

ANNUAL REPORT 2023–24



Acknowledgment

We acknowledge the Traditional Aboriginal Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and future Traditional Owners.

Cover photo: Streetscape of Bendigo

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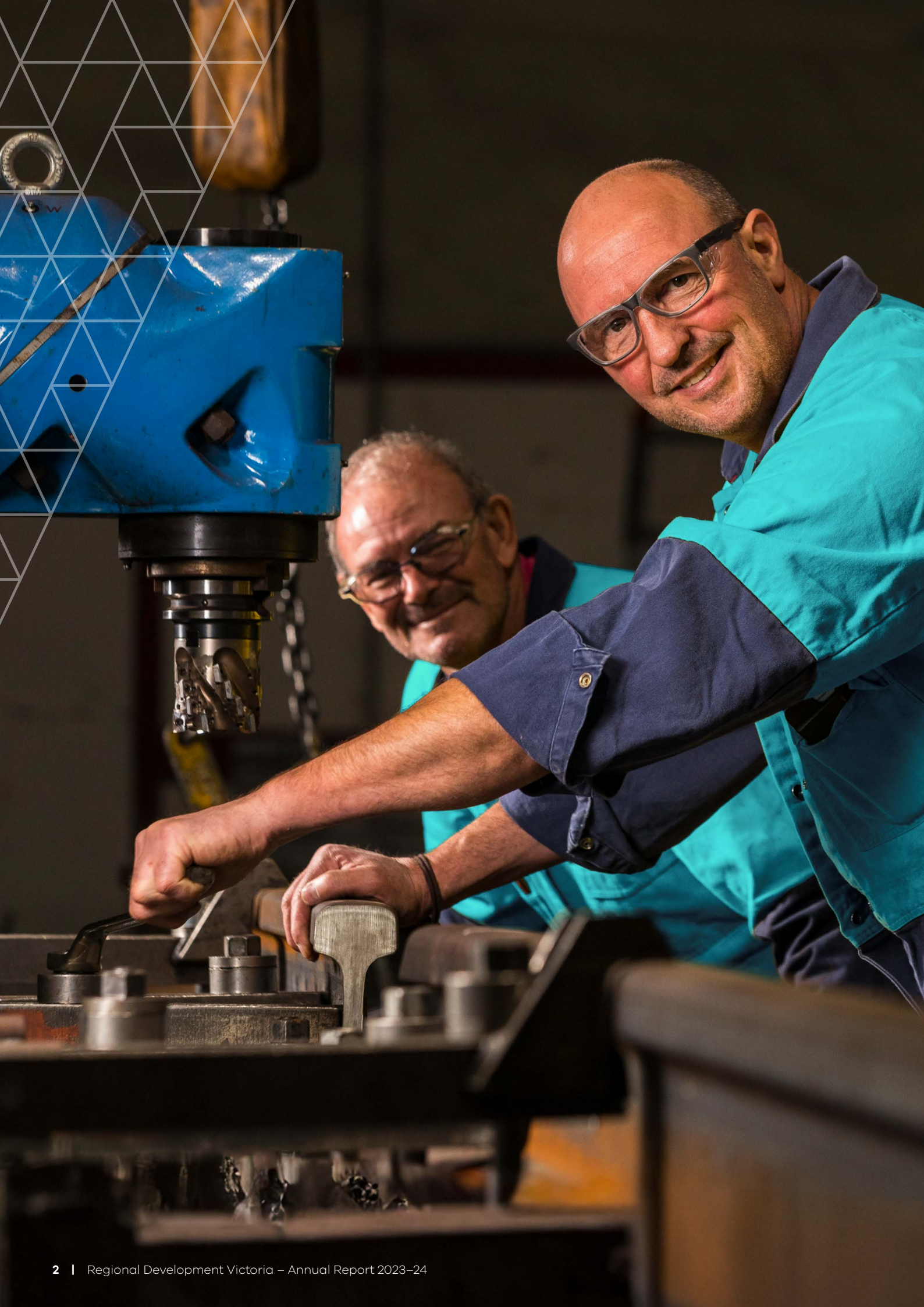
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Accessibility

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Chief Executive foreword

In 2023-24, Regional Development Victoria (RDV) continued to work with businesses and communities across regions and cross-border areas to promote prosperity through the development and delivery of placed-based policy, programs and projects.

