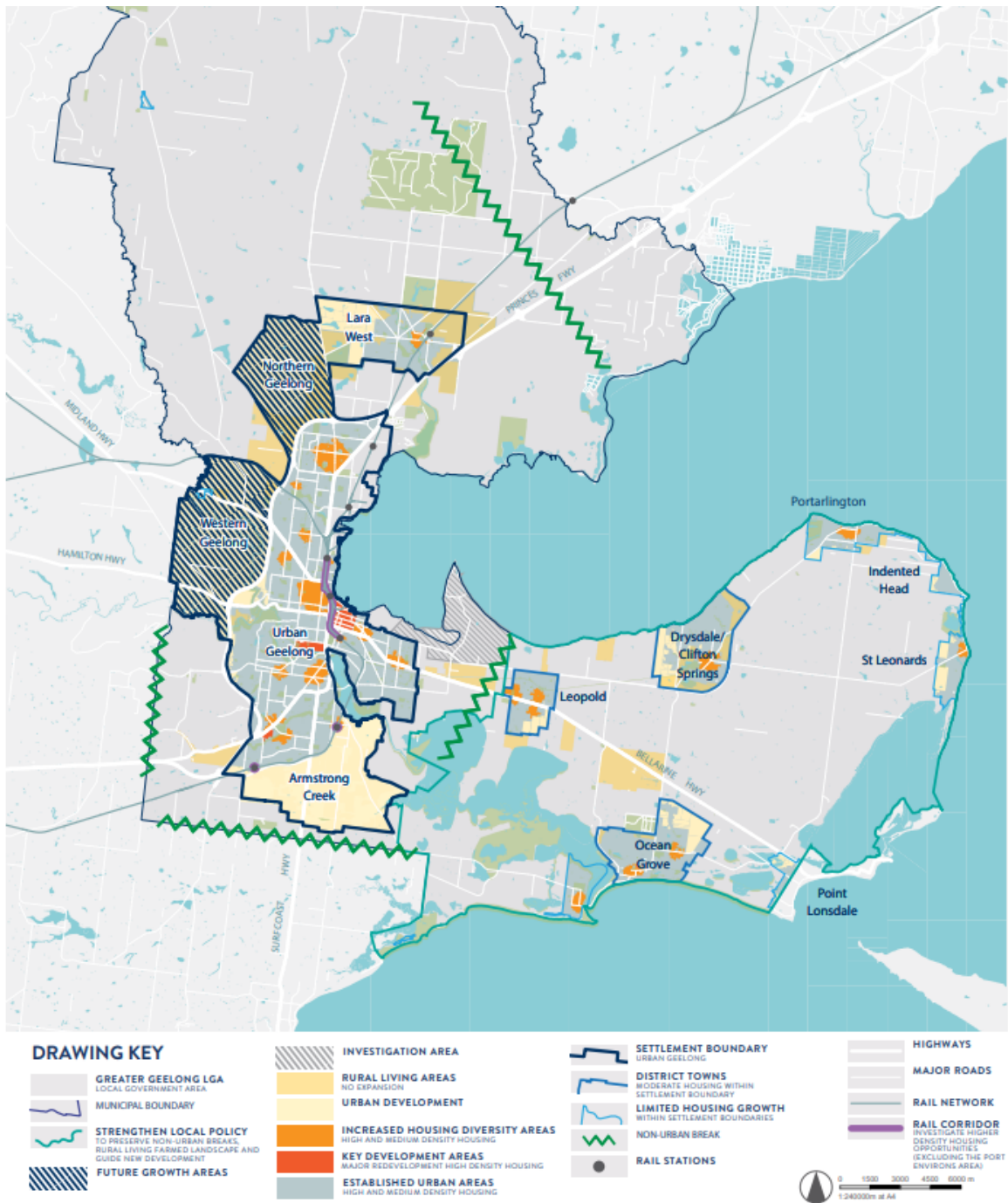
In Plan for Victoria, Greater Geelong is planned to have 128,600 additional dwellings over the next 30 years, the most additional housing of any LGA, with almost double the next highest regional council area, in Mitchell Shire. This planned growth is at a target of 60% infill, and 40% greenfield. This means 51,440 greenfield dwellings in total over 30 years.

Geelong’s Northern and Western Growth Zones, both of which neighbour Norlane and Corio, are set to absorb most of this greenfield development, with plans for 110,000 new residents and 40,000 dwellings over their development timelines to 2051, as outlined in the Growth Areas Framework published in 2020.

Any infill development in Norlane and Corio is most likely to be small scale redevelopment of individual lots into dual occupancies or townhouses. This will rely on land prices and house prices supporting redevelopment feasibility.

A noteworthy takeaway is that for both Greater Geelong and the G21 region, there is a greater difference between household and population growth rates than the area with Norlane and Corio. This is because of forecast changes to household size, in which Greater Geelong and G21 are seeing a smaller average household size into the future (more single person or couple with no children), while Norlane and Corio see relatively little change in household size.

Figure 21: Northern and Western Growth Areas Plan



Source: Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Framework Plan (2020)

4.3 Future Employment

Overview

Greater Geelong's employment growth is projected to be in population services, including healthcare and education. The historically dominant manufacturing sector is unlikely to see much future jobs growth. The historical growth in construction and retail jobs is projected to stabilise, while still growing proportionately with the population.

Norlane and Corio are positioned with good access to both of Geelong's greenfield growth areas – to the north and west. The development of these major new communities expected to occur up to 2050, are likely to present further opportunities to continue to grow construction and retail jobs in line with population growth. This presents opportunities for a long-term investment in a local skilled workforce supporting this development.

The employment forecasts from the SGS small area housing and employment forecasting model (SAM)⁹ forecasts a strong increase in 'health and education' jobs in Greater Geelong over this period, with a 48% growth figure, while other industries grow at closer to 25%. Other population serving industries, such as retail trade and construction, are set to grow strongly, remaining the largest of the four categories for employment in Greater Geelong.

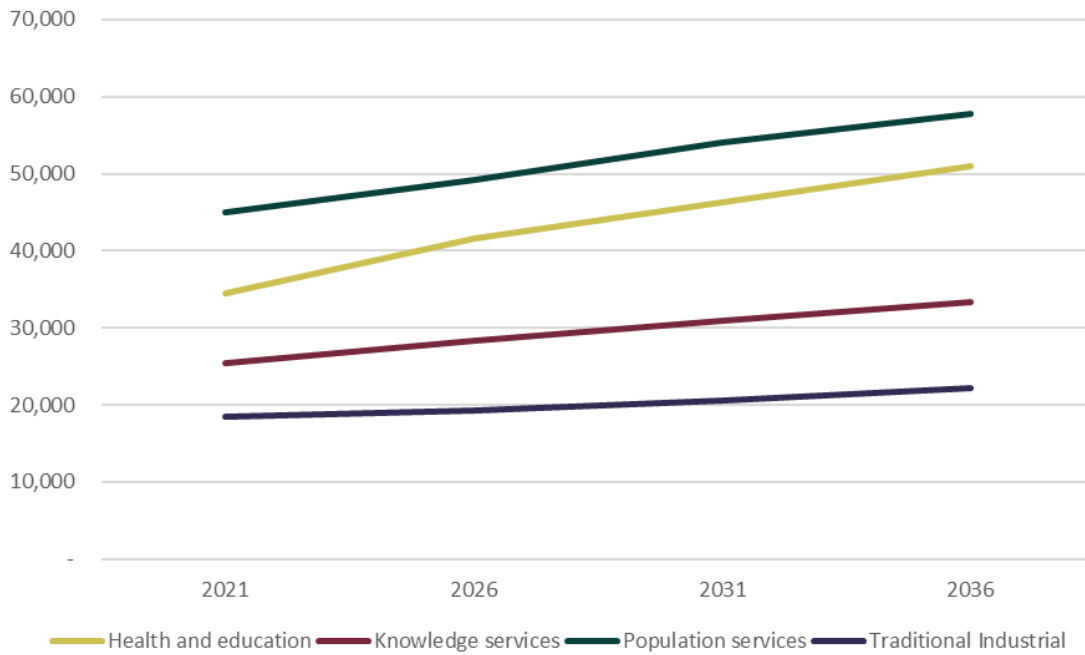
In Norlane and Corio, the growth in employment is projected to be smaller than the rest of Greater Geelong, though with a similar 'shape'. Health and education employment is forecast to grow by 42%, while other areas sit closer to 15%. In other words, the trends we observe today in Norlane and Corio are forecast to continue, and the employment gap is set to widen, as the rest of Geelong grows. That is, the current assumptions about employment growth, continue the trends that are already in place.

Taking a longer timeframe (15-20 years to 2041) and looking at industries (19 categories) in more detail sees the largest amount of job growth in health care and social assistance, education and training, professional services, accommodation and food services, closely followed by construction and retail, then transport, postal and warehousing. While from a lower base, the percentage change in jobs across arts and recreation, and electricity, gas, water and waste are expected to be high. Manufacturing remains a large employer of over 8,000 workers, with minimal change over the period.

⁹ The SGS small area model is a state-wide breakdown of growth trends, in population, housing, and employment. It accounts for major project pipelines, as well as state-government targets, and disaggregates high level forecasts down to a travel zone level. These projections seek to represent the 'most likely' urban future based on current data and assumptions related to various trends and a current understanding of policy/structural changes. Like any forecast, there is always a degree of uncertainty in the future.

Key data sources include ABS ERP, ABS Census, ABS Labour Force Survey, Department of Transport and Planning Urban Development Program, VPA and Geelong PSP data, SRL Business Case, Multiple location-specific supply datasets and planning policy inputs.

Figure 22: Greater Geelong employment forecasts, 2024



Source: SGS Small area model (2024)

The construction industry has seen significant growth across Geelong over the past 10-15 years (see Figure 16). Greater Geelong is forecast to continue its strong housing growth, with some of the highest planned growth in the state, as part of the Victorian Government housing targets.

The construction industry remains an opportunity for workers living in Norlane and Corio. A large job market with focussed training, and a planned period of growth and expansion, create a stability of employment for locals. The scale of plans for new housing and jobs in the urban growth corridors is significant, over a long time period. This presents opportunities for a long-term investment in a local skilled workforce across construction and other services supporting this development.

The Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Framework Plan – which sets out new urban development to 2050 includes plans for 294 ha of employment lands. In the Northern precinct, the focus is on an employment hub to leverage the growth area’s proximity to the Geelong Ring Road Employment Precinct, the Port of Geelong, Avalon Airport and Melbourne. The Western precinct is more locally focussed, with a network of activity centres responding to the local environment.

