



An Australian Government Initiative



RDA HUME

BUSINESS PLAN 2023-24



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we live.

We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We support initiatives that encourage greater unity, knowledge, cultural awareness and respect for the first occupants of our land.

The Hume region is home to the largest population of First Nations people in Victoria outside of Melbourne. Hume is home to two Registered Aboriginal Parties – the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation and the Taungurung Land and Water Council.

RDA Hume works closely with First Nations organisations to encourage stronger community links and local representation and build shared prosperity in the region.



Chairs Foreword

In the 12 months since I was appointed chair of Regional Development Australia's Hume Region, I am delighted to have been supported by a committee that reflects the unique variety of the region.

Each member brings with them a particular skill set and an array of knowledge and expertise. Together their combined attributes and wisdom have been invaluable, especially when developing this business plan.

The role of RDA Hume is to raise the profile of the region and its natural assets, assist with economic development, engage continually with our various communities and stakeholders, and to ensure commitment from all levels of government.

A major part of this is identifying key infrastructure investment priorities and being strong advocates for them. We also work to support sustainable solutions for our region's workforce – helping to address skills gaps and workforce shortages.

RDA Hume is fortunate to be closely involved with all levels of government and we have tremendous support from elected representatives and officials throughout the region as well as in Melbourne and Canberra. This allows us to speak with a combined voice on projects of common interest. It also ensures that we have a key role in directing state and federal investment to the appropriate impactful projects that maximise benefit to Hume.

These efforts are reflected in the latest Treasury figures that show investment continues to increase and unemployment decrease across the Hume region. RDA Hume collaborates with businesses, not-for-profit organisations and industry bodies to coordinate regional priorities and foster comparative advantages.

As you can read in this plan, this year we will continue to identify key sustainable investment priorities.

This includes housing with the delivery of a Hume Housing Prospectus that identifies viable solutions to address the housing situation.

Another priority is a renewable energy future. We need to engage with industry on the issues, challenges and opportunities for energy transition and define our priorities and role.

In the coming year, RDA Hume will continue to facilitate, engage and communicate. We will continually bring key people and organisations together to support the development of our regional economy by addressing key opportunities for growth.

I look forward to your engagement and in particular your response and insights to this business plan.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Eliza Brown'.

Eliza Brown
Chair
RDA Hume

The Hume Region

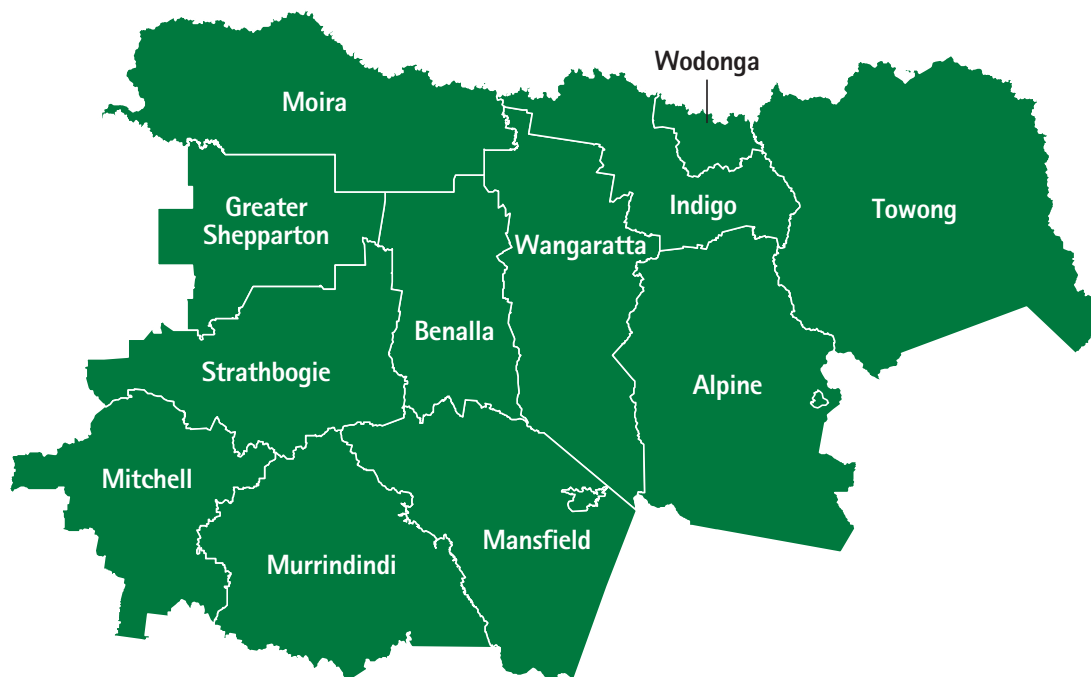
The Hume Region has a population of over 300,000 people and continues to be fast growing with a social and cultural fabric and heritage to match its natural beauty.