Our regions account for around a quarter of Victoria's economic output, population, small businesses and employment. Regional Victoria continues to attract new residents, with current net regional migration higher than the preceding 5-year average. As Victoria's lead regional economic development agency, RDV is focused on supporting regional businesses and communities by facilitating investment in our regions. RDV leverages a deep knowledge of, and connection to, the regions to facilitate the development and realisation of transformative economic opportunities in place.

RDV is delivering 3 new programs – Regional Worker Accommodation Fund, Council Support Package and Tiny Towns Fund. The implementation of these programs is well under way and projects funded by these programs will deliver quality outcomes for both large and small communities right across regional Victoria.

RDV continued to support regional communities during and after natural disasters, working with local government and other parts of the Victorian Government to strengthen community resilience in trying times. Significant weather events in 2023-24 also saw RDV provide direct assistance, via the Tiny Towns Fund, to the small communities of Mirboo North and Pomonal to establish community and business resilience hubs for residents.

Victoria's 9 Regional Partnerships have continued to engage deeply with their communities to identify regional priorities and provide insights and solution-focused advice directly to government. Regional Partnerships have strongly advocated for priorities ranging from key worker housing and investment attraction through to building awareness and support for reconciliation and Treaty readiness in our regions.

This year has also marked the fifth year of the Geelong City Deal and some significant milestones across several transformative projects for Geelong and the Great Ocean Road economy. Of particular significance was the gifting of the name Nyaal Banyul to the flagship Geelong Convention and Event Centre (GCEC) by the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. Nyaal Banyul means 'open your eyes to the hills' and invites locals and visitors to appreciate the landscapes of Wadawurrung Country. Construction of Nyaal Banyul GCEC has commenced and is on track for completion in 2026.

In February 2024, Brett Davis commenced as Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner, succeeding Luke Wilson following his retirement. Brett has embraced the critical advocacy role of the Cross Border Commissioner and has travelled widely since his appointment to engage with individuals and communities in our cross-border areas. Significant work has also taken place in 2023-24 to further our cross-border collaboration efforts with South Australia and New South Wales via their respective Cross Border Commissioner offices.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the work and dedication of RDV staff and the significant organisational change we went through this year. Their knowledge, skills and passion, along with their deep connections to the places in which they live and work, are central to all that RDV delivers for regional Victorians. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge Beth Jones, who worked tirelessly to deliver for regional Victoria in her 5 years as CEO, RDV. On behalf of all RDV staff, I wish Beth all the best in her future endeavours and thank her for her contribution.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Schinck'.

Anthony Schinck
Acting Chief Executive
Regional Development
Victoria

RDV Executive team 2023-24



Beth Jones
Chief Executive



Anthony Schinck
Executive Director,
Regions



Luke Wilson
Cross Border Commissioner
July 2023 – December 2023



Brett Davis
Cross Border Commissioner
February – June 2024



Jeremy Levine
Executive Director, Place
Based Strategy, Insights
and Coordination



David Burns
Executive Director,
Priority Projects and
Business Performance



Brett Ince
Regional Director,
Barwon South West



Sara Rhodes Ward
Regional Director,
Gippsland



Sarah Henderson
Regional Director,
Grampians



Matt Nelson
Regional Director, Hume
July 2023 – March 2024



Mark Byatt OAM
Acting Regional Director,
Hume
March – June 2024



Leanne Rosewall
Regional Director,
Loddon Mallee



Regional Victoria – a vital part of our state

Rural and regional Victoria is home to one in 4 Victorians. It accounts for 840,300 jobs and 24% of the state's small businesses (defined as employing one to 19 staff). Victoria has a regional economy that generates over \$110 billion and accounts for 21% of Victoria's total economy.