Table 15: Greater Geelong employment forecasts (place of work), 2024

Industry	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	Growth 21-41	% Change 21-41
Health Care and Social Assistance	22,456	27,340	29,953	32,760	35,917	13,460	60%
Education and Training	11,968	14,272	16,259	18,261	20,680	8,712	73%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	8,544	10,388	11,520	12,805	14,536	5,992	70%
Accommodation and Food Services	8,396	9,819	11,182	12,138	13,215	4,819	57%
Construction	12,635	14,431	15,741	16,605	17,381	4,746	38%
Retail Trade	17,408	18,005	19,278	20,560	21,906	4,498	26%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	4,682	5,428	6,247	7,179	8,110	3,428	73%
Public Administration and Safety	7,226	7,394	8,194	8,625	9,051	1,826	25%
Arts and Recreation Services	1,739	1,848	2,300	2,682	3,084	1,345	77%
Other Services	4,855	5,155	5,587	5,835	6,087	1,233	25%
Financial and Insurance Services	3,473	3,861	4,003	4,229	4,502	1,029	30%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	1,822	2,164	2,364	2,588	2,764	943	52%
Wholesale Trade	2,455	2,635	2,757	3,041	3,299	844	34%
Administrative and Support Services	3,002	3,212	3,453	3,616	3,805	804	27%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	1,148	1,403	1,603	1,767	1,920	772	67%
Manufacturing	8,515	8,224	8,338	8,535	8,782	268	3%
Information Media and Telecommunications	1,303	1,280	1,389	1,465	1,542	239	18%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1,393	1,348	1,416	1,447	1,474	82	6%
Mining	206	217	245	258	270	64	31%

Source: SGS Small area model (2024) ANZSIC 1 digit

4.4 Key Economic Prospects

Overview

There have been many local and regional policies and strategic plans prepared for the region over recent years. A review of these identified 7 potential economic prospects for the region that are consistently highlighted:

- Leveraging existing infrastructure assets
- Nurturing growth in precincts and clusters
- Embracing the transition to a clean economy
- Reducing socio-economic disparities
- Addressing skills shortages and gaps
- Cost competitive
- Balancing housing growth and employment lands

These prospects present opportunities for Greater Geelong to continue its economic evolution and strengthen its role as Victoria's second city. At the same time, they present very real opportunities for Norlane and Corio.

However, without strategic intervention the benefits will bypass Norlane and Corio's community and residents. This has been the pattern through Geelong's economic transition so far. A new focus is required to engage Norlane and Corio in the future of the region.

Key economic prospects were identified through a review of local and regional policies and strategic plans. The documents reviewed include:

- Victoria Economic Growth Statement¹⁰
- Barwon Regional Economic Development Strategy¹¹
- G21 Geelong Region Plan 2050 (2023 Update)¹²
- Greater Geelong Economic Development Plan 2024-2034¹³
- CoGG Council Plan 2025-2029¹⁴
- Geelong's risk, economic and business growth landscape (KPMG, 2023-2025)^{15,16}

A detailed policy review is attached in Appendix B. Policy Review.

10 Victoria Government (2024), Economic Growth Statement – Victoria: Open for Business, <https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-12/Economic-Growth-Statement.pdf>

11 Victoria State Government (2022), Barwon Regional Economic Development Strategy, https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/2063907/Barwon-REDS-2022.pdf

12 G21 Geelong Region Alliance (2023), Region Plan 2050 – Updated 2023, https://g21.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/G21-2050-Region-Plan_compressed-1.pdf

13 The City of Greater Geelong (2024), Geelong on the Rise: A Clever and Creative International City, [https://hdp-au-prod-app-ggc-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-](https://hdp-au-prod-app-ggc-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/2917/1349/8244/Geelong_on_the_Rise_a_Clever_and_Creative_International_City.pdf)

[2.amazonaws.com/2917/1349/8244/Geelong_on_the_Rise_a_Clever_and_Creative_International_City.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-ggc-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/2917/1349/8244/Geelong_on_the_Rise_a_Clever_and_Creative_International_City.pdf)

14 The City of Greater Geelong (2025), Council Plan 2025-29, <https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/common/Public/Documents/8d932558ca8f13a-councilplan2025-29.pdf>

15 KPMG (2023), Geelong Economic Blueprint 2023/24, <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmgsites/au/pdf/2023/kpmg-geelong-economic-blueprint-2023-2024.pdf.coredownload.inline.pdf>

16 KPMG (2025), Geelong Risk Landscape, <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmgsites/au/pdf/2025/kpmg-geelong-risk-landscape.pdf.coredownload.inline.pdf>

The economic prospects noted for the region from these documents are noted below, along with implications for Norlane and Corio.

Leveraging existing infrastructure assets

Greater Geelong is an increasingly attractive location for business due to its proximity to Melbourne and its skilled and growing labour pool. It is home to several key assets which can be leveraged to generate employment growth – notably Avalon Airport, Geelong Port, road and freight connection, Deakin University, TAFEs, government agencies and specialised industry clusters. This is a focus of the many local and regional policies and strategic plans prepared for the region. They tend to focus on inbound capital investment and attracting new workers to locate in the region.

For Norlane and Corio: at a local level, there are infrastructure assets that can be leveraged in support of future economic activities – such as schools, vacant shops and community facilities. While the regional transport, health and education assets are important in attracting economic activity, structural barriers such as limited public transport connectivity and relatively low car ownership limit opportunities for Norlane and Corio residents to participate. Addressing this transport disadvantage would open more opportunities to participate in regional jobs created by these infrastructure assets.

Nurturing growth in precincts and clusters

Innovation and business precincts and clusters are emerging across the region around Deakin University, Pivot City, Civic Precinct, the Port and Airport and the employment lands precinct. These precincts are a focus of the published strategy documents across the region. These locations position the region to capture emerging opportunities relating to the 5 priority sectors outlined in the Victoria Economic Growth Statement (advanced manufacturing and defence, health technologies and medical research, circular economy, digital technologies, agribusiness). A focus on these locations, will drive regional competitiveness and creates pathways to attract investment, talent seeking quality jobs, and related services.

For Norlane and Corio: The existing supply of serviced and available industrial land across Norlane and Corio present opportunities to attract and support the growth of new businesses that could coalesce as an industrial precinct with specialist clusters. To maximise this potential, it is important to build on existing strengths (e.g. light industry, freight and logistics, major business operations) and ensure that future uses either complement these or create supportive, co-located activities that can drive broader industry and local economic growth.

Even with the realisation of these opportunities meaningfully connecting growing local industries to the local workforce and community remains the challenge.

Embracing the transition to a clean economy

The strategic planning documents reviewed consistently focus on the opportunities from a transition to a clean economy through climate change mitigation, renewable technologies and circular economy practices. For example, the G21 Region Plan includes the ‘Accelerating the clean economy’ program; the Barwon REDS includes a strategic direction to ‘Build a sustainable and climate resilient region’; and the Greater Geelong Economic Development Plan identifies the clean economy as a priority industry.

For Norlane and Corio: it is important that businesses and residents can work towards and benefit from the clean economy transition – noting that this generally faces headwinds.

New industries may emerge over time (e.g., renewable energy or circular economy practices), providing pathways for local jobs and skills development. However, barriers such as skills gaps, limited access to capital and upfront costs of new technologies may reduce the immediacy of these opportunities for the many small businesses that dominate in Norlane and Corio, let alone the resident labour force. The location of firms supporting the transition, also does not mean that the local businesses or community benefit from more affordable or green energy themselves. Community benefits programs that accompany renewable industry expansion could be further harnessed for local workforce benefits. In addition, sharing the benefits of the transition could be further enhanced through community long term ownership of renewable assets as shareholders.

Reducing socio-economic disparities

Norlane and Corio are consistently identified and acknowledged as facing disadvantage across the reviewed reports and strategies. The challenge is well known and considered in strategic planning work. The plans note that opportunities to lift socio-economic status come from the provision of quality jobs, education, public transport and social and affordable housing. The strategies talk of embedding equity into future economic development to ensure that growth is inclusive and benefits all residents, not just those in more advantaged parts of the region. This aspiration of shared prosperity for the whole of Geelong Region includes the ability to grow businesses, create work pathways and drive prosperity in all parts of the community. The reviewed reports and strategies include a focus on achieving this but clearly the challenge is in the effective ‘follow-through’. The consistent focus on jobs and economic growth as a tool for addressing disadvantage has not addressed the issues.

For Norlane and Corio: the rhetoric is that reducing existing socio-economic disadvantage in communities like Norlane and Corio will come from targeted investment into skills development and education, improved transport connections to increase access to services, and an increased provision of well-located and accessible affordable housing. Turning the rhetoric into programs and initiatives that come to terms with entrenched disadvantage, and that persevere to truly build community wealth and capacity to bridge the disparity between Norlane, Corio and the more ‘advantaged’ suburbs across Geelong, remains elusive.

Addressing skills shortages and gaps

The documents reviewed identify an existing shortage of around 18,000 workers in the region into the future to address the workforce needs of new industries and economic activities. While rapid population growth will contribute to closing this gap, the strategies also highlight the importance of retraining skilled workers, equipping people with adaptable, long-term skills, and improving educational attainment.

For Norlane and Corio: While the region has a network of schools, TAFE and a university, the alignment of the offer could be further tailored with business needs and skills of the future. A focus on increasing the accessibility and take up of education and training would enable residents to upskill. This would be alongside programs of support including wraparound services such as childcare, transport and literacy support to not inhibit take-up of opportunities.

Remaining cost competitive

The cost of housing, and land for commercial and industrial uses in Greater Geelong is very competitive relative to Melbourne and other capital cities across Australia. Combining this with high quality environments and liveability on offer, it is expected that Geelong region will continue to attract young people to relocate.

For Norlane and Corio: a portion of the region's population growth and change will occur in Norlane and Corio, particularly among younger people drawn to the comparatively lower cost of established housing for both purchase, investment and rentals. While this presents opportunities from an increasing population, there is also a risk of gentrification displacing existing residents. Targeted planning and investment in new housing with a mix of tenures and household types, is an opportunity to reduce the concentration of disadvantage, while at the same ensuring that the area retains affordable options. The lower costs of retail and commercial spaces present opportunities for startups that connect the local community with business opportunities.

Balancing housing growth and employment lands

The policies suggest the wider region faces a shortage of serviced industrial lands. While an appropriate supply of zoned land exists, a lack of serviced land can hinder economic growth. Additional investment is needed to ensure that land is available for future jobs growth and economic activities. There are large housing growth areas identified in the region, and the services required to bring that land to market can often be a focus given the national focus on housing supply and affordability.