Renowned for world-class wines and gourmet food, the region is woven together by the Murray, Goulburn, Broken, Ovens, King and Kiewa Rivers – all vital to sustaining a rich environment, economy and lifestyle.

Hume is extremely varied in its industry and employment make-up, with a strong concentration of agriculture in the west and the alpine, wine and gourmet food areas in the region's east making tourism a strong contributor to regional employment.

The region is home to a well-established value-add manufacturing supply chain and strategic transport links that sees a diverse mix of industries thrive. The region is a significant exporter of raw and manufactured goods with a total export value of \$2.4bn.

Hume comprises the Goulburn and Ovens Murray sub-regions and includes the following local government areas.



Regional Vision

THE HUME REGION IS VICTORIA'S HEARTBEAT

The Hume Region is the lifeblood of the state and nation through its productive and beautiful landscapes, its deep connections to its people and cultures and its strategic location in the heart of Victoria amongst the nation's arterial network.

The Hume Region will sustain the preservation of future generations through its rich primary production and food producing capabilities, access to services and its vibrant and empowered communities.

RDA Hume Executive and Support Team

| RDA Hume Executive and Support Team | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Name | Position |
| Eliza Brown | Chair |
| Elise Armitage | Deputy Chair |
| Matt Nelson | Executive Officer |
| Tim Russell | Manager Strategy Development and Regional Planning |
| Michaela Lobb | RDA Hume Coordinator and Project Officer |

RDA Charter

On Friday, 28 July 2023 the Australian Government introduced a new RDA Charter. This new charter outlines the role and expectations for the RDA Network to help drive economic growth, innovation and entrepreneurship by facilitating investment in regional communities, industries and environments.

RDA Hume will achieve the aims of the new charter through its work with its broad range of stakeholders and collaborating with other RDA committees and all three levels of government and will:

- focus its activities and strategy on delivery of the Regional Investment Framework (RIF) in their region, including investment in people, places, services, and industries and local economies;
- support regional stakeholders, including local government and the not-for-profit-sector, to seek grant opportunities that advance strategic regional priorities;
- support decarbonisation efforts and the transformation to a net zero economy and enable regional linkages between sectors to achieve these aims;
- build the evidence for economic development, including innovation and diversification strategies;
- facilitate meaningful engagement across the three levels of government to ensure investments deliver better outcomes for regions; and
- contribute relevant data and local intelligence to support the evidence base to inform regional development strategies, program design and policy responses.

RDA Hume will also use their local, cross-sector expertise and regional voice to:

- collaborate with integrity, transparency, respect and accountability;
- engage with diverse communities, especially First Nations people;
- support the Australian Government's ambition of 'no one held back and no one left behind'; and
- support gender equality opportunities in the Hume region.

Collaboration Statement

Victorian RDA Network

RDA Hume is actively involved with the Victorian RDA Chair's Network which comes together to identify and undertake projects relating to state-wide focus areas and priorities. These include key workers housing, digital capability, workforce, skills and renewable energy.

