Our region in central Victoria covers an area with a diverse population and a buoyant economy based on agriculture, health, professional services, education and manufacturing. Bendigo, one of Victoria’s largest and fastest growing regional cities, lies at the heart of the region and is a prosperous and vibrant hub of cultural and economic activity. This vibrancy is based on growing partnerships, deeper understanding and recognition of our Traditional Owners and appreciation of natural assets.

Our region includes:

- Six municipalities - Campaspe Shire, Central Goldfields Shire, City of Greater Bendigo, Loddon Shire, Macedon Ranges Shire, Mount Alexander Shire
- A Gross Regional Product of $10.3 billion
- A population of 228,400
- More than 9% of people born overseas

The outcomes we are striving to achieve

Our region is striving to achieve the following long term social, economic and environmental outcomes for the individuals, families and communities who live in and visit the region. The roadmap overleaf outlines the challenges we face in achieving these outcomes, the actions we are taking and what success looks like for our region.

A Growing Economy
A strong, diverse economy that enables people to actively contribute to their community

Healthy Heart of Victoria
Active communities, healthy settings and productive lives at all stages

Create the Best Start for Every Child
Families and communities that give children the best start in life

Youth our Critical Asset
Safe, supported and engaged young people

A Great Environment to Live
Our culture, heritage and environment is protected and enjoyed

A Connected Region
All people in the Loddon Campaspe Region benefit from economic activity and access to services

This roadmap reflects the views of the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership. The roadmap is a living document that will be updated regularly by the Regional Partnership.
A Growing Economy
A strong, diverse economy that enables people to actively contribute to their community

Healthy Heart of Victoria
Active communities, healthy settings and productive lives at all stages

Create the Best Start for Every Child
Families and communities that give children the best start in life

Youth our Critical Asset
Safe, supported and engaged young people

A Great Environment to Live
Our culture, heritage and environment is protected and enjoyed

A Connected Region
All people in the Loddon Campaspe Region benefit from economic Activity and access to services

Our region is an inclusive corridor of economic activity, characterised by diversity in food production, innovation in energy, advanced manufacturing and world-recognised research centres. Our thriving economy is supported by strategic investment in the strengths of the region and growth in jobs.

Employment opportunities are unevenly spread across our region, driven by uncertainty about future jobs, the need for increased investment in training and transport and accessibility issues. This has its biggest impact on small communities. Education facilities are unable to provide specialist skills and there is a lack of planned, investment in our skills and job markets.

Our region is working to make sure the economy is growing, by identifying strategic projects in population growth, education, research, tourism, and export opportunities.

We are supporting efforts to bring additional jobs to the region while improving the opportunities to upskill our current workforce to be ready for the jobs of the future.

Development of the Regional Economic Growth Strategy – highlighting strategic opportunities
Investment in the city of Bendigo, including the Gov Hub, Law Courts and Rejuvenation of the Bendigo TAFE Campus
Analysis of the Food Industry Supply Chain and associated project opportunities for economic growth.
Development of a Loddon Campaspe Regional Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing Skills Road Map.
Preparation of a scoping study to test the need for a localised Capital Investment Fund.
Support for the Loddon Campaspe Renewable Energy Road Map.

Our region is characterised by active communities supported by an increase in healthy eating.

People across demographics enjoy healthy lifestyles and this is demonstrated through a drop in the rate of avoidable deaths and a rise in the rate of community wellness and mental health outcomes.

Our region’s population experiences numerous serious health and wellbeing challenges, including mental health conditions, obesity, cancer and heart disease. Our communities do not meet dietary guidelines for fruit and vegetable intake. At the same time, our region lacks the infrastructure and planning to provide holistic service delivery to address these issues.

We are working collaboratively to build health and wellbeing to reduce rates of chronic illness and rising cost of health services, building on the recent work of local governments and their partners in developing contemporary health and wellbeing plans. We are also advocating for investment in upgrades to our infrastructure and programs to encourage active lifestyles and healthy eating.

