

# CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE IN A SECOND CITY - GEELONG AND MELBOURNE

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## OUTLINE

1. Background
2. Conceptualising the “second city” in Australia
3. Patterns of convergence and divergence
4. Connectivity and identity
5. What does it all mean for this “periphery”?

# I. BACKGROUND

- Geelong in Victoria is 75 kilometres from the capital metropolis – Melbourne
- With 244 000 people it is overshadowed by the primate city of 5 million+
- Growth rates are comparable – Geelong 1.3% Melbourne at 2.5% (2017-18)
- Melbourne is expected to become ever more dominant – going from 75% to 80% of the state's population by 2027
- However, historically, Geelong considered itself to be a genuine rival to Melbourne, and in the 1830s-40s, aspired to be the commercial capital
- Geelong lost the mantle of being the state's "second city" in the 1850s – to the gold centre of Ballarat – only to regain it care of industrialization in the 1930s
- From the 1970s and slow collapse of manufacturing, Geelong has been a "sleepy hollow" struggling to restore economic growth and civic pride
- However, this non-metro area is now booming and the question is why?



N E W S O U T H W A L E S



GAZETTEER  
MAP OF  
**VICTORIA**

PRINTED BY PERMISSION OF CHARLES WHYBROW ESQ<sup>RE</sup>, SURVEYOR GENERAL.

SCALE - IS MILES TO AN INCH

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Transferred from original map

Engraved at the Department of Lands & Survey, Melbourne, Victoria, March 27<sup>th</sup> 1865.

By William Collins



## 2. CONCEPTUALISING THE SECOND CITY IN AUSTRALIA

- The second city or second tier city in Europe or North America is usually applied to the place in a national system eg Chicago and Los Angeles or Birmingham and Manchester (see eg Hodos or Markusen)
- There have also been lots of other theorisations of urban systems – from Walter Christaller’s central places to Zipf’s rank size rule
- The relationship between first and other cities in an urban hierarchy has been considered in terms of “borrowed size”, “agglomeration economies” and “overshadowing” (from Alonso)
- There is also the idea of the “urban region” – extending across space to encompass large and small cities alike (leading to the global urbanism of Brenner and Schmidt) – or metro region (McGuirk and Argent)
- More recently there has been the notion of the “Regional second city” –  
“cities with distinct histories and identities that fuel, compete with and are otherwise relationally connected to larger and/or putatively more ‘successful’ neighbouring cities” (Pendras, University of Washington)

### 3. PATTERNS OF CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE

- The main points of both convergence and divergence relate to the **employment structures of the two cities** -
  - Geelong has more Construction, Retail, Accommodation/Food, Public Administration and Safety, Education and Training, Health Care and Social Assistance
  - Melbourne has more Finance and Insurance, Professional, Scientific and Technical as well as Arts and Recreational Services
  - Melbourne is far more the globalized metropolis, Geelong the extending regional centre (health, education, retail) but also one with particular concentrations of Public Administration and Safety (care of Worksafe, TAC and NDIA) and tourism gateway (via Great Ocean Road, Bells Beach etc) and Avalon (International) Airport

# GEELONG AND MELBOURNE EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY (2016)

## Industry sector of employment, 2016

export

Total employed persons



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

## 4. CONNECTIVITY AND IDENTITY

- As a second regional city which is growing strongly after a major series of shocks as first the textile industry collapsed (in the 1970s and 80s), then truck and tractor manufacturing (in the 1990s) and finally the end of car making (Ford in the 1990s and 2000s) and aluminium smelting (Alcoa closed in 2018)
- This means that over 10 000 workers left manufacturing and the regional economy that was once dominated by industry (30%) shifts dramatically (to less than 8% of employees though still significant GRP)
- This rust belt city has become something else now, care of:
  - Inflow of migrants from an increasingly unaffordable and crowded metropolis – diseconomies of agglomeration
  - Economic diversification – from high end manufacturing to regional services and tourism
  - Commuting – 15 000 by rail and 7 000 by car per day (=15% - 25% of the workforce)
  - Concerted and focused lobbying by CoGG, G2I, Committee for Geelong
  - A swag of marginal seats – Corangamite federally and 2/4 in the State parliament – which lead to massive inflows of “restructuring” monies and initiatives as well as better connective infrastructure
  - Strong local identity via governance, history, non-metro AFL team



## 5. WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN FOR THE PERIPHERY?

- Geelong is separate but is increasingly integrated into the metropolitan region
- BUT it retains a particular economic structure and identity which allows (for the moment) integration on its own terms
- It helps that this is a city less than 100 kilometres from the metropolis (and much less from its western suburbs). So it is hardly peripheral
- Comparable to Newcastle/Wollongong and the Gold/Sunshine Coast rather than Townsville, Launceston, Port Augusta/Whyalla
- Need to recognize a variegated urban structure beyond the metropolitan centres, and differences across the “second” and “third” cities of the nation
- Also need to acknowledge the importance of local histories, politics and identities as well as economic geographies in the fate of these cities