An overview of Regional Development Victoria

RDV is the Victorian Government's lead agency for developing rural and regional Victoria.

A statutory authority operating within the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR), RDV facilitates economic and community development in rural and regional Victoria.

Purpose

RDV works to ensure that communities are vibrant, thriving and inclusive. It does this by creating jobs and enabling vital infrastructure to drive positive outcomes for communities.

With a focus on partnerships, RDV leverages the strengths of each region. These partnerships ensure that government investment harnesses local opportunities and addresses local issues. By working with local businesses and communities, RDV has a comprehensive understanding of the issues most important to rural and regional Victorians.

RDV plays an important role in aligning government's activity and investment for greatest impact in rural and regional Victoria. It works with all levels of government, across different departments, businesses and local communities. RDV uses local insights, ideas and experiences to enable positive outcomes for regional communities through a coordinated, whole-of-government approach. This collaboration helps RDV ensure that rural and regional Victoria continues to prosper and be a great place to live, work and invest.

RDV provides timely advice and facilitates local solutions. A core role for RDV is supporting rural and regional communities and businesses through natural disasters, emergencies and unplanned events, such as floods and associated cross-border issues.

Organisational structure

RDV sits within the Regional Development and Outdoor Recreation (RDOR) group of DJSIR.

With a strong presence throughout rural and regional Victoria, RDV ensures that local businesses and communities receive support specific to their needs. Its operations are delivered through 5 regions:

- Barwon South West
- Gippsland
- Grampians
- Hume
- Loddon Mallee.

The regions are supported by teams that focus on policy and strategy, regional programs, recovery and investment, and business performance.



Regional Partnerships

Overview

Victoria's Regional Partnerships (RPs), established in 2016 by the Victorian Government, play a crucial role in empowering local communities to address regional challenges and opportunities. The partnerships are designed to ensure that regional voices are not only heard but also actively involved in shaping policies and initiatives that affect where they live.

Comprising over 150 dedicated local leaders, including business figures, community members, representatives from Regional Development Australia (RDA), local government CEOs, and senior Victorian Government officials, these partnerships reflect the diverse makeup of Victoria's regions.

Through ongoing consultation and direct engagement with government bodies, RPs enable local communities to articulate their priorities and advocate for initiatives that are responsive to their specific needs. This approach not only strengthens regional governance but also fosters collaboration between different sectors and stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the sustainable development and prosperity of Victoria's diverse regions.