Investment in the Healthy Heart of Victoria initiative. This includes:
• Delivering a region wide Active Living Census,
• Investment in infrastructure and programs to support participation in physical activity and
• Recruitment of Health Brokers to influence better health through a system change approach.

Our region understands the importance of a child’s early years. Young families are supported and encouraged to focus on early learning and literacy so that their children reach their full potential. This is evidenced by improvement in SEQA and AEDC data and increased kindergarten participation for vulnerable children.

The number of developmentally vulnerable and at-risk children is increasing in the region. More than 15% of parents in our region expressed concern about their child’s speech and language development on school commencement (1). Research shows that literacy skills enable educational attainment, strong family relationships, better health choices and the ability to gain employment.

We need to raise awareness across our communities about the importance of early years in a child’s development. This is why we are advocating for a strategy that supports the best possible language and literacy development for all children in their early years. The strategy will help us to understand how we can better deliver services and support families to achieve positive early years outcomes.

We are partnering on initiatives that will improve mental health services and outcomes for young people in our region. Our focus targets prevention or early intervention actions for young people at risk. We are hosting workshops with young people from the region to inform initiatives.

We are focussed on bringing education, employment and student needs closer together.

• Developing an Early Years Language and Literacy Strategy, before seeking further investment to create the best possible start for our children.
• Supporting place based initiatives which aim to support our most vulnerable families and children, such as the Heathcote Parents as Literacy Champions project, Go Goldfields and Loddon Shire Strong Families, Strong Children initiative.
• Investment in school upgrades, including upgrades to Castlemaine Secondary College and the Echuca Specialist School.

Young people in our region are supported and are given every opportunity to thrive in our community. We support their mental health and provide opportunities to learn and develop skills that help them flourish. Young people feel confident and empowered to take on challenges and new opportunities.

Our young people are experiencing a mental health crisis, with one in four experiencing a mental health issue—we do not have the services they need to support them. This is contributing to low year 12 completion rates and low rates of participation in Tertiary Education. Our region has a high Youth Unemployment rates of 18.3% (2). This impacts their ability to fully participate in our community and workforce.

We are partnering on initiatives that will improve mental health services and outcomes for young people in our region. Our focus targets prevention or early intervention actions for young people at risk. We are hosting workshops with young people from the region to inform initiatives.

We are focussed on bringing education, employment and student needs closer together.

• Partnering on initiatives that will improve mental health services and outcomes for young people in our region.
• Developing an Early Years Language and Literacy Strategy, before seeking further investment to create the best possible start for our children.
• Investing in a new land management partnership between Traditional Owners and the State – Walking Together initiative.
• Four significant Tracks and Trails have been identified for further investment. These include: the Murray River Adventure Trail; Daylesford to Hanging Rock Rail Trail; Goldfields Track upgrade and the Heathcote to Murchison Trail.

Our region’s culture, heritage and environment is celebrated and valued, demonstrated through significant investment in its management, growing popularity with residents and ability to attract visitors to our region.

We are experiencing a long term decline and lack of investment in our local heritage and environment. Complex organisational arrangements across parks, Traditional Owners, local government and community make management complex. Maintenance of our cultural and natural features are not funded, leading to their degradation.

A priority for the region is working with Traditional Owners to streamline land management practices. We’re also advocating for investment to ensure the long term water sustainability of our small towns.

We have recognised the demand for nature based outdoor activities across the region is rising, with the interest in Tracks and Trails predominantly driven by tourism.

In consultation will the Loddon Campaspe Regional Transport Working Group, we have identified the top ten transport projects for this region to target our efforts and advocacy.

We have established a Digital Working Group to inform the planning process and investments to make this region the premier region for digital connectivity.

• Advocacy for capital investments in rail that will translate into increased passenger rail services.
• A Digital Plan for the region is currently being developed, this will inform targeted investment and projects.
• Investigating the opportunities and commercial viability to access high speed internet connections.