For Norlane and Corio: There is a large supply of industrial zoned land, most of which is assumed to be serviced. Plans for the northern and western growth areas include employment lands and activity centres to support local investment. Into the future, this land can be used to provide spaces for economic activities aligned with the needs of increasing households.¹⁷

4.5 Key Industry Sectors

Overview

Historic trends do not necessarily reflect future opportunities. The following key sectors opportunities were identified for the economy of Geelong, by various peak bodies in the region:

- Advanced manufacturing
- Light industry, transport, freight and logistics
- Creative and service sectors
- Health and care economy
- Cleantech, renewable energy, and circular economy practices
- Professional business services

Within these strategies, the construction and retail sectors are generally overlooked. This is despite the significant residential growth planned in the growth areas to the north and east of Norlane and Corio that will generate both construction activities, and future demand for population related services.

¹⁷ G21 Geelong Region Alliance (2023), *Region Plan 2050 – Updated 2023*

Looking at the economic future of Norlane and Corio, it will be paramount to identify the right industries and sectors to invest in, rather than simply relying on the status quo. The key sectors of opportunity are reviewed and highlight the potential opportunities for Norlane and Corio – informed by the previous sections of this report.

Advanced manufacturing

Policies at the local, state and federal level identify advanced manufacturing as one of the key sectors driving Geelong's future growth.¹⁸

While manufacturing jobs in the region have declined significantly over the past two decades – notably through the closure of Alcoa's Point Henry aluminium smelter in 2014¹⁹ and Ford's Norlane automotive manufacturing plant in 2016. While the overall long-term trend is of decline in this sector, recent data shows that manufacturing jobs between 2022/23 and 2023/24 increasing.²⁰

While many of these new jobs will fall within traditional manufacturing roles, a portion will likely be in advanced manufacturing. This is because, Geelong boasts a relatively rich network of advanced manufacturing precincts, clusters, institutions and research facilities – all of which are continuing to grow through increasing investment and strategic direction. Furthermore, as the region aligns with state-wide net-zero ambitions, advanced manufacturing jobs linked to the renewables sector are expected to grow. This is especially the case in Geelong, where the region plays a key role in supporting the Gippsland and Southern Ocean REZs through its access to Geelong Port, Avalon Airport, and its rail and road freight network.

The strategies also identify an emerging Geelong defence cluster, supported by several local businesses supplying the defence industry, and anchored by Hanwha Defence Australia's manufacturing precinct in Avalon which specialises in building infantry fighting vehicles.²¹ The Australian Government has identified over \$200 billion in defence spending over the next five year which will continue to drive strong industry growth. The City of Geelong has estimated that the region captures a range of direct and indirect economic benefits relating to this investment.²²

Norlane and Corio are well-positioned to capture advanced manufacturing growth, given quality industrial zoned land and floorspace, and numerous existing businesses that operate in a co-locative manner. The prospect for advanced manufacturing growth appears real, particularly given rising demand for clean economy, renewable energy, defence equipment and the like.

However, translating prospects in the area's industrial precincts into advanced manufacturing jobs for local Norlane and Corio residents will require a concerted strategy addressing skills shortages and gaps, with wraparound and on-going support to ensure disadvantaged residents can begin to take advantage of opportunities.

18 Geelong Manufacturing Council (2025), 'Manufacturing leads strong employment and economic growth in Greater Geelong', <https://www.geelongmanufacturingcouncil.com.au/2025/08/manufacturing-leads-strong-employment-and-economic-growth-in-greater-geelong>

19 Alcoa (2014), 'Alcoa to Close Point Henry Aluminium Smelter and Rolling Mills in Australia', <https://news.alcoa.com/press-releases/press-release-details/2014/Alcoa-to-Close-Point-Henry-Aluminum-Smelter-and-Rolling-Mills-in-Australia/default.aspx>

20 .idcommunity (2025), City of Greater Geelong – Employment by industry (Total), <https://economy.id.com.au/geelong/employment-by-industry?sEndYear=2023>

21 Geelong Manufacturing Council (2024), 'Defence industry, Geelong', <https://www.geelongmanufacturingcouncil.com.au/about/industries/defence-industry>

22 The City of Greater Geelong (2024), Geelong on the Rise: A Clever and Creative International City, https://hdp-au-prod-app-ggc-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/2917/1349/8244/Geelong_on_the_Rise_a_Clever_and_Creative_International_City.pdf

Notwithstanding a good supply of INZ1 and INZ2 zoned land, established industrial businesses and proximity to regionally significant assets including the Geelong Port and Avalon Airport, the local workforce is ‘disconnected’ from the opportunities. Many advanced manufacturing roles require TAFE or university qualifications, meaning that serious upskilling would be required to open widespread access to employment for residents. Some opportunities in lower skilled roles might be available.

Light industry, transport, freight and logistics

Light industry services (including freight and logistics) are the fastest growing part of Australia’s industrial market due to increasing demand for imports based on population growth, and the transitioning nature of industry across Australia.²³ Geelong will continue to support the transport and logistics industry into the future through key existing assets including the Avalon Airport, the Port of Geelong, and access to major road and rail freight corridors with good access to Greater Melbourne and beyond. The sector will also continue to evolve alongside advanced manufacturing, with new technologies and processes boosting productivity and efficiency. This growth will be essential in meeting the needs of a rapidly expanding population and ensuring Geelong remains competitive as a regional logistics hub.

Northern Geelong is recognised as the industrial hub of the region, with clusters of light industry and freight and logistics businesses in the industrial areas near to Norlane and Corio. Light industry activity has ramped up significantly over the past decade (reflected in increasing numbers of jobs in the area) and will likely continue through increasing investment and evolving industry needs. A mix of transport, logistics, and light industry businesses are already established in Norlane and Corio, which provides a foundation for further growth. This industrial land is accessible to residents though this doesn’t necessarily lead to gainful employment.

Recent development illustrates this momentum. In Corio, the Bisinella Industrial Estate and Business Park in the Geelong Ring Rd Employment Precinct has recently delivered a range of purpose-built factories and warehouses for long-term lease, alongside 14 hectares (ha) of land ready for immediate development.²⁴ This land can cater to a diversity of future uses. In Norlane, the refurbishment of the former Ford factory has created approximately 150,000 sqm of industrial and commercial floorspace, including the construction of Amazon warehouse and other new facilities.²⁵ Both of these projects will generate ongoing employment opportunities. Many roles within the sector (e.g. warehousing, distribution, and entry-level production) do not require higher education qualifications, and skills developed in these roles are often transferable across industries. This makes the sector particularly well-suited to local employment for residents of Norlane and Corio. However, it will take more than entry level basic jobs to address the long-term challenges identified.

Large logistics companies like Amazon can offer jobs that require no previous experience²⁶, providing a pathway into work for residents and potentially helping to reduce the relatively high unemployment rates in Norlane and Corio, though there is a precariousness to this type of low salary, casualised work. As technology advances, reliance on automation processes will continue to increase. Into the future, this might replace and displace the unskilled workforce.

²³ The City of Greater Geelong (2024), Geelong on the Rise: A Clever and Creative International City, <https://hdp-au-prod-app-ggc-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast->

²⁴ Bisinella (2025), Bisinella Business Park Corio, <https://bisinella.com.au/documents/bisinella-industrial-estate/Bisinella-Business-Park-Brochure-August-2025.pdf>

²⁵ Ethos Urban (n.d.), FORTEK Geelong, <https://ethosurban.com/projects/fortek-geelong/>

²⁶ Taylor, J (2024), ‘Amazon seeks seasonal workers In Geelong’, <https://timesnewsgroup.com.au/geelongtimes/news/amazon-seeks-seasonal-workers>

Into the future, economic prospects for the light industry, domestic trades and services sectors will likely remain strong in Norlane and Corio. The proximity of established industrial lands likely to host these uses, proximity to key infrastructure, and pipeline of investment suggest that these suburbs will continue to capture growth. The relatively unskilled nature of jobs in this sector may suit a share of Norlane and Corio's workforce. Longer term, accessible skills training, apprenticeships, and TAFE pathways will be vital in building a pipeline of local workers for entry-level and semi-skilled positions, and with opportunities to continue to progress into higher skilled, higher paid positions. Promoting the sector to young people through schools and career programs could also help to strengthen long-term workforce participation. It will also be important to guard against the risks of exploitative practices, with basic warehousing and logistics occupations amongst the least secure and poorly paid jobs available to lower-skilled workers²⁷. An overreliance on unskilled, low-quality employment at large, footloose logistics businesses might raise risks for the local community and economy.

Creative and service sectors

Creative industry opportunities in Geelong include an evolving mix of sectors spanning arts, culture, screen, design, publishing and advertising. Such industries not only add jobs and value to the local economy but also contribute to Geelong's liveability and attractiveness for future residents.²⁸

It is safe to assume that the creative sector is growing across Geelong for several reasons:

- Between 2022/23 – 2023/24, the arts and recreation services sector increased by +537 workers (from 2,512 to 3,049 workers).²⁹
- A focus of the City's Council Plan 2025-2029 is to increase investment into creative hubs and strengthen creative enterprises.³⁰
- Recent \$140 million upgrades to the Geelong Arts Centre have increased capacity and event space and this will likely drive demand and support overall growth in Geelong's art scene.
- Geelong was designated as Australia's first (and only) City of Design and a member of the UNESCO Creative City Network in 2017. This international network of cities works together to place creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans.³¹

The sector is experiencing strong growth, driven by recent investment (e.g. the Geelong Arts Centre redevelopment), a growing younger population and workforce, targeted Council initiatives, and Geelong's recognition as Australia's only City of Design Member in the UNESCO Creative City Network. These are all strengthening the city's creative economy, attracting talent and investment, and creating increasing employment opportunities based on tourism and the visitor economy.

However, although Geelong's creative sector is growing and investment is increasing, most of this activity is concentrated within the Geelong City Centre, driven by tourism and recreation activities. While several arts programs and activities are provided at the Norlane Community Centre³², there is a limited creative sector

27 Jaffee, D. and Bensman, D. (2016) 'Drawing and picking: precarious work and labor action in the logistics sector', Working USA, vol. 19, pp. 57-79

28 Ibid.

29 .idcommunity (2025), City of Greater Geelong – Employment by industry (Total), <https://economy.id.com.au/geelong/employment-by-industry?sEndYear=2023>

30 The City of Greater Geelong (2025), Council Plan 2025-29, <https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/common/Public/Documents/8d932558ca8f13a-councilplan2025-29.pdf>

31 United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (n.d.), Creative Cities Network, <https://www.unesco.org/en/creative-cities>

³² Norlane Community Centre (n.d.), *Groups & Activities*, <https://norlanec.com.au/courses-activities/>

presence in either Norlane or Corio. Based on this, it is considered that prospects for unlocking creative sector potential are high in Geelong and in proximity to the city centre, but lower in outer suburbs including Norlane and Corio.

