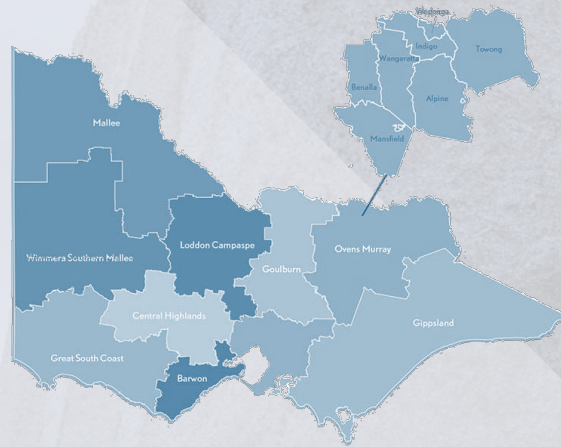


# REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS OVENS MURRAY



Bordering the Murray River to the north and having unique access to Victoria's high country, the Ovens Murray region is best known for its lifestyle advantages and thriving tourism sector based on cycling, snow, nature-based tourism, food, wine, craft beer and cultural heritage. The region is also strategically located on national freight and transport routes servicing Australia's east coast and has a number of strong manufacturing and service centres.

We proudly acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land and pay respects to their Elders past, present and future, for they hold the memories, the tradition and the culture of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our region has:

- Seven municipalities – Alpine Shire, Benalla Rural City, Indigo Shire, Mansfield Shire, Towong Shire, Wangaratta Rural City and Wodonga City
- Four Alpine Resorts – Mount Buller, Mount Stirling, Falls Creek and Mount Hotham
- A Gross Regional Product of \$5.7 billion
- A population of 121,940
- More than 3 million High Country visitors a year

## The **outcomes** we are striving to achieve

The Ovens Murray Regional Partnership is striving to achieve positive long term social, economic and environmental outcomes for the benefit our residents, businesses and communities. This 'roadmap' captures input from targeted engagements with business and community, on-line feedback and Regional Assemblies. It provides an outline of our opportunities, the challenges we face, the actions we are taking and what success looks like for our region.



## Our Outcomes Roadmap



### **Transport**

Communities and industries connected to each other and major service centres



### **Health and wellbeing**

Healthy and engaged communities – a great place to grow up and grow old



### **Economic development**

Prosperous and innovative economy growing our key and emerging sectors



### **Education and skills**

21<sup>st</sup> Century education for future generations and lifelong learning for all



### **Digital economy**

Leading the way in digital inclusion, innovation and entrepreneurship



### **Climate change and renewable energy**

Renewable energy future protecting our natural environment and delivering community benefit

This roadmap reflects the views of the Ovens Murray Regional Partnership. The roadmap is a living document that will be updated regularly by the Regional Partnership.

*What success looks like for Ovens Murray*

*Some key challenges we are facing*

*How our partnership is responding*

*The actions and key projects we are focussing on*



**Transport**

Communities and industries connected to each other and major service centres

An **integrated transportation network** that underpins our sustainability and innovation. The transport network **supports and enables our region's industries and connects communities**, creating jobs and sustaining **employment across the region**.

Transport access and connectivity is a key challenge for our region, with **unreliable passenger rail services, limited public transport options and poor east-west connections**. It is difficult to **connect our dispersed population and effectively support business**. In particular, passenger rail on the **North East line** is considered the worst in the State.

We are focused on **passenger rail improvements** on the North East line and will continue to keep community up to date on progress of the \$235m **track upgrade** and has input on the design and amenities for **new VLocity trains**. We want to make sure that government hastens this work and delivers a **fast, reliable and comfortable train service** as soon as possible.

- Seeking firm commitment for purchase of new trains to provide five services per day.
- Working with the *Hume Corridor Passenger Rail Collaboration Group* to understand community expectations and provide input to government about amenity and scheduling.
- Monitoring progress on improvements and keeping the community informed.



**Health and wellbeing**

Healthy and engaged communities – a great place to grow up and grow old

Healthy, vibrant and safe communities, where people have a strong **connection to 'place'** and **work together** to achieve **wellbeing and resilience** across all ages, abilities and circumstances – **'a great place to grow up and grow old'**.

Our **health and wellbeing is poor** when compared to the Victorian average. We have limited investment in **preventative approaches**, high levels of **disadvantage** in some areas, an **older population** than many other regions and **patchy access to services**, particularly for people living outside our regional centres.