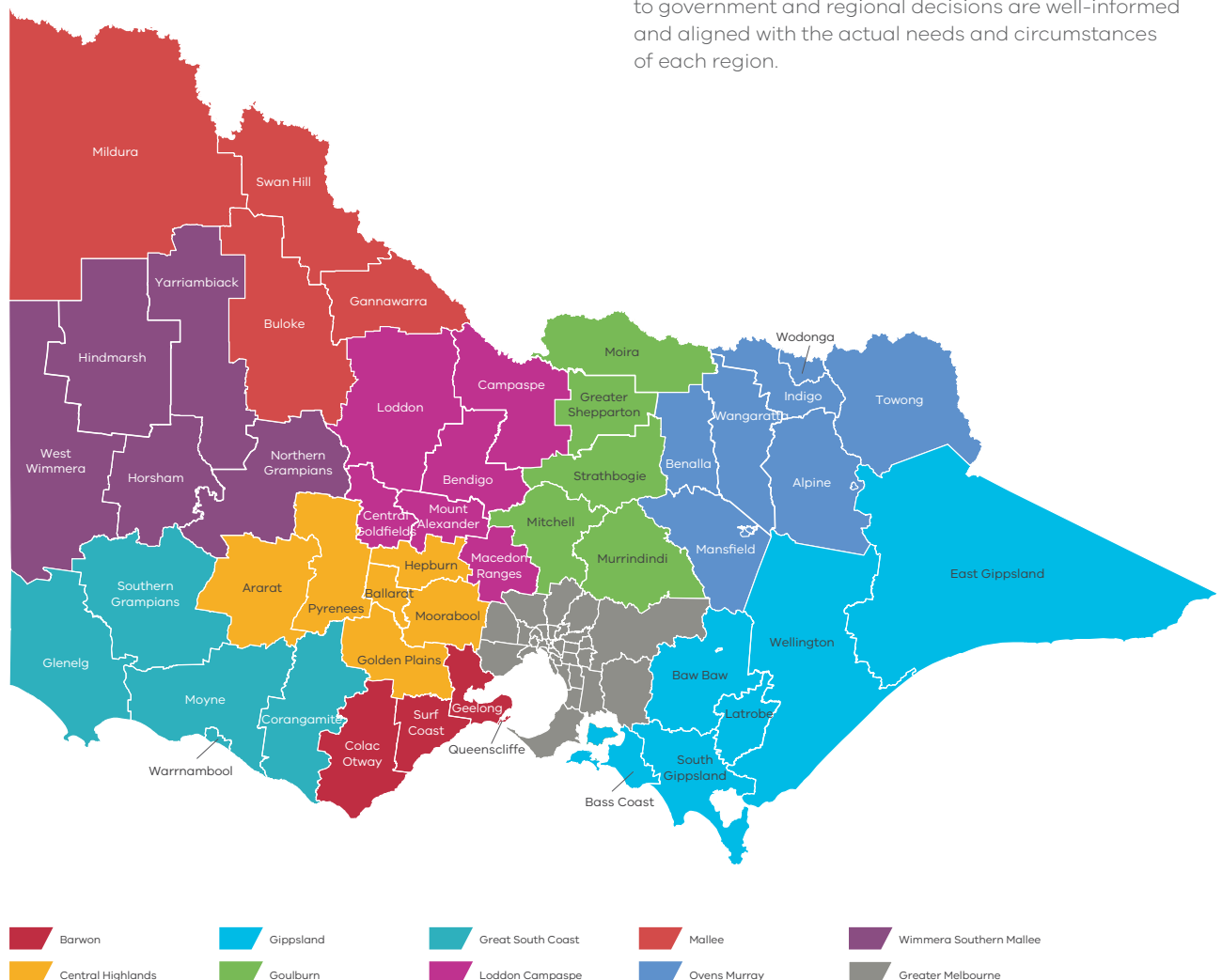
Key achievements for 2023-24

RPs, supported by RDV, have continued to engage extensively with their communities to identify emerging opportunities and priorities, and to develop collaborative solutions that address regional challenges effectively.

RPs successfully advocated for priorities that provided:

- valuable insights on worker housing challenges and opportunities, informing the development of the Regional Workforce Accommodation Fund
- continued commitment to build awareness and support for reconciliation and Treaty readiness
- investment prospectuses to stimulate and grow local economies
- coordination between key stakeholders to support progress of Victoria's energy transition
- strategies and action plans to advance opportunities to address critical workforce needs and labour supply
- opportunities for collaboration to address complex issues such as the provision of childcare
- further community acceptance of the opportunities provided by migration attraction and retention.

The work of RPs is grounded in evidence-based research, expert advice and reliable data, ensuring that advice to government and regional decisions are well-informed and aligned with the actual needs and circumstances of each region.