However, low land prices and residual industrial fabric, there may be an opportunity for creative work, living and display spaces such as studios. At least one enterprising artist, Frank Burgers, is taking advantage of relatively low rent shop space in Labuan Square, Norlane to establish a studio and small gallery space that offers art classes.³³ A concerted program could focus on spreading this type of creative activity in underutilised space.

There is great potential to expand local opportunities through targeted initiatives such as community arts programs, creative skills training, pop-up studios, or even partnerships with local schools and organisations. This could help to unlock creative talent within these communities, leading to potential career pathways for some residents.

There is also a large supply of relatively cheap land, retail and warehouse space, which if marketed appropriately to creatives (and with support from Council) could grow in popularity, providing creative opportunities to the local population.

Health and care economy

Healthcare and social assistance is Greater Geelong's largest industry of employment – accounting for almost 9% of the GRP and employing around 20% of workers in 2021.³⁴ Barwon Health has provided a steady flow of employment opportunities and attracted many students and professionals to the region. Barwon Health provides facilities across the Barwon Region, including in Norlane. Deakin University (and its associated precincts/hubs) plays a central role in supporting the state's vision to enhance medical technology research and innovation. This activity will continue to generate skilled employment pathways for residents, while also attracting specialised talent from outside of the region.

Healthcare and social assistance is the region's largest industry of employment, and demand for workers will remain strong due to the growing and ageing population.

An ageing population, coupled with substantial projected population growth will continue to drive ongoing demand for health, aged care, disability and community support services. In contrast to the abovementioned industries, healthcare is more resilient to economic cycles and shocks. It will also continue to offer secure and stable job pathways for residents, though not always well-paid. It is therefore considered that this industry will remain moderate-to-strong for residents of Greater Geelong, Norlane and Corio.

It is highly unlikely that Norlane or Corio will play a role in the medical technology and research subsector, which is expected to remain concentrated around Deakin University and related hubs.

Norlane and Corio face higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage, which are linked to lower community health outcomes. This creates strong demand for accessible health services, as well as for local healthcare workers. Existing facilities, including a Barwon Health centre and several medical clinics, will continue to provide local employment opportunities. However, becoming a nurse or doctor (or other specialised roles) requires a bachelor's degree or higher – which likely acts a barrier that prevents many residents from joining the workforce.

³³ Frank Burgers, Visual Artist, <https://www.frankburgers.com/>

³⁴ ABS Census Data (2021), Industry of Employment (Place of Work)

Entry-level roles in aged care, disability support or community health – which don't often require university-level qualifications – are likely to provide more accessible job opportunities for the local population.

Cleantech, renewable energy and circular economy practices:

Demand across the region is expected to remain strong in this sector, underpinned by Victoria's ambition to reach net-zero by 2045 and supporting policies, though noting the significant political, economic, community and environmental headwinds that exist for a successful transition.

The Geelong Port and Viva Energy will play a critical role in supporting the operation of nearby REZs, particularly through the import and assemblage of large wind turbine components. Local capabilities are being further strengthened by research at Deakin University and associated industry clusters, consolidating Geelong's role as a key hub in the state's clean energy transition.

Many roles in this sector will require highly skilled qualifications in engineering, science, ICT, and related fields – generally obtained at bachelor level or higher. However, there will also be demand for 'on-the-ground' roles such as electricians, transport operators, and welders, which can be accessed through TAFE pathways or targeted upskilling programs.

Vestas, who currently operate from the former Ford site in Norlane, specialise in wind turbine design, development and assemblage. Limited but direct opportunities exist for residents to participate in the sector. However, fully realising such opportunities will require a clear strategy that expands industry awareness, focuses on training and upskilling and takes a long-term view.

Professional business services

Geelong's professional workforce is growing because of the region's affordability relative to Melbourne, and its high liveability standard. Population growth and the expansion of the priority growth sectors identified in this report will continue to drive demand for professional services across the region.

Professional roles typically require higher levels of educational attainment (at the bachelor's degree level or above) which presents a barrier for many residents. Where local young people do pursue university study, they often leave the area to access educational and career opportunities outside of Corio or Norlane (e.g. in Melbourne), limiting the development of a local professional workforce.

Over the longer term, improvements in educational attainment and digital access may open remote and hybrid professional roles, creating new possibilities for residents to participate in the sector without relocating.

Construction

The construction industry plays a crucial role in the development of housing, infrastructure and commercial projects. It has overtaken manufacturing in recent years to become one of the region's key industries, not only supporting strong economic growth, but also providing employment opportunities to around 10% of the Norlane and Corio resident workers (as detailed in Section 2.5).

The strategies and documents review on future economic opportunities do not identify construction as a growth opportunity. They tend to focus on major institutions and inbound investment. While regional leaders are very aware of the urban growth corridors, there has not been a focus on the economic opportunities that

this investment in new urban precincts could present for the region. The same can be said for the increasing opportunities in population serving retail jobs.

Demand for construction workers will continue to rise as the population increases, more major projects are announced, and new employment lands are unlocked. The key challenge lies in ensuring that the labour supply can keep pace with this demand, both in terms of the number of workers and required skills. An ageing workforce combined with declining apprenticeship uptake makes this increasingly difficult.

To address this, construction apprenticeships must become a more appealing pathway for young people, particularly for underrepresented groups and women. Attracting and retaining apprentices is a growing challenge, with low pay and cultural issues often discouraging completion. Strengthening links between local training providers - such as the Geelong Industry Trade Training Centre and TAFEs - with local schools and construction businesses could help boost the share of apprentices in the workforce, while aligning skills development with local needs.

4.6 Emerging Trends and Economic Disruptors

Overview

There continues to be new emerging trends that present the potential to reshape and disrupt Geelong's economy in the coming years.

These forces may act as major economic disruptors – impacting local industries and businesses, employment options for residents, housing outcomes, and community wellbeing.

Awareness of these environmental, social and economic shifts are important when considering future economic opportunities.

Climate change, decarbonisation and transition

While Geelong can grow its cleantech and renewable energy industries, it is equally important to recognise the economic and social impacts of the net-zero transition and ensure that any at-risk workers are supported through reskilling into future ready sectors.

In addition, Geelong Port has proposed the Geelong Renewables Terminal³⁵, which (if approved) will be purpose-built to cater for the needs of the offshore wind industry in support of Victoria's Renewable Energy Zones (REZs). This project is expected to generate more than 4,200 direct and indirect jobs during construction and 850 direct and indirect jobs once the terminal is operational.

Automation (AI, robotics)

Land use patterns are shifting as more organisations continue to integrate the digital transformation, automation and AI.

Geelong is home to a digitally active population, a growing tech-focused community and a highly skilled workforce. Such characteristics have fuelled demand for innovation precincts such as the Geelong Future

³⁵ GeelongPort (2025), Geelong Renewables Terminal, <https://geelongport.com.au/development/geelong-renewables-terminal/>

Economy Precinct, and the emergence of technology-driven industries (e.g., MedTech, BioTech, AgTech). Increasing advancements in automation technologies may eventually lead to potential industry restructures and the displacement of workers, or a loss of skills through a higher dependence on technology. Geelong may confront this reality in due course, notwithstanding the positive employment future typically promulgated in the strategy material

Economic exclusion and wealth concentration

Geelong is marked by stark socio-economic contrasts, home to both some of the most advantaged and disadvantaged communities in Australia. Norlane has the lowest SIEFA score in Victoria (2021)³⁶, making it the state's most disadvantaged suburb, while nearby areas such as Fyansford and Ceres rank among the most advantaged.

The loss of thousands of jobs in manufacturing since the 1980s left deep economic and social impacts³⁷, contributing to cycles of unemployment, lower educational attainment, and reduced opportunities for residents. At the same time, wealth and investment have increasingly concentrated in more affluent suburbs, reinforcing spatial inequality across the region.

Without intervention, economic exclusion and wealth concentration will disrupt the region's overall growth potential. Addressing disparities is critical to ensuring that future economic opportunities are inclusive and shared across all communities.

Ageing including impacts on workforce participation

In 2021, people aged 55 years and over comprised approximately 31% of the population of Greater Geelong (or 110,740 people). By 2046, this is forecasted to increase to 35.5% of the population (or 156,860 people).³⁸ It is widely acknowledged that as the population grows older, there will be an accompanying need for more health services, including in aged care settings.

A larger share of older residents also means a shrinking proportion of workers available to fill jobs. This might increasingly become a challenge at a time when it is said that Geelong is already facing a shortage of around 18,000 workers.³⁹

Labour force change and working preferences

Support services such as the Geelong Skills and Jobs Centre were instrumental in enabling former Ford manufacturing workers to reskill and re-enter the labour market.⁴⁰

36 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia/latest-release>

37 Tippet, H (2023), The Geelong suburb of Norlane is Victoria's most disadvantaged area, census data shows, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-05-04/norlane-most-disadvantaged-area-in-victoria-abs-census-data/102291206>

38 .idcommunity (2025), City of Greater Geelong – Population and age structure, <https://forecast.id.com.au/geelong/population-age-structure>

39 G21 Geelong Region Alliance (2023), Region Plan 2050 – Updated 2023

40 Dyett, G (2018), 'Two years on from Ford factory closure, how are workers coping?', <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/two-years-on-from-ford-factory-closure-how-are-workers-coping/smci7cxxv>

Such employment support services will remain integral to the region, where looking ahead, Geelong's emerging industries will create demand for new skillsets. For suburbs like Norlane and Corio – where workforce participation is low – the risk is that these communities will fall further behind if residents are unable to access upskilling/reskilling opportunities.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Insights and Implications

The **Greater Geelong region** economy holds significant opportunity to continue to grow and transform with a strong local identity. This growth is backed by diverse regional economic assets including the port, airport, and transport connections that operate as a gateway for western Victoria. The large health and education providers (Barwon Health and Deakin University) also support a strong knowledge economy. The regions proximity to Greater Melbourne, as well as a growing local skilled labour market, present opportunities that complement the traditional manufacturing and agriculture base. These are big shifts from the industrial base development during the 1920s to 70s. There is major infrastructure investment underway to realise this potential, including planning for 2 major urban growth area corridors to the north and west.