RDA Hume remains committed to collaborating with and supporting the RDA Melbourne Committee as it consolidates its new role to identify and develop opportunities to improve economic, employment and investment linkages between Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Regional Partnerships

The Victorian Government established nine Regional Partnerships (RPs) across the state to give regional communities greater say about what matters to them and ensure their priorities are communicated to the highest level of state government.

There are two RPs in the Hume region, the Ovens Murray Regional Partnership (OMRP) and the Goulburn Regional Partnership (GRP).

RDA Hume has been represented on both RPs since July 2016. This has deepened RDA Hume's collaborative activities across all three tiers of government. It has also increased its knowledge and advocacy opportunities back into the Australian Government and assists to connect the Commonwealth's regional priorities and goals with the other two tiers of government.

Regional Development Victoria

RDA Hume will continue its work collaborating with Regional Development Victoria (RDV) to support the Victorian State Government to implement its Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) and the related strategic priority activities for the Hume Region.

RDA Hume's active support of both the Victorian Government's REDS and the RPs, has strengthened RDA Hume's capacity to provide comprehensive advice on socio-economic issues and economic development opportunities back to the Australian Government.



Local Government Areas

RDA Hume has strong and well-established relationships with all 12 of its local government areas and Alpine Resorts Victoria. It continues to develop its role as a direct entry point for smaller regional areas to communicate their priorities and seek support to develop solutions from all levels of government.

Hume Economic Development Network (HEDN)

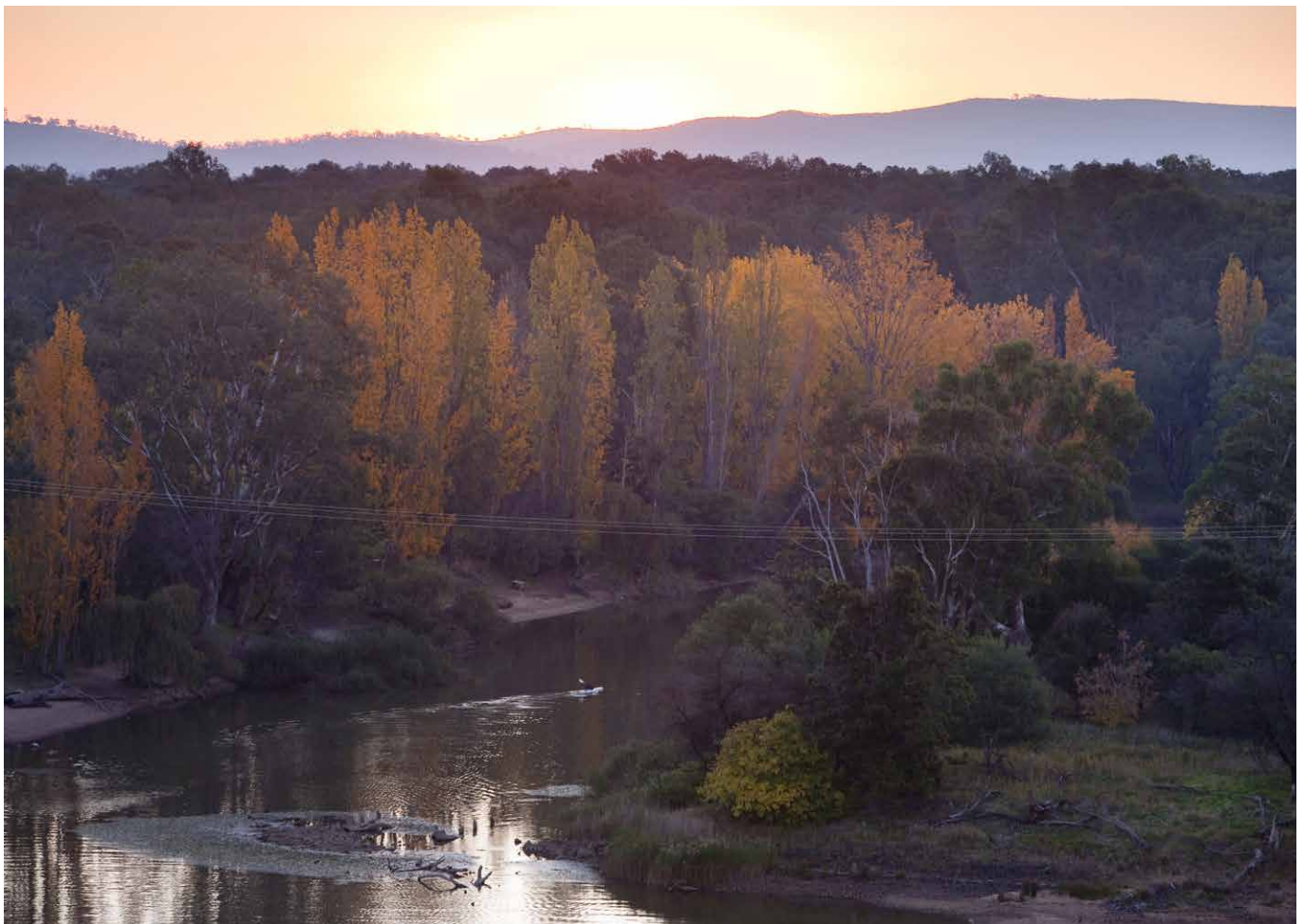
Since 2018, RDA Hume has been dedicated to funding and facilitating the development of its Local Government Areas to strengthen their economic development capability, capacity and functions in order to successfully obtain economic recovery and growth for the Hume Region.