Reporting on Regional Partnerships

Barwon

In 2023–24, the Barwon Regional Partnership (RP) continued its focus on ‘Good Growth’ and identified priority initiatives that will address some of the challenges and opportunities faced by the Barwon region.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- **Integrated, connected growth** – Focusing on rail and transport hubs, this approach promotes efficient land use and development. The Barwon Regional Priority Precincts initiative targets 11 key areas along the Geelong Regional Rail network, aiming to enhance housing and transport outcomes through integrated planning and delivery
 - **Guiding growth through caring for Country** – Central to this vision is the establishment of a physical presence for the Wadawurrung Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation, a place that is grounded on Country, serving as a beacon for culture, heritage and legacy
 - **Clean, sustainable growth** – Invest in integrated water management solutions and circular economy commercialisation to accelerate the shift towards a clean and sustainable economy
 - **Cohesive and inclusive growth** – Continued support for Geelong Region Opportunities for Work (GROW) targets in public infrastructure projects to ensure inclusive employment outcomes and address entrenched disadvantage in the region.
- Identified surplus government land in 3 local government areas and provided advice to the government on potential actions to support housing targets outlined in Victoria’s Housing Statement
 - Endorsed the G21 Region Plan 2050 and committed to aligning Regional Partnership priorities with the plan. The Barwon RP agreed to work to ensure the region’s good growth priorities, including the Region Plan 2050, are considered as part of the state-wide work being progressed to develop the new Plan for Victoria
 - Committed to being a part of the healing, education and truth telling. The partnership met with Uncle Terry Garwood to better understand the Victorian Government’s commitment to Truth, Justice and Treaty and the First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria. This ongoing commitment will help inform government of the challenges facing Traditional Owners and First Nations people in the Barwon region through the Treaty process
 - Partnered with RDA Barwon South West to produce the Clean Economy Investment Footprint, work that will lead to a Barwon South West Renewable Hydrogen Prospectus and help accelerate the region’s shift to a clean economy

HIGHLIGHTS

- Worked closely with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) and local governments to advance 11 potential priority precincts across the region. This coordination of land use, transport and density planning aims to facilitate sustainable population growth, urban renewal and improved liveability
- Conducted a scoping study to support an action plan for accelerating the region’s transition to a clean economy. The study recommended further work to identify the gap between existing initiatives and the region’s aspirations. This will ensure the region is well-prepared to achieve its clean economy goals
- Consulted with VicGrid and collaborated with RDA Barwon South West and the Great South Coast Regional Partnership to put forward a submission to inform the Draft Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Community Benefits Plan.



347,612

Population
(2023)



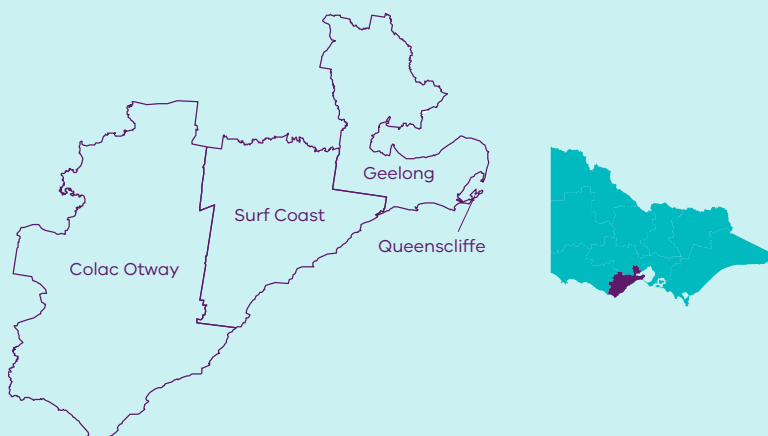
27.5%

Population growth
(2023–2036)



\$23.5B

Gross Regional Product
(2023)





CASE STUDY

Commercialisation pathways for circular economy technologies

The Barwon RP prioritised the transition to a clean economy by collaborating with Barwon Water to produce the Circular Economy Commercialisation (CEC) Hub Business Case. Supported by the Regional Partnership Development Fund, the project aimed to build a case for establishing a hub to test and demonstrate new circular economy technologies at Barwon Water's Black Rock facility.