Norlane and Corio have undergone a profound economic and social transformation, since they first began as worker housing in the 1920s. They were a part of the post war manufacturing economic force that propelled the Geelong and Australian economies. Since this time population growth has been modest, significantly below regional averages, with younger, more culturally diverse households concentrated in these suburbs. Despite this diversity, socio-economic indicators reveal persistent challenges: low educational attainment, limited workforce participation, high unemployment, and incomes well below regional benchmarks. Housing affordability remains a relative strength, yet high rates of renting and concentration of social housing have contributed to residualisation⁴¹ and constrained wealth accumulation. Long-established neighbourhood retail strips show signs of decline and there are low levels of business engagement. There are few local employment opportunities and a disconnect between resident skills and available jobs. While Greater Geelong has diversified in health, education, and advanced manufacturing, Norlane and Corio have not shared in this renewal. The cumulative effect of industrial decline and structural barriers has left these communities with entrenched disadvantage.

The communities in Norlane and Corio have many informal community networks and willingness of some business leaders to engage locally. This social capital provides elements of strength and connection that could be built on. Despite this, and the close proximity to a growing region, Norlane and Corio remain disconnected from the local and regional economy.

Notwithstanding growth in Geelong and the thriving industrial precincts, along with optimistic talk in strategic policy and planning documents on the future sectors that will continue to grow, Norlane and Corio are missing out.

The regional economic development strategies tend to focus on attracting inbound investment, growing local jobs and skills development. This approach over many years has not addressed the underlying challenges, new approaches are needed.

Without a deliberate and strategic approach to ensure the regional benefits are captured and shared across the local community, the disconnect is likely to remain and exacerbate.

Thoughtful intervention and targeted strategies are needed to unlock value, foster inclusion, and drive more equitable outcomes that build and retain more wealth locally. Without this, Norlane and Corio are unlikely to integrate into the Geelong economy nor benefit from the expected regional economic growth. The challenges

⁴¹ AHURI (2019) Understanding the 'residualisation' of social housing

facing Norlane and Corio are likely to persist, even as the rest of the Geelong economy grows. The risk for Greater Geelong is that it cannot reach its full potential if it is leaving some communities behind.

This underscores the need for a place-based response to build local wealth, strengthen community assets, and reconnect residents to meaningful economic opportunities. There are opportunities for existing business to grow and for new businesses to be formed. However, these businesses need to be more than located in Norlane and Corio to realise benefits. They need to become embedded and invested in the place and community.

This is about regional economic growth that has a focus on quality over quantity, improvement rather than expansion, and productivity as optimisation rather than maximisation. Greater economic engagement and ownership by local communities also means more community connections and cohesion, less alienation and division.

The opportunities for a place-based approach to economic development are explored further in the following section.

5.2 Opportunities for Place-Based Economic Development

The response calls for a greater focus on place and a better economy, not just a bigger economy. This contrasts with the past decades of economic development in Australia, which saw a focus on large scale external investors (such as Ford car manufacturing) seeking a large, relatively low cost, labour force.

Adapting to economic change and shaping a brighter future that is rich in human, social, cultural, environmental, and financial capital should focus on more than performance against traditional economic indicators. That is, economic success is also about the quality of change and the implications for community wellbeing, community ownership, social cohesion, and liveability. There is an opportunity to address the current demographic and economic profile with prospects, industry sectors and the emerging trends and disruptors. Norlane and Corio show emerging strengths that can be built on to develop a stronger wellbeing economy, including quality social connections, sharing of resources, taking a long-term view, and collaboration.

One approach that aligns closely with this thinking is Community Wealth Building. Community Wealth Building is a people-centred approach that ‘redirects wealth back into the local economy and places control and benefits into the hands of local people’.⁴² This aims to spread with wealth and opportunity more broadly and ensure that investment and economic activity leave a positive legacy for communities, environment and places.⁴³

There are five key ‘pillars’ underpinning Community Wealth Building:

Progressive procurement of goods and services: procurement processes and decision making to deepen local supply chains and socially virtuous business development, spending and investment.

Fair employment and just labour markets: employment practices and wages that are fair and provide opportunities for disadvantaged workers and communities.

42 CLES (2024), ‘What is Community Wealth Building?’, <https://cles.org.uk/community-wealth-building/what-is-community-wealth-building/>

43 Ibid.

Socially productive use of land and property: the use of land and property in ways that generate wealth and benefits for local citizens and local businesses.

Making financial power work for local places: wealth and savings being harnessed for local community and economic benefits.

Plural ownership of the economy: the encouragement of different models of business ownership to build wealth that is responsible and ‘sticks’ in local communities.

Community Wealth Building has been successfully applied in a variety of regions, cities and communities across the world, particularly in the United Kingdom and in the United States.⁴⁴

The analysis of demographic, socio-economic, housing, employment, jobs and economy, business and community activity and future casting the industry and economic prospects as outlined in this report, presents opportunities for Norlane and Corio. These opportunities are explored through a lens of the five pillars of Community Wealth Building, to embed into future actions and initiatives.

There are already some Community Wealth Building Initiatives underway in the Geelong region with some specifically being designed to reflect one or more of the five pillars while others could simply be classified as a related initiative. A few of these are described below:

- **G21 Region Opportunities for Work (GROW):** GROW is an initiative of the Give Where You Live Foundation and was developed in 2014 using specific Community Wealth Building examples as exemplars. It originated as an attempt to address entrenched disadvantage in Norlane and Corio using the levers of social procurement, impact investment, open-sourced data and reporting and employment brokerage.
- **GCEC Early Engagement Social Procurement Program (GEESP):** The Give Where You Live Foundation’s GROW Initiative, gforce employment and recruitment and Development Victoria, collaborated to design and deliver the GEESP Program during the construction of the Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCEC) now known as Nyaal Banyul. The program uses a social enterprise group training organisation to specifically employ apprentices and trainees experiencing significant barriers to employment. These roles were a requirement of the state government construction contract with associated penalties if they were not delivered.
- **Northern Futures:** Northern Futures is a longstanding employment program offering free personalised mentoring, hands-on training and real job opportunities through strong partnerships with local employers, community groups and government.
- **Geelong Financial Inclusion Action Plan (FIAP):** Launched in 2016, FIAP asks local organisations to make public commitments to close the gender pay gap, provide employment opportunities for under-represented groups including people with a disability and implement domestic violence policies including awareness training and support.
- **Geelong Aboriginal Employment Taskforce:** The taskforce brings together local Aboriginal community representatives, employers, groups and businesses to reduce the barriers Aboriginal people face when looking for work. It asks for commitments from major employers and members of the taskforce to drive better employment outcomes for Aboriginal people.
- **The Real Deal Geelong:** The Real Deal is a collaboration of organisations from the union movement, faith communities and community groups to address three priority issues of secure housing,

44 Fensham, P. (2020), ‘Community Wealth Building in Australia: A new focus for regional economic development’, https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning_community-wealth-building_Pat-Fensham.pdf

meaningful work and cost of living and care and connection. The initial work has centred on secure housing.

These are key examples of existing Community Wealth Building work but in no way an exhaustive list. These initiatives, along with other organisations, have laid the groundwork for further community wealth building strategies.

The analysis in this report builds on these existing initiatives to connect more closely with Norlane and Corio.

Progressive procurement of goods and services

<p>Progressive procurement is about how anchor institutions – major public and private entities – use their procurement processes and decision making to deepen local supply chains and socially virtuous business development.</p> <p>This takes these organisations from being in the region, to being embedded in place and an active part of more inclusive local economic growth and development.</p>	
<p>Future opportunities for Norlane and Corio</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding existing supply chains of major locally based organisations, and mapping where spend goes. This supply chain mapping could identify opportunities and market gaps for new business entrants or local suppliers. • Growing industry sectors becoming more conscious of engagement with local workforces and building strong local supply chains. • Seeking opportunities for start-up businesses, SMEs and local enterprises through procurement by modifying contracts to ensure local suppliers can compete and building local capacity. • Building a network of anchors to prepare targeted procurement approaches and an approach to measure and monitor spend over time.

Fair employment and just labour markets.

<p>Fair employment and just labour markets is about anchor institutions and other employers stimulating and contributing to a fair economy through decent wages and conditions. Often the biggest employers in a place, the approach that anchor institutions take to employment can have a defining effect on the employment prospects and incomes of local people.</p>	
<p>Future opportunities for Norlane and Corio</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying gaps in local skills development that are needed to match with business needs and economic prospects. Local education and training institutions (TAFE and Schools) could target skills matching to industry sectors and needs. This could be delivered through a feedback loop from industries to training providers for skills and workforce planning – matching training with industry needs and gaps. • Offering training and working closer with generational disadvantaged households through school education programs. • Working with major industry employers to take longer term approach to local labour market deployment and skills development through investment in apprenticeships and other training.

Socially productive use of land and property.

Anchor institutions including government, can use land and property in ways that generate wealth and benefits for locals, rather than for remote and private interests.

Future opportunities for Norlane and Corio

- Homes Victoria have large land holdings in Norlane and Corio, any future redevelopment of these homes and land assets should work to deconcentrate disadvantaged residents and present opportunities for home ownership and security of tenure. An initial audit of assets would inform future opportunities.
- Many main street and retail locations in Norlane and Corio are underutilised. Vacant shop fronts, and limited retail offerings present opportunities to better connect landowners with the local community's needs. This may offer new leasing opportunities or seeking out meanwhile uses building on strong local community connections and networks.
- Leverage how local community infrastructure assets are used and programmed to better connect with local communities and businesses.
- There are unused or underutilised public assets that could be identified for repurposing as affordable business space, this would support start up business and other opportunities to increase community connections.
- Seek out spaces within employment precincts in new growth areas for local incubator and startup businesses.
- Seek out opportunities to use unconstrained lands to contribute to the local economy and the livelihoods of residents, e.g., community gardens.

Making financial power work for local places.

Making financial power work for local places is about harnessing wealth and savings for local community and economic benefits, as an alternative to pursuing national or international capital.

Future opportunities for Norlane and Corio

- Seeking out a place-based investment fund to direct regional or state savings into addressing local disadvantage.
- External investment in defence industries or renewables often comes with community benefit schemes that seek to share the returns from external investment with the local economy, establishing an independent fund with local governance and decision making would support addressing the issues that matters locally.
- Engagement with the locally connected mutual banking and local financial institutions on provision of local personal and business banking and financial services and other engagement with the local economy for socially virtuous investment.

Plural ownership of the economy

<p>Business ownership that enables wealth to stay local and play a role in counteracting extraction is central to Community Wealth Building. Co-operatives, mutually owned business, employee ownership, purpose driven small to medium enterprises all have a role. In effect, this is about reducing the separation between production and consumption.</p>	
<p>Future opportunities for Norlane and Corio</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the existing co-op economy that currently exists in the region and opportunities to build on existing connections and networks. • Targeted support to improve skills for residents to build local businesses and providing seeding for businesses with plural ownership that build supply chains into the growing industry sectors. • Address gaps in local provision of services, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health and care economy: identified as a growing sector for employment, to address service gaps with an ageing population in the region, and sustain workforce attraction ○ Renewable energy: to increase long-term benefits of energy transition, provide more affordable energy to address cost of living challenges (through community ownership and shareholding models), and ○ Housing: there is already a strong co-operative housing sector in the region to collaborate with on opportunities to increase affordable and secure housing and provide local employment through construction opportunities.