The Hume Economic Development Network (HEDN) comprises members from all 12 of the Hume Region's local government agencies and the newly formed Alpine Resorts Victoria. The program for 2022-23 focussed on skills development and training needed to create the conditions that are required for improving local economic viability and sustainability. The sessions are conducted by highly skilled and respected experts in their field.

HEDN is regularly briefed on critical issues that impact the whole of the Hume region to broaden the members knowledge and understanding beyond their own area. These briefings also provide a more integrated method to collecting insights and data across the region. HEDN's role has therefore been expanded in 2022-23 from skills and knowledge capacity development to include reporting functions back to RDA Hume to provide deeper place-based communications and feedback to all three levels of government.

Australian Government Agencies

With support from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts; RDA Hume will continue to develop relationships with other Australian Government department and agencies whose portfolios relate to RDA Hume's key strategic focus areas. RDA Hume will continue to include sessions with Australian Government entities at its bi-monthly meeting to enable sharing of information and relationships building.



Communications Strategy

RDA Hume Communications Strategy incorporates four key elements:

- further develop RDA Hume's identity and raise its profile within the Hume Region;
- regular communication with key stakeholders to promote government program and funding opportunities;
- create products to support development and dissemination of government messaging; and
- continual engagement with stakeholders to acquire local insights and input to include in advice back to all three levels of government.

To implement these strategies, RDA Hume has developed a communications plan for the next 12 months that includes:

- **Identify and Profile:** A quarterly e-newsletter containing articles relating to economic development issues and interests, member profiles and insights and updates on government programs and events across the region. The e-newsletter is sent to key stakeholders and is open to the public to register and be placed on the distribution list. Regular media releases on issues, projects and programs are issued to media in the region. The media releases serve to help raise the profile of RDA Hume in the region.
- **Key Stakeholder Communication:** Fortnightly 'Chair's Update' emails sent to key stakeholders with an overview of current RDA Hume activities, 'hot' issues, events, as well as program and funding opportunities. A direct communication with key stakeholders where they can provide input and feedback directly to the Chair on specific projects. Items from these communiques are also used to continuously update the RDA Hume LinkedIn page.
- **Product Development:** includes collateral items such as the RDA Hume videos, housing prospectus, information sheets, plan on a page, media releases and other material as required.
- **Engagement and Consultation:** HEDN meetings, industry roundtables, forums, workshops and industry briefings.

Other planned communication activities include:

- Bimonthly Committee meetings that include sessions from other government agencies and industry experts relating to a key priority focus area.
- Continuous updates and maintenance of the RDA Hume funded Hume Region Priority Projects database.
- Regular updates of the RDA Hume website and LinkedIn account.
- Support team training to ensure that accessibility of information is maintained across digital platforms.
- RDA Hume attendance at ministerial online briefings and town halls, RDA National Forum, RAI conferences and CEDA events and learnings.
- Contribute to reports and submissions as the opportunities arise.