Collaborating closely with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), industry and local government, stakeholder consultations confirmed strong support. The hub would aim to showcase circular economy technologies using leasing and commercialisation models. The model involves partnerships with local organisations like Deakin University to deliver incubation programs. The construction cost is estimated at \$2.7-\$4.8 million, with funding to be sought from investors, grants and partnerships.

Next steps involve refining strategic choices and partnership options. The CEC Hub will be a catalyst for commercialisation pathways that demonstrate climate technology. By harnessing the region's natural assets and its capability in advanced manufacturing, it aims to meet renewable energy targets, protect the environment, and enhance job creation and economic resilience.

Great South Coast

In 2023–24 the Great South Coast RP maintained its focus on supporting initiatives that can unlock the region's potential in transport, housing, clean energy and agriculture to foster a diverse, resilient and sustainable economy.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- **Increase investment in our nationally significant road infrastructure** – Future growth of industries like agriculture, the visitor economy and clean energy rely on well-developed road infrastructure. The Great South Coast RP identified investment in roads as a priority to address deteriorating infrastructure, improve safety and support priority industries in the region
- **Increase key worker housing** – The region is facing a severe housing shortage for long-term rental accommodation due to increased demand for regional living and domestic tourism. Vacancy rates for long-term rental accommodation remain consistently below 2%, indicating a pressing need for additional housing supply. The limited availability of housing is hindering economic growth and expansion of our growth industries
- **Grow our clean energy sector** – The Great South Coast region faces challenges in obtaining social acceptance for expanding renewable energy infrastructure, hindering our ability to fully utilise the economic and environmental advantages of renewable energy development. Failure to implement policy and regulatory reforms that build social acceptance and incorporate community benefits will put decarbonisation targets at risk. The region is strategically poised to expedite investment for clean energy objectives but requires policy to support subsidised access to green electrons to ensure consistent supply in the industry development phase.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Successfully facilitated the Clean Energy Investment Footprint project with RDA that strategically located potential public and private sector investments in clean energy, pinpointing the enablers and support required to maximise the benefits of these investments
- Facilitated a Social Futures Forum with over 50 stakeholders in attendance to discuss the *In Plain Sight* report, which focuses on investing in social equity to drive economic growth to benefit whole communities
- Facilitated a roundtable discussion with private and public sector representatives focused on streamlining planning hurdles and planning scheme amendments to assist with the regional housing challenges that exist within Barwon South West
- Facilitated an industry and public sector roundtable discussion to understand the region's transition to renewable energy for job creation, economic growth and environmental sustainability, and the importance of collaboration with private enterprises, local government and community stakeholders for a smooth transition
- Supported a delegation including representatives from Great South Coast Economic Futures, Food and Fibre Great South Coast and Agriculture Victoria to attend the EvokeAG conference in Perth, promoting the region to private investors. One significant outcome from the networks developed at the conference was the selection of Grange Garlic, a family farming business based near Hamilton, for the National Agricultural and Food Incubator (NAFI) for investment.



105,957

Population
(2023)



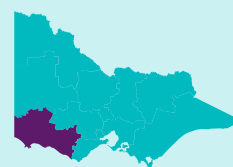
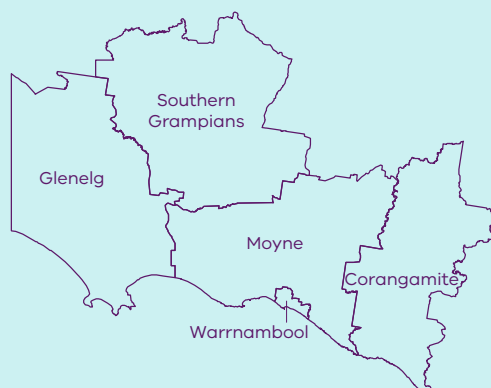
3.1%

Population growth
(2023–2036)



\$ 7.4B

Gross Regional Product
(2023)





CASE STUDY

Great South Coast Economic Futures Program

The Great South Coast RP continued to support the region's Economic Futures program. The program was formed to guide the region in capitalising on high-value opportunities that align with the region's strengths and diversify the Great South Coast economy. Through the Regional Partnership Development Fund, it has yielded several key outcomes which drive economic growth and investment in the region.