5.3 Next Steps

This report sets out demographic, socio-economic, housing, employment, jobs and economy, business and community activity and future industry and economic prospects for Norlane and Corio. It provides a timely benchmark for future evaluation of initiatives and measurement of progress.

The next steps include further **engagement**, and exploration of **barriers** to action.

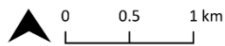
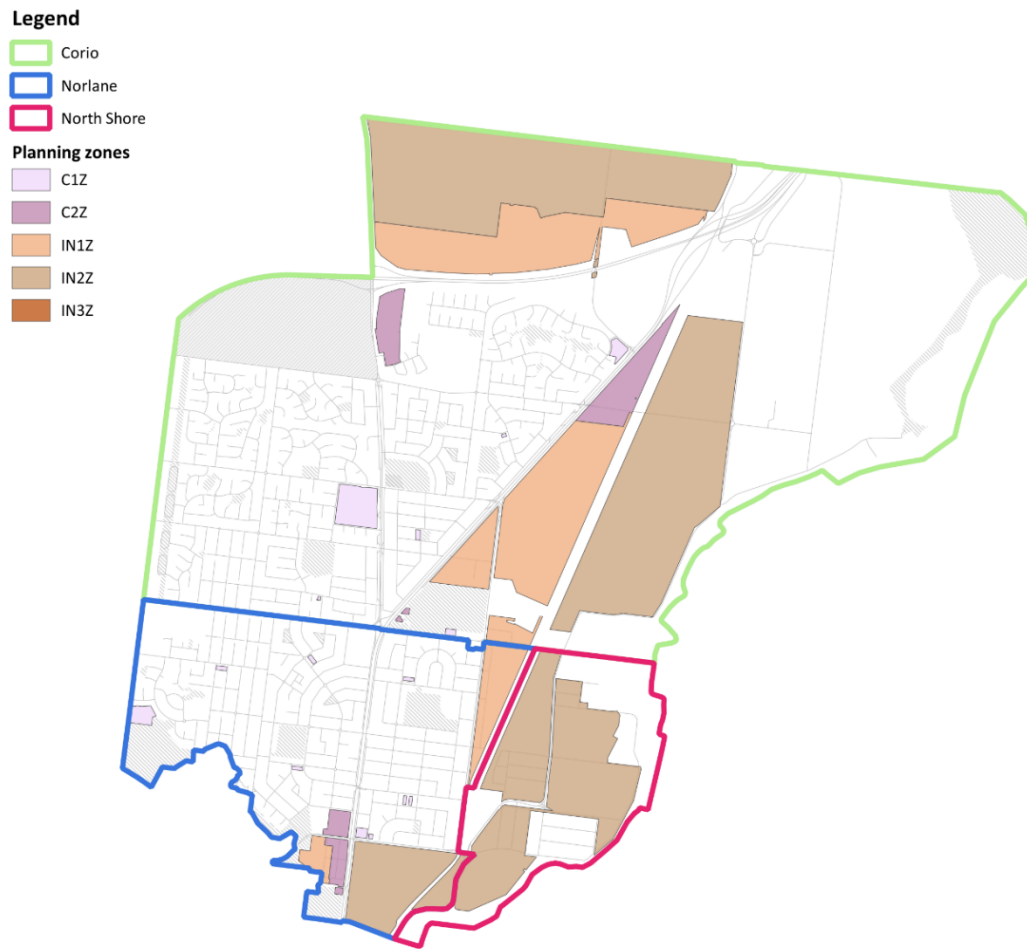
The opportunities outlined will be tested and refined through **engagement** with major investors and employers, along with local government, key businesses and other landowners. This will test the disconnect between the residents and the local economy by exploring the opportunities for businesses – existing and new – to be more embedded and invested in Norlane and Corio - not just located nearby.

The opportunities for place based economic development show that there is broad support for innovative approaches being taken locally. However, a lack of a broader take up also suggest that there remain **barriers** to greater participation or innovative approaches. The barriers across the Community Wealth Building pillars in an Australian context will also be explored.

Appendix A: Commercial, retail and industrial land uses

The commercial and industrial zoned areas are mapped in Figure 23. It shows the major industrial precincts, along with the commercial centres.

Figure 23: Commercial and industrial zoned areas in Norlane, Corio and North Shore



Greater Geelong Planning Scheme, VicPlan



Source:

Table 16: Broad Land Use Categories

BLC Name	Description
Office	Office buildings that are independent (i.e. are not ancillary to another use on site) and likely to accommodate a significant number of administration staff
Business Park	Integrated warehouse, storage, R&D, 'back-room' management and administration with greater than 40% office component
Big Box Retail	Large shopping complex and supermarket developments.
Main Street Retail	Main Street Retail involves small scale and local retailing activities, traditionally found on the main street of an area.
Bulky Goods	Typically large, one-story buildings surrounded by car-parking,
Heavy Industrial	Large scale production activity. Likely to be characterised by high noise emission; emission stacks; use of heavy machinery; and frequency of large trucks
Freight and Logistics	Warehousing and distribution activities. Includes buildings with several docking facilities; 'hard stand' areas with trucks or goods awaiting distribution; and large storage facilities
Urban Services	Concrete batching, waste recycling and transfer, construction and local and state government depots, sewerage, water supply, electricity construction yards
Light Industrial	Small scale production with lower noise and emission levels than heavy manufacturing
Local Service Industrial	Wide range of businesses that service other businesses (components, maintenance and support) and Subregional populations. Typically, does not interfere with the amenity of the neighbourhood via pollution.
Local Dispersed	Social and community services, trades construction, other 'nomads'
Regional Dispersed	Varied typology, however, typically large in scale.
Service Stations	Service Stations
Local health and education	Smaller scale education or health uses such as schools, training centres, community college, aged care facilities, day surgery
Regional health and education	Large-scale regional health and education facilities include general and speciality hospitals, universities and TAFEs

Figure 24: Commercial areas in Norlane, Corio and North Shore

Legend

- Corio
- Norlane
- North Shore

Planning zones

- C1Z
- C2Z

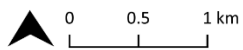
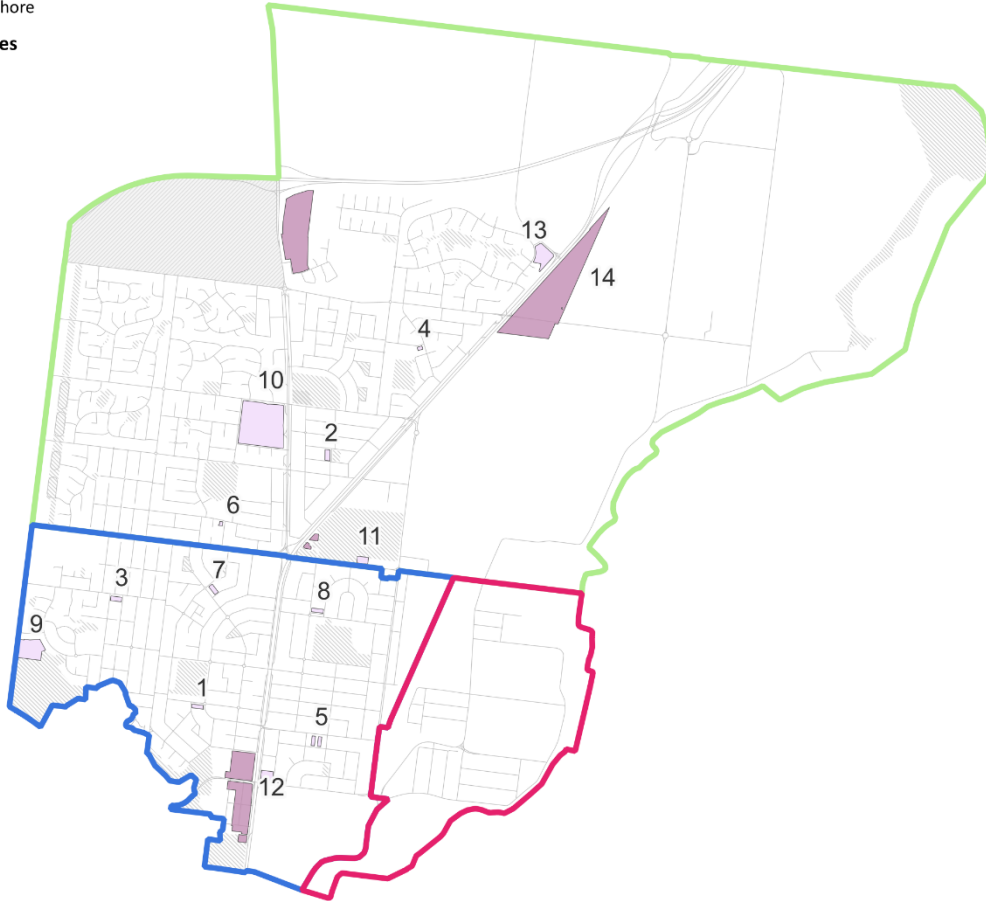


Table 17: ‘Main street’ retail centres (floorspace square metres)

	Shopping centre	Occupied	Vacant	Total	% Vacant
1	Alkira Shops	1,175	801	1,977	41%
2	Detroit Shops	1,541	202	1,743	12%
3	Donny Brook	1,232	797	2,029	39%
4	Kosciusko Shops	238	-	238	0%
5	Labuan Sq	2,402	950	3,353	28%
6	Navada Shops	656	-	656	0%
7	Robin Ave Shops	1,606	-	1,561	0%
8	Rose Ave	1,355	189	1,545	12%
	Total	10,205	2,939	13,144	22%

Table 18: ‘Big box’ retail centres (floorspace square metres)

	Shopping centre	Total
9	Bellpost Shops	8,165
10	Corio Village	31,613
	Total	39,778

Table 19: ‘Bulky goods’ and dispersed retail centres (land area square metres)

	Shopping centre	Occupied	Vacant	Total	% Vacant
11	Stead Park	6,885	0%	6,885	0%
12	The Boulevard	31,079	4,332	35,411	12%
13	Princes Hwy - Aldi	15,722	-	15,723	
14	Princes Hwy	1,168,853	-	1,168,853	