Strategic Focus Areas and Alignment

RDA Hume's strategic focus areas align with the Goulburn and Ovens Murray REDS. These strategies reflect the long term aims and activities planned to strengthen local regional economies and prioritise sharing across all three levels of government of evidence-based data and analysis that identify key challenges and opportunities and to also provide a unified regional voice.

By using the REDS guiding principles, RDA Hume aims to support its local communities in the following key strategic focus areas. These focus areas speak to the underlying challenges facing the region's prosperity but also the key opportunities to enable place-specific growth and development:

- affordable housing for key workers
- energy transition
- skills gaps and workforce shortages.

Key business activities to support the strategic areas include:

- continuing to participate in the Victorian RDA Chair's Network to achieve successful outcomes for their identified whole of state RDA projects;
- providing high level expert regional advice to all three levels of government;
- identifying government and industry investment opportunities that complement regional strengths and competitive advantages; and
- improving Hume region responses to specific priorities by continuing to make connections between Australian and Victorian government programs and strategies.

RDA Hume Work Plan 2023–24

RDA Hume has identified the following key actions to be progressed over 2023–24.

| Strategic Focus Area | Key Actions | Measures |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Housing</p> <p>Find practical and timely solutions to barriers limiting the region's growth and liveability</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a Hume Housing Prospectus. 2. Advocacy for the North East Workforce Management and Appropriate Housing (NEWMAH) project. | <p>Delivery of a Hume Housing Prospectus that identifies viable options to contribute to the solution of the housing shortage.</p> <p>Work with Tourism North East (TNE) for the establishment of NEWMAH project.</p> |
| <p>Energy Transition</p> <p>Support the region in derisking energy transition and continue development of the region's circular economy</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage with industry to determine issues, challenges and opportunities for energy transition. 2. Analyse existing strategic work to determine the role for RDA Hume. | <p>Provide a forum for key regional stakeholders to present to the RDA on energy transition and renewable energy challenges and the transition to a circular economy.</p> <p>Work with key national and state agencies to align regional projects with investment opportunities.</p> |
| <p>Support the development of the regional economy by addressing key enablers for growth</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuing investment in building local government' economic development workforce. 2. Identify key investment priorities for strategic infrastructure to improve connectivity, liveability and resilience. 3. Support sustainable solutions for workforce, skills and population growth. | <p>Ongoing delivery of the Hume Economic Development Network.</p> <p>Maintain RDA Hume's Priority Projects database.</p> <p>Undertake regular engagement across all levels of government on priority projects.</p> <p>Work with other agencies to identify and address barriers to cultural safety, employment opportunities, skills and training pathways and childcare provision.</p> |