- Delivered an Agricultural, Food & Fibre Prospectus which identified 12 streams of agriculture investment opportunities in the Great South Coast
- Showcased the region's strengths at the EvokeAG 2024 conference, resulting in Hamilton-based family business Grange Garlic being selected for the NAFI for investment
- As a result of the participation at EvokeAG and a relationship with Deakin University, Food and Fibre Great South Coast received a \$25,000 grant from AgriFutures to host a regional agriculture showcase at Deakin Warrnambool on September 12, 2024
- Undertook 'Unlocking value in the Great South Coast region for dairy, red meat and timber product' study, resulting in funding being sought for the timber industry to complete feasibility work for in-region processing and production of building materials
- Developed the Geothermal Tourism Investor Prospectus, establishing key investor partnerships including ongoing engagement with Traditional Owners Eastern Maar around their aspirations for geothermal tourism. Presented at the 2023 Geothermal Think Tank Symposium
- Developed the Barwon South West Renewable Hydrogen and Energy Opportunity – Draft Report which is currently with the project steering group for feedback
- Currently developing the Barwon South West Hydrogen Prospectus in collaboration with Barwon Water.

Wimmera Southern Mallee

In 2023–2024, the Wimmera Southern Mallee RP continued to advocate for key enablers to achieving economic, social and cultural development within the Wimmera Southern Mallee community.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- **Secure new agricultural valued-added investment in Wimmera Southern Mallee by leveraging the Regional Investment Attraction Project (RIAP)** – Seeking to leverage the RIAP – Food and Fibre Value Add project to deliver food product manufacturing opportunities in Wimmera Southern Mallee. Agricultural product value adding has been identified as the top opportunity for economic development in the Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) and is underscored by a 2021 RDA Grampians report that identified 5 investment-ready opportunities for increasing value-adding in agriculture in WSM
- **Develop a Filipino Migrant Education & Training Model to grow the agriculture and healthcare workforce in Wimmera Southern Mallee** – Advocating with the Australian Government to target migrants from the Philippines for work in the agriculture and healthcare sectors – building on the foundation of the large Filipino community already living in Wimmera Southern Mallee. The proposal is to target couples, with one partner being trained for broadacre cropping, fodder production and sheep husbandry work and the other working under the existing critical worker visa system as an allied health carer or nursing support person while training to become a registered nurse. This may form the basis for a workforce pilot program in Wimmera Southern Mallee
- **Direct government housing development funding into new trunk infrastructure and provision of services to building blocks** – Building regional housing stocks is acknowledged in the Wimmera Southern Mallee REDS as a key economic enabler. There are existing critical shortages of accommodation for health, education, childcare and tourism sector workers. The solution is to activate the private sector to invest and construct the critical infrastructure Wimmera Southern Mallee requires

- **Secure new family violence crisis dwellings** – The demand for family crisis accommodation in Wimmera Southern Mallee continues to grow, particularly for those impacted by family violence. Social services providers have identified the need for 12 new Wimmera Southern Mallee crisis accommodation dwellings to enable specialist agencies such as the Orange Door organisation to manage family violence impacts on the community more effectively. Wimmera Southern Mallee RP is seeking 12 new crisis accommodation centres.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Delivered the Sustainable Childcare for Rural Kids Project Report and recommendations to enable sustainable childcare services in smaller rural townships (500 to 5000 residents). The recommendations are based on a review of childcare requirements and potential solutions in 10 study communities in Wimmera Southern Mallee, Mallee and Loddon Shire. This project was funded through the Regional Partnerships Development Fund with \$210,000 co-allocated for Wimmera Southern Mallee and Mallee RPs project support funding and delivered by the By Five Early Years Initiative and North Central LLEN (see case study)
- Formed the Rural Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Steering Committee led by Wimmera Southern Mallee RP Acting Chair Dr Cathy Tischler including representatives from Wimmera Southern Mallee RP, Mallee RP, By Five Early Years Initiative, North Central LLEN and Country Education Partnerships. The ECEC is tasked with implementing an advocacy and activation strategy to realise the systemic changes required to make rural township childcare services sustainable