Figure 25: Industrial areas in Norlane, Corio and North Shore

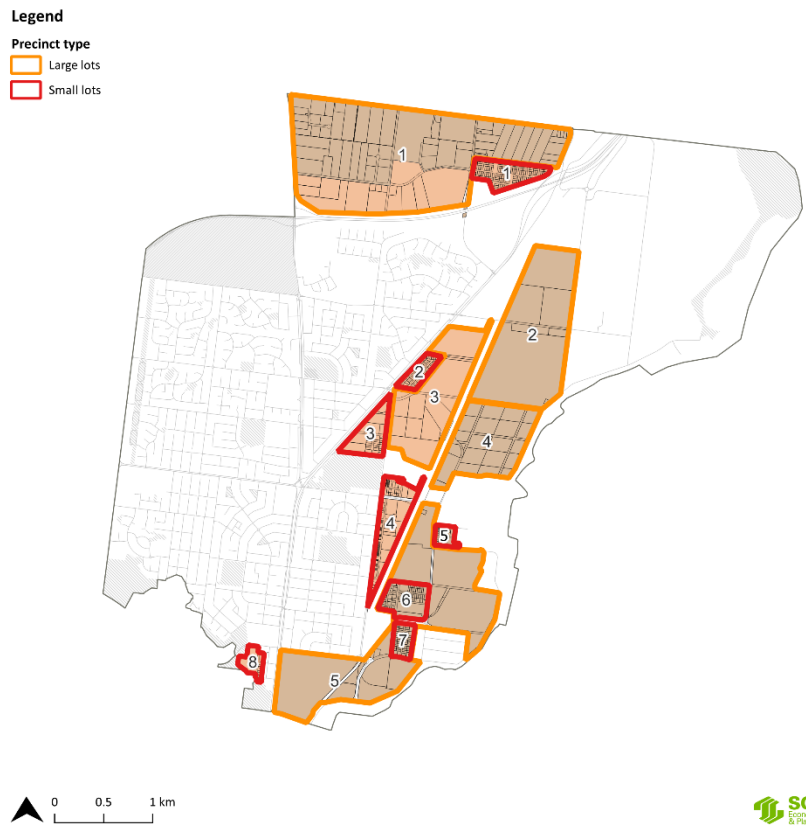


Table 20: Large lot strategic industrial precincts - orange precincts

Label	Precinct (Red)	Use Description	Approximate vacancy
1	GREP Large Lots	Business Park, Urban Services, Freight and Logistics, Light Industrial – Cobram olive oil, Agri Business, Hogan Fulton, PFD – food distribution, Concrete	20%
2, 3, 4	Oil refinery	Heavy Industrial – Oil terminal, Viva Energy	0%
5	Large Southern Lots	Light industrial – freight and logistics, energy, light manufacturing	15%

Table 21: Light industrial / Urban Services precincts – red precincts

Label	Precinct (Red)	Use Description	Approximate vacancy
1	GREP Small Lots	N/A – old fine grain subdivision, buffer land to port, undevelopable	10%
2	Small Lots on Princes Hwy	N/A – old fine grain subdivision, not developed	NA
3	Princes Hwy Wedge	Light industry/Dispersed/Bulky Goods Retail – manufacturing, fabrication, storage / warehousing, new strata, pet shop, party supplies, caravans, motel on Hwy	10-15%
4	Station St Wedge	Light industry – manufacturing, storage small scale freight and logistics, warehousing, new strata	15-20%
5	Corner Seabeach Pde/Madden Ave	Light industry – construction, plumbing, steel fabrication, crane equipment storage	10%
6	North Abery Rd	Light industry / urban services – warehousing, manufacturing, fabrication, transport, concrete batching	5-10%
7	South Abery Rd	Urban services / light industry / local services industry – waste services depot generator sales and services cycle manufacturing art supplies warehouse recreation hall, seafarers auto repairs	20-25%
8	Cowies Creek	Local dispersed / urban services – gymnasium, Vinnies, CFA, 3-4 vacancies, bricks, engineering	15%

Appendix B: Policy review

Summary of key policy documents

A comprehensive review of local and state policies was completed to understand where the opportunities for the Geelong region were being directed.

The documents reviewed include:

- Victoria Economic Growth Statement⁴⁵
- Barwon Regional Economic Development Strategy⁴⁶
- G21 Geelong Region Plan 2050 (2023 Update)⁴⁷
- Greater Geelong Economic Development Plan 2024-2034⁴⁸
- CoGG Council Plan 2025-2029⁴⁹
- Geelong's risk, economic and business growth landscape (KPMG, 2023-2025)^{50,51}

The review informed the economic prospects and key industry sectors identified in Sections 4.4 and 4.5.

Victoria Economic Growth Statement⁵²

The Statement focuses on unlocking new economic growth by building new skills, leveraging existing strengths and making it easier to do business, invest and innovate in Victoria. It focuses on strengthening 5 key priority sectors:

1. Advanced manufacturing and defence
2. Health technologies and medical research
3. Circular economy
4. Digital technologies
5. Agribusiness

45 Victoria Government (2024), Economic Growth Statement – Victoria: Open for Business, <https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-12/Economic-Growth-Statement.pdf>

46 Victoria State Government (2022), Barwon Regional Economic Development Strategy, https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/2063907/Barwon-REDS-2022.pdf

47 G21 Geelong Region Alliance (2023), Region Plan 2050 – Updated 2023, https://g21.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/G21-2050-Region-Plan_compressed-1.pdf

48 The City of Greater Geelong (2024), Geelong on the Rise: A Clever and Creative International City, [https://hdp-au-prod-app-ggc-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-](https://hdp-au-prod-app-ggc-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/2917/1349/8244/Geelong_on_the_Rise_a_Clever_and_Creative_International_City.pdf)

[2.amazonaws.com/2917/1349/8244/Geelong_on_the_Rise_a_Clever_and_Creative_International_City.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-ggc-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/2917/1349/8244/Geelong_on_the_Rise_a_Clever_and_Creative_International_City.pdf)

49 The City of Greater Geelong (2025), Council Plan 2025-29, <https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/common/Public/Documents/8d932558ca8f13a-councilplan2025-29.pdf>

50 KPMG (2023), Geelong Economic Blueprint 2023/24, <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmgsites/au/pdf/2023/kpmg-geelong-economic-blueprint-2023-2024.pdf.coredownload.inline.pdf>

51 KPMG (2025), Geelong Risk Landscape, <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmgsites/au/pdf/2025/kpmg-geelong-risk-landscape.pdf.coredownload.inline.pdf>

52 Victoria Government (2024), Economic Growth Statement – Victoria: Open for Business, <https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-12/Economic-Growth-Statement.pdf>

To an extent, each of these priority sectors already exist in the Greater Geelong region, with further prospects emerging through growing levels of investment. Over the past decade, significant local action has been taken, including:

- Deakin University hosts the Geelong Future Economy Precinct, ManuFutures, the Advanced Fibres Cluster and a range of other research facilities – collectively building advanced manufacturing capabilities and the commercialisation of future-led products.
- The Pivot City Innovation District intends to transform the former Federal Woolen Mill and automotive glass factory into a hub for startups, entrepreneurs, tech and innovation businesses.
- An array of networks that focus on emerging technologies exist across the region including:
 - Geelong Manufacturing Council
 - Engineering Network Geelong
 - Cleantech Innovations Geelong
 - Geelong Defence Alliance
 - Greater Geelong Hydrogen Technology Cluster
 - Geelong Centre for Emerging Infectious Diseases
 - Sustainability Geelong
 - Cleantech Innovations Geelong
 - Barwon Water Regional Renewal Organics Network

While the Statement sets out a state-wide vision for future industry and workforce development, its relevance to Norlane and Corio lies in how these opportunities can be translated into local outcomes. The Geelong region already plays a critical role in priority sectors as highlighted above. However, to ensure communities such as Norlane and Corio share in this growth, pathways into emerging industries would need a specific focus, and deliberative action, including expanding access to upskilling and training for residents. An opening for this through the Statement lies in Action 1: Open Doors, Action 3: Build New Skills, and Action 4: Reach Every Community.

Barwon Regional Economic Development Strategy⁵³

Geelong is the largest of three LGAs located in Victoria’s Barwon Region. This REDS outlines strategic directions for driving economic growth and development across the region. Employment growth in the region has outpaced the Victorian average in 11 of 19 sectors from 2015-2020. Notable growth sectors include public administration and safety, retail trade, education, and healthcare. In this time, the public administration workforce grew by around 50%, with gross value add (GVA) increasing by 70% (compared to the rest of Victoria). The demands of a rapidly growing resident base have driven most of this ‘population related’ employment though an expanded services base has also been driven by the relocation of several State and Australian government agencies to the region.

Manufacturing was historically the region’s largest economic driver, sustained by major employers including the Ford Motor Company, Alcoa, Shell (now Viva Energy), and the Federal Woollen Mills. However, over the past two decades, its output has fallen significantly due to the closure of production facilities and operations, increased mechanisation and automation, and overall declines in petroleum and coal product

⁵³ Victoria State Government (2022), *Barwon Regional Economic Development Strategy*, https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/2063907/Barwon-REDS-2022.pdf

related manufacturing. In its place, construction and healthcare have emerged as the leading sectors by GVA.

Despite its recent decline, the manufacturing sector is beginning to experience an increase in employment (and associated GVA), supported by a range of federal, state and local government policy interventions and investment. For example, the REDS identifies 5 strategic directions for the region. Of most relevance are directions 1 and 2.

1. Accelerate the transition to new and high-value manufacturing opportunities

Geelong has a strong manufacturing legacy, supported by a skilled workforce, established infrastructure, and close links with education providers such as Deakin University and TAFE. The region currently specialises in food products, construction materials, chemicals and plastics, oil refining, and carbon fibre products. Into the future, opportunities exist to strengthen capabilities in advanced manufacturing, defence, renewable energy, and medical technologies. Partnerships with research institutions and industry clusters will be central to strengthening local capabilities.

2. Further the innovation skills and skills ecosystem

Geelong is a hub for research, innovation, and specialised industries, supported by a strong network of education institutions. Start-ups, entrepreneurs, and innovators benefit from networks that connect them with universities, incubators, and accelerators. This foundation has helped attract and produce a growing pool of skilled workers, with skilled employment in the Barwon region increasing faster than the state and metropolitan averages. Fostering partnerships between government, industry, and research; prioritising projects that can increase productivity and create jobs; and promoting the region as a centre of innovation will be critical to realising this strategic direction.

While Norlane and Corio are not specifically mentioned in the REDS, their proximity to Geelong—the region’s primary employment and innovation hub—presents at least notional opportunities for residents to access jobs, training, and upskilling. However, low levels of skill, relative to the rest of the region, could mean residents are locked out of new opportunities.