We are focussing on **early intervention and prevention** strategies to improve **community wellbeing**. We know there are examples of high quality successful **partnerships with local communities** in the region that are delivering great benefits and we want to **adapt and replicate** these approaches.

- Working with *Tomorrow Today Foundation* to implement their internationally recognised Education Benalla program in other vulnerable communities in the region.
- Developing a new *Regional Community Wellbeing Outcomes Framework*.
- Supporting adoption of *Age Friendly Rural Communities* framework by all our councils.



**Economic development**

Prosperous and innovative economy growing our key and emerging sectors

There is **significant growth** across the region's **key and emerging economic sectors** including tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, transport, distribution and logistics with a **strong culture of innovation and collaboration** supported by **long term investment and planning** linked to **job creation**.

We risk missing out on potential benefits from our substantial regional economic **opportunities** if we don't support **sustainable economic growth and investment in enabling infrastructure**, including energy, telecommunications and transport systems to support our key and emerging industry sectors.

We are strengthening **cycle tourism** and developing other **iconic tourism products** to support the visitor economy; collaborating with the **agribusiness sector** on future sustainability; examining potential development of a **regional inland port**; and supporting **industry links with the education sector**.

- Progressing the *North East Victoria Cycling Optimisation (NEVCO) Masterplan* and key tourism priorities - *Growing Mount Hotham, Ned Kelly Alive and Mount Buffalo Activation*.
- Developing a sustainability plan for agriculture and a new governance model.
- Supporting improvements in energy and telecommunications for industry.



**Education and skills**

21<sup>st</sup> Century education for future generations and lifelong learning for all

Children start school **developmentally ready to learn** and all community members are actively engaged in **lifelong learning**, achieve their educational potential and obtain **21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce and life skills**.

Evidence of **children developmentally not ready to learn** when they start school; **low educational aspiration, engagement and attainment**; and **workforce skills shortages** in the region. It is difficult to respond given lack of access to **regional data** and **poor understanding** about the problems and potential solutions.

We are working to improve **access to data** and other information that will help us **understand and take action** to improve our poor educational outcomes and workforce skills shortages. We will continue to support development of **innovative educational pathways** for students and **accessible learning opportunities** for older residents.

- Developing a regional *Education Strategy and Implementation Initiative*.
- Producing an *Ovens Murray Regional Skills Demand Profile*
- Continue support for Community Leadership



**Digital economy**

Leading the way in digital inclusion, innovation and entrepreneurship

Ovens Murray is a **regional leader in digital inclusion, innovation and entrepreneurship** – a 'Smart Region' that **connects people, attracts talent, encourages innovation and creates jobs and growth** for the 21st Century. We are digitally literate and support 'job creators as well as job takers'.

We have gaps in **digital capacity and skills across industry and community**. The region's tourism operators have a **low digital presence**, which impacts their **business opportunities**. We also need to help our **older population** become more **digitally literate**, as services are increasingly delivered on-line.

We are planning an **optimal digital future** for the region, working with community, industry, and local government to identify a **shared vision and priorities** for the region. We are supporting **digital innovation initiatives** to strengthen **access and knowledge sharing**. Because digital inclusion is vital, we are also focusing on **eliminating blackspots**.

- Developing the *Ovens Murray Digital Plan* and exploring opportunities to strengthen telehealth and digital services for tourism.
- Supporting establishment of new digital and innovation hubs in Wangaratta and Wodonga.
- Eliminating mobile telephone blackspots in key locations across the region.



**Climate change and renewable energy**

Renewable energy future protecting our natural environment and delivering community benefit

A **strong culture of climate change adaptation**, with **government, industry and community** working together to support investment in **innovative community based renewable energy initiatives** that advance **energy security** and mitigate **environmental risk**.

With **highly valued environmental assets** and a climate suited to **solar energy** generation, there is a need to **build resilience** to climate change, ensure **community benefits** from renewable energy and **balance the interests** of agriculture and large scale renewable energy production. **Industry** also needs to adapt to **climate change** and adopt **renewable technologies**.

We are supporting our **highly motivated local communities** taking **innovative action** to expand renewable energy. We are also undertaking planning with our broader community to secure an **environmentally sustainable future** where **risks are understood and managed** and our **natural environment is protected and enhanced** through low emission **renewable energy generation**.

- Developing and implementing the *Hume Regional Renewable Energy Roadmap* to facilitate optimal regional outcomes from the uptake of renewable energy.
- Seeking finalisation and implementation of government *Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Solar Energy Facilities*, including support for 20% community ownership.