Outcomes and Performance Indicators

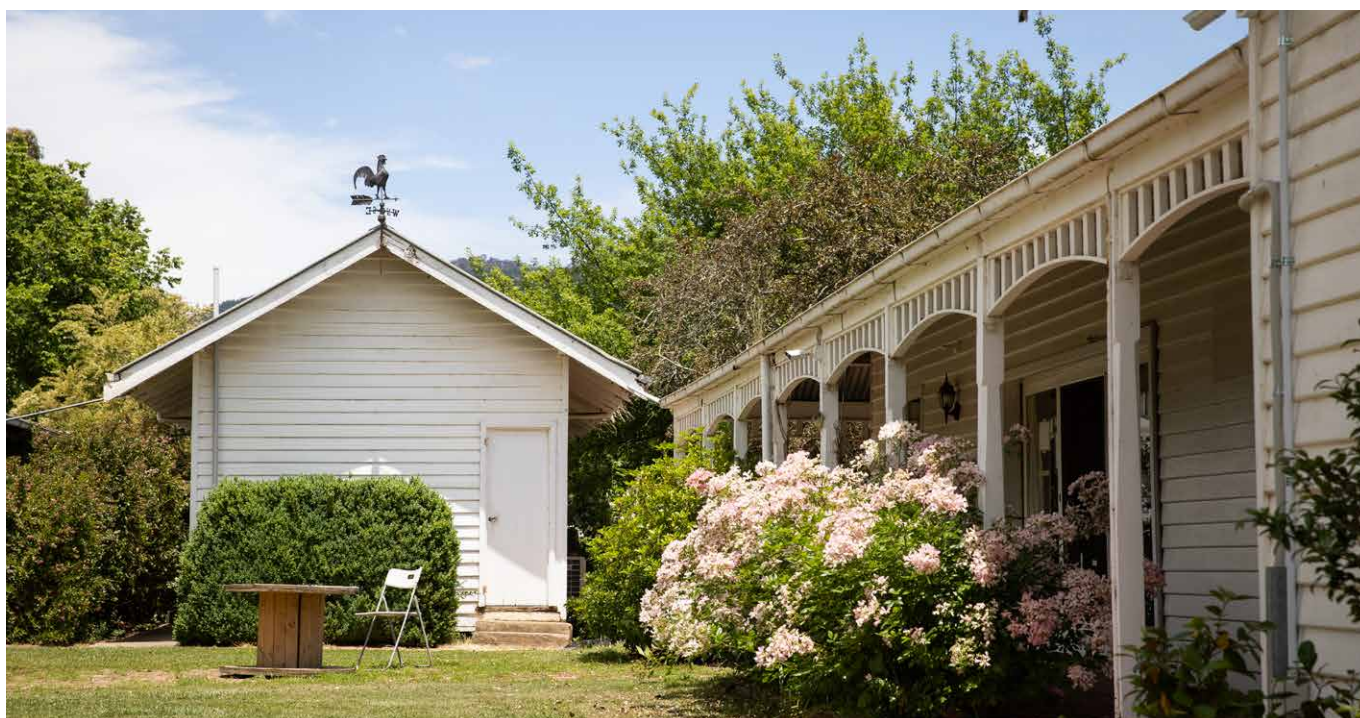
Summary of Outcomes

Summary of key strategic priorities for upcoming year:

1. **Regional Intelligence Gathering:** Engage with the region's local government and industry stakeholders to gather regional intelligence on policy issues, events and opportunities and provide regular advice to the Australian Government based on this intelligence.
2. **Local Government Capacity Building:** Continue to build capacity of local government professionals in planning and economic development with a new iteration of the Hume Economic Development Network.
3. **Energy Transition:** participate and support activities relating to the region's energy transition including identifying significant threats to established industries and any requirements for freight and logistics capabilities.
4. **Housing and Workforce Shortages:** Identify opportunities for RDA Hume to identify and assist development of solutions for workforce shortage issues including key worker requirements in the region such as affordable housing, skills gaps and other workforce issues.

Summary of key business activities for upcoming year:

1. **Advocacy and Engagement:** RDA Hume to deliver a 12 month communication and engagement plan including regular forums with key stakeholders and local leaders on priority issues as outlined in the Communications Strategy, gather intelligence on economic solutions and develop localised evidence-based pathways.
2. **Raise Awareness:** Promote Australian Government programs, policies and other opportunities as they arise to support potential local applicants to access Commonwealth funding and research.
3. **Growing Regions:** support the promotion of the Australian Government's Growing Regions program and work with stakeholders to identify appropriate projects.
4. **Cross Border Communities:** collaborate with RDA Murray, RDA Loddon Mallee, the Victorian Cross Border Commissioner, and other relevant organisations such as the Murray River Tourism Board (MRTB) and TNE on economic recovery opportunities.



