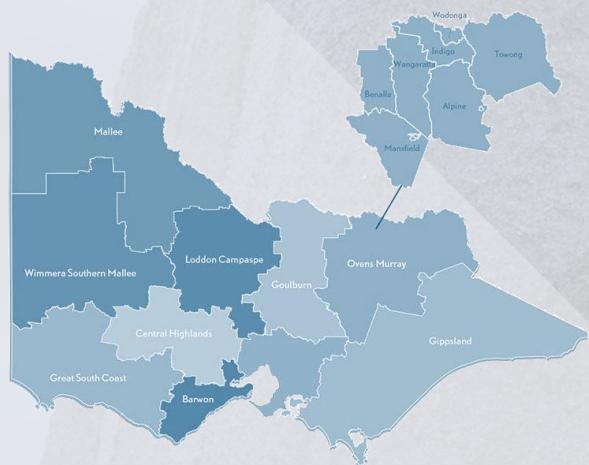


REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS OVENS MURRAY

The **outcomes** we are striving to achieve

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.



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.

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
- Population of 125,400
- \$6.5 billion Gross Regional Product (GRP)
- 3.9 million annual High Country visitors
- \$1.3 billion in-region visitor spend.



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

21st Century education for future generations and lifelong learning for all



Digital future

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

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, which has **unreliable passenger rail services, limited public transport options and poor east-west connections**. It is difficult for our region to **connect its dispersed population and effectively support business**. In particular, passenger rail on the **North East line** is one of the worst in the State.

We have a particular focus on **passenger rail improvements** on the North East line and will continue to ensure the community is kept up to date on the **track upgrade and new VLocity trains**. We want to make sure that government delivers a **fast, reliable and comfortable train service by mid-2021** and secure improvements to passenger amenity and connections along and to the North East line.

- Providing design input for new long haul VLocity trains.
- Working with stakeholders such as *Hume Corridor Passenger Rail Collaboration Group* to identify community priorities for passenger amenity and connections along and to the NE line and scheduling up to five daily services.
- 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.

- Strengthening youth mental health and wellbeing through place based initiatives and evidence based suicide prevention programs such as *Live4Life*.
- Assisting *Tomorrow Today Foundation* to develop a sustainable operating model and adapt their Education Benalla Program to other vulnerable communities in the region.

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, and 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; examining potential development of regional **transport and logistics** capability; collaborating with the **agribusiness sector** on future sustainability; and supporting **industry links with the education sector**.

- Supporting cycle tourism initiatives, including *Ride High Country*.
- Securing funding for key regional tourism priorities - *Growing Mount Hotham, Ned Kelly Alive and Mount Buffalo Activation*.
- Supporting development at Logic Wodonga.
- Identifying and reducing barriers to agribusiness sustainability and growth.

Education and skills



21st 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 **21st 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 ready access to **regional data** and resulting **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 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.

- Obtaining data and other evidence to better understand regional and local educational outcomes and identify priority actions.
- Working with industry, education providers and local government at local level to identify workforce skill needs and priority actions.
- Advocating for ongoing statewide *Regional Community Leadership Program* funding.

Digital future



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 and farmers have a **low digital presence**, which impacts their **business opportunities**. We also need to help our **older and disadvantaged people** 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**.

- Supporting action on priorities identified in the *Ovens Murray Digital Plan*, such as digital hubs; telehealth and eHealth; digitally enabled tourism; IoT in agriculture; business grade broadband, mobile network capacity, public WiFi networks and mobile blackspots.
- Progressing *Regional Digital Fund* initiatives.

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 priorities identified in the *Hume Region Renewable Energy Roadmap*.
- Supporting initiatives that capitalise on the region's opportunities, including microgrids; distributed energy resources; pumped hydro; large and scale solar (including on public buildings); community benefit models and emerging technologies.