G21 Geelong Region Plan 2050 (2023 Update)⁵⁴

G21 is a formal alliance of government, business, and community organisations working across five municipalities— Greater Geelong, Colac Otway, Golden Plains, Queenscliffe, and Surf Coast. Established in 2001, it was formed in response to the City of Greater Geelong’s call for a new approach towards strengthening the economy, enhancing social cohesion, and protecting the environment.

The G21 Geelong Region Plan 2050 (2023 Update) refreshes the original 2006 plan, setting out 6 aspirations, 7 programs of work, and a suite of priority projects. Together, these form the strategic framework that guides the G21 Region’s future.

⁵⁴ G21 Geelong Region Alliance (2023), *Region Plan 2050 – Updated 2023*, https://g21.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/G21-2050-Region-Plan_compressed-1.pdf

Figure 26: G21 Region Plan 2050 strategic framework

G21 REGION PLAN 2050

Together, these key elements create a strategic framework to guide our region's future, harnessing our spirit of collaboration.

ASPIRATIONS

SIX big ideas that describe the type of region we hope to see in 2050.

PROGRAMS OF WORK

SEVEN key programs we will progress over the next 5 years, to get closer to our desired future.

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Projects of regional significance that are critical to achieving our desired future, updated every year.

COLLABORATION IS OUR SUPERPOWER

The concentric circles that link our Aspirations, Programs and Priority Projects are emblematic of the inter-connection between these important ideas and our collaborative approach to delivery.



Source:

G21 (2023)

Key aspirations and programs of work with most pertinence to economic opportunities are discussed below:

Table 22: Key aspirations and programs, G21 Geelong Region Plan 2050

Aspirations / Programs	Commentary
<p>Creative sustainable economy (Aspiration)</p>	<p>The region’s economy is transitioning new sectors with a growing number of younger people making it their home. As a result, professional services jobs are becoming increasingly prominent in the local jobs market.</p> <p>At the same time, Australia’s transition to clean energy is driving the rise of new industries, technologies, and career opportunities. For example, several renewable energy projects are already established across the region, green hydrogen development is a focus at Deakin University, and Geelong Port and Viva Energy are developing additional refinery infrastructure. Such advancements can create meaningful and skilled jobs for residents, whilst progressing towards sustainable outcomes for the region.</p>
<p>Everyone able to thrive (Aspiration)</p>	<p>This aspiration focuses on reducing socioeconomic disparities and access to services and opportunities. The Plan highlights that Norlane is Victoria’s most disadvantaged postcode, where 17% of residents report a mental health condition (compared with the state average of 9%), 16% leave school at Year 9 or earlier (compared with 8% across Victoria), and 13% of young people are unemployed. In addition, the Plan outlines that pockets of Corio experience much higher housing stress than the Victorian average (26% compared to 11%).</p> <p>Addressing these challenges requires accessible services—including education, health, disability and financial support—along with stable housing, greater educational and employment opportunities, and stronger connections with First Nations heritage.</p>
<p>Skilling the region (Program)</p>	<p>The region is projected to face a shortage of 18,000 workers by 2025, driven by factors such as limited housing supply, rising living costs, and high car dependency. This program aims to address the challenge by strengthening the existing education ecosystem which spans high schools, TAFE, and Deakin University. The skills gap is identified as teachers (in vocational training), childcare, healthcare, aged care and manufacturing workers.</p> <p>A key priority is supporting the shift toward a knowledge-based economy. This will ensure residents gain the skills needed to drive the transition to a clean economy, while also supporting key sectors such as healthcare, education and training, and advanced manufacturing. Lower existing skill levels in Norlane and Corio need to be addressed to access opportunities and establish viable training pathways.</p>
<p>Accelerating the clean economy (Program)</p>	<p>This program aligns with the abovementioned aspirations. The Plan seeks to work towards achieving zero carbon emissions and building a circular economy for the G21 region, as well as leveraging existing research and manufacturing capabilities for production of clean technologies, energy efficiency and renewable energy.</p>

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025), G21 (2021)

Greater Geelong Economic Development Plan 2024-2034⁵⁵

Geelong's economic landscape has shifted over the past several decades, driven by rapid population growth, an attractive lifestyle, affordable housing relative to Melbourne and increasing job opportunities. By 2041, Geelong is expected to attract an additional 120,000 people, 55,000 jobs and \$9.7 billion in Gross Regional Product (GRP). This Plan provides a blueprint for future direction, guiding Council's actions to maximise economic growth and position Geelong as a global business centre that can attract international investment.

Manufacturing remains one of Geelong's largest export sectors, albeit its workforce is now smaller than the healthcare and construction sectors. A range of new industries - including the creative sector, tourism, and events are emerging across Greater Geelong. These industries will not only generate jobs and economic value but also enhance the city's liveability and strengthen its appeal to innovative and creative residents.

Beyond population and sector growth, Geelong's \$13.2 billion investment pipeline (including \$3.6 billion of commenced projects and \$5.2 billion of proposed projects) will generate significant employment and economic opportunities.

Figure 6 (below) illustrates the Plan's framework. Of relevance, this highlights the priority growth industries which Council will support in creating new jobs and investment opportunities. It also shows the strategies in place which collectively seek to strengthen economic development across the LGA.

⁵⁵ The City of Greater Geelong (2024), *Geelong on the Rise: A Clever and Creative International City*, https://hdp-au-prod-app-ggc-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/2917/1349/8244/Geelong_on_the_Rise_a_Clever_and_Creative_International_City.pdf

Figure 27: Greater Geelong economic development framework

As our economy evolves, it will:		By 2041, Geelong will have:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be more sustainable and circular • Be more innovative and resilient • Be future focused (City of Design) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120,000 additional people • 55,000 new jobs • A \$27 billion economy 	
Our priority industries that will get us there:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced manufacturing • Defence • Healthcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor economy and events • Agribusiness and food manufacturers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport, logistics and fulfilment • Professional business services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean economy • Creative industries and digital technologies
Our strategies			
Positioning Geelong	Collaboration and Support	Talent Attraction and Development	Planning and Advocacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Geelong as a global centre of business and innovation district • Attract investment from around the world • Deliver vibrant arts and cultural experiences and world class events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively support the development of industry clusters • Support local businesses to thrive • Take a place-based approach to the delivery of vibrant retail precincts and City Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote our lifestyle and liveability to attract talent • Support workforce development, training and skills innovation • Support programs and initiatives that seek to reduce disadvantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan well so there is sufficient land supply • Advocate for key enabling infrastructure • Advocate for site activation and investment to assist in facilitating positive place-based outcomes

Source: City of Greater Geelong (2024)

CoGG Council Plan 2025-2029⁵⁶

This Plan sets the strategic direction for the City of Greater Geelong over the next four years. It is underpinned by 6 directions which each contain a range of objectives, indicators and supporting initiatives. Those with most pertinence to this study include:

⁵⁶ The City of Greater Geelong (2025), *Council Plan 2025-29*, <https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/common/Public/Documents/8d932558ca8f13a-councilplan2025-29.pdf>

Table 23: Relevant strategic directions, objectives and major initiatives, CoGG Council Plan 2025-29

Relevant strategic directions and objectives	Relevant initiatives
<p>Core and critical infrastructure: Plan, deliver, manage and optimise core and critical infrastructure across the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive and sustainable growth and development • Multi-modal transport networks are well-connected and accessible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerate planning for housing, employment land and major infrastructure development in response to the Plan for Victoria.
<p>Economic development: Lead efforts to strengthen our diverse economy and workforce to enhance prosperity across our community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New businesses, events and investment are attracted to the region. • Local businesses and industries are supported to thrive. • Greater Geelong attracts, retains and develops workforce capacity and capability. • Sufficient land supply to enable sustainable growth, business expansion and attraction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the growth of Greater Geelong businesses through a mix of target event delivery and sponsorship, strategic partnerships and multifaceted advocacy approach. • Increase capacity and capability of Greater Geelong's workforce by promoting liveability to attract and retain talent. • Ensure appropriate supply of industrial land across Greater Geelong.

Source: City of Greater Geelong (2025)

Together, these strategic directions highlight a commitment to strengthen infrastructure, enable growth and drive economic development.

Greater investment into transport connectivity, housing and employment lands can influence and improve liveability, while targeted support for business development and workforce capacity can unlock pathways that allow the population to realise their potential.

By aligning the Plan's broader objectives and initiatives with the specific needs of Norlane and Corio—employment and education opportunities, increasing access to services, housing pathways and the like - there is an opportunity to foster local economic growth that reduces the existing inequality and builds long-term resilience in these communities.

Geelong's risk, economic and business growth landscape (KPMG, 2023-2025)^{57,58}

Between 2023 and 2025, KPMG produced a series of reports outlining key risks and growth opportunities for the Geelong region, offering insights to support and strengthen the local economy.

Relevant findings for Norlane and Corio are summarised below.

⁵⁷ KPMG (2023), Geelong Economic Blueprint 2023/24, <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmgsites/au/pdf/2023/kpmg-geelong-economic-blueprint-2023-2024.pdf.coredownload.inline.pdf>

⁵⁸ KPMG (2025), Geelong Risk Landscape, <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmgsites/au/pdf/2025/kpmg-geelong-risk-landscape.pdf.coredownload.inline.pdf>

- At the SA2 level, Norlane and Corio-Lovely Banks recorded the highest unemployment rates in the Geelong Region at 19% and 12% respectively (June 2024).
- Norlane has the lowest median total household income in the Geelong Region, at \$628 per week. Corio–Lovely Banks median income is \$762 per week (2021).
- Norlane has the lowest Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) score in Victoria at 764 (1st Decile) (2021).
- The Corio–Lovely Banks SA2 comprised a high share of workers in Wholesale trade (20% as a share of total industry), and North Geelong–Bell Park in Transport, postal and warehousing (24%).
- Accounting for population differences among sub-regions, Corio–Norlane experienced the largest growth in businesses from 2016-2021 (35%) which was an increase of 11 businesses, followed by North Geelong–Bell Park (15.5%). Norlane saw entries of three large businesses (200+ employees) in wholesale trade in 2021 – these were in the employment lands.

The research from KPMG also interviewed stakeholders in the region. Shared prosperity for the whole of Geelong Region, including for historically disadvantaged areas such as Norlane and Corio was a focus. This included the ability to grow businesses, create work pathways and drive prosperity in all parts of the community.

While data shows that Norlane and Corio experience significant socioeconomic disadvantage relative to the broader LGA, there are some signs of local opportunities. Corio benefits from an established wholesale trade base, and Norlane and North Geelong host industries such as manufacturing, transport and logistics, and utilities. Given Norlane’s proximity to North Geelong – one of the region’s leading employment hubs - there may be potential to increase local workforce participation.