Facilitate regional economic development outcomes, investment, jobs and local procurement.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- a. Provide details and/or a copy of a suitable existing strategic Regional Plan that your RDA is contributing to or that your RDA is developing in accordance with the RDA Charter and the RDA Better Practice Guide.
- b. Provide details of the investment (in dollar terms), jobs (number), local procurement opportunities (in dollar terms) and other regional development outcomes that your RDA will facilitate (for planning purposes) or has facilitated (for reporting purposes) for your region during this financial year. Please separate these in terms of outcomes that your RDA has:
 - Lead/Championed – heavily involved with the outcome.
 - Contributed to – moderately involved with the outcome.
 - Otherwise assisted – marginally involved with the outcome.

Examples of these levels of involvement are at item A.3.3 of your 2021-25 funding agreement.

PART 1 – FOR THE ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN

What will we do?

Activity 1

Identify economic development opportunities that provide collaboration and co-investment between private and public sectors targeting priority issues to address key areas of economic barriers including:

- Engaging with organisations, potential investors, industry experts and local government areas to discuss feasible investment opportunities (L/C). **Timeframe: ongoing.**
- Develop the Hume Region Housing Prospectus identifying viable sites and potential solutions to key worker affordable housing shortages within the region (L/C). **Timeframe: by end of 2023.**
- Support the Victorian State Government to achieve the regional economic development objectives relating to the Hume Region contained in the Ovens Murray and Goulburn REDS (O). **Timeframe: ongoing.**

Activity 2

- Continue to build capacity of local government economic development professionals through delivery of the HEDN program. (L/C). **Timeframe: ongoing.**

Activity 3

Cross Border Communities:

- RDA Hume will continue its collaboration with its cross border partners to identify opportunities for economic prosperity and any advocacy role required for RDA Hume (LCO). **Timeframe: ongoing.**
- Continue participation in the Albury Wodonga Regional Projects.

OUTCOME 2

Promote greater regional awareness of and engagement with Australian Government policies, grant programs and research.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- a. Provide details of where you have supported awareness raising and/or engagement.
- b. Number of submissions supported.

SECTION 1 – FOR THE ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN

What will we do?

As per the RDA Hume Communications Strategy outlined above, RDA Hume undertakes to:

Activity 1

Provide support for applicants seeking federal and state government funding:

- RDA Hume will continue to provide information and support to applicants to create competitive submissions where appropriate and in alignment with the selection criteria and eligibility. (C)
 - RDA Hume will provide letters of support for applicants as appropriate and where the project will contribute to long term economic growth for the region and is an identified priority project. (L/C)
-

Activity 2

Increase regional awareness of federal and state government policies, grants, programs and research:

- RDA Hume will actively promote and disseminate information to regional business, communities and industry on grants, programs, research and other federal and state government initiatives using the most appropriate channels including e-newsletters, social media, stakeholder engagement and by leveraging other Victorian Government communication channels. (L/C)
-

Activity 3

RDA Hume engagement and representation:

- RDA Hume will host and attend meetings, forums and other forms of stakeholder engagement to support development of regional key priorities and projects as identified in the RDA Hume Region Priority Projects List. (L/C)
 - Facilitate stakeholder meetings or briefings to promote and or assist in the delivery of Australian Government programs. (L/C)
-

OUTCOME 3

Contribute to Commonwealth regional policy making by providing intelligence and evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on regional development issues.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- a. Outline instances where you have provided intelligence and evidence-based advice to the Australian Government.
- b. Number of instances information / feedback was provided.

SECTION 1 – FOR THE ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN

What will we do?

Activity 1

- Provide evidence-based advice to the federal government on critical regional economic development issues.
- Continue to meet with members of parliament to discuss regional matters.
- Attend and participate in online briefings, meetings, townhalls and conferences held by Australian Government ministers with carriage of the RDA Network and/or related portfolios).

Activity 2

- Conduct engagement activities with local leaders, innovators, industry experts and other regional stakeholders to coordinate advice to government on strategic focus areas (such as housing, workforce issues and energy transition). (L/C)

Activity 3

- RDA Hume will actively engage and collaborate with relevant federal and state government departments, agencies and other entities such as the RDA Melbourne and Regional Partnerships (including participation in surveys and enquiries as required). (L/C)
 - RDA Hume will participate in the state-wide Victorian RDA projects to support successful outcomes. (L/C)
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