48,075

Population
(2023)



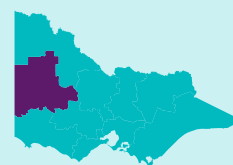
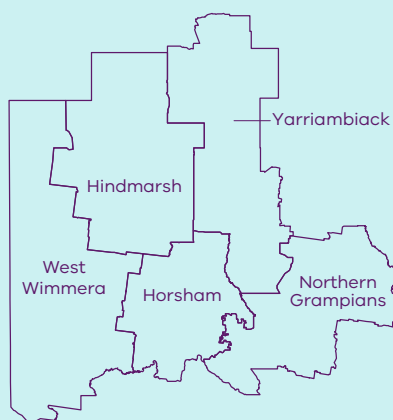
-1.7%

Population growth
(2023–2036)



\$3.6B

Gross Regional Product
(2023)



- Took a community leadership position in the identification of the impacts and opportunities in the Wimmera Southern Mallee community arising from the transition of the regional economy by establishing 2 new regional industries – renewable energy and mineral sands mining. This has included on-going engagement with VicGrid regarding its proposed Community Benefits Fund to be funded by the operators of renewable energy generating infrastructure and power transmission lines
- The Victorian Government's funding for 43 new social housing dwellings in Wimmera Southern Mallee via its Big Build program and Social Housing Development Fund will provide a potential pathway towards meeting the Wimmera Southern Mallee RP Family Violence response priority for 12 new family crisis accommodation dwellings in the region
- Identified potential funding pathway through Housing Australia to secure grants for trunk and non-trunk infrastructure for new private sector housing developments – via a coordinated development approach with Wimmera Southern Mallee Development Ltd and LGAs in the region
- Collaborated with Wimmera Southern Mallee Development Ltd to engage with the Immigration and Citizenship branch of the Australian Department of Home Affairs on the potential for a workforce pilot program to attract Filipino immigrants into the Wimmera Southern Mallee agriculture and care sector workforces.



CASE STUDY

Sustainable Childcare for Rural Kids

The Sustainable Childcare for Rural Kids Project commenced in 2023 with the task of identifying the best business models to deliver sustainable childcare services in smaller rural townships with 500 to 5000 residents.

This project was funded through the Regional Partnerships Development Fund with \$210,000 co-allocated for Wimmera Southern Mallee RP (\$130,000) and the Mallee RP (\$80,000) to support project delivery by the Wimmera Southern Mallee By Five Early Years Initiative and North Central LLEN.

A review of childcare requirements and potential solutions for sustainable childcare delivery in 10 study communities in Wimmera Southern Mallee, Mallee and Loddon Shire found that under the existing Victorian and Australian Government delivery and funding frameworks none of these communities could achieve sustainable childcare services. Consequently, the project focused on recommendations to overcome the impediments to delivering long-term sustainable childcare for rural communities – delivering its final report in January 2024.

The project report detailed 4 key recommendations that recognise the particular challenges and solutions for childcare delivery in rural townships as compared to regional and urban centres:

1. Change the funding and delivery model for rural communities to provide block funding that allows continuity of services despite annual fluctuations in childcare numbers.
2. Introduce co-location, co-staffing and combined administration of childcare and kindergarten under a new rural ECEC model specifically designed for smaller population rural townships, including maternal and child health services co-locating wherever possible.
3. Align salaries for childcare and kindergarten workers to attract and retain a sustainable childcare workforce in rural settings and facilitate efficient staffing through interoperability.
4. Eliminate the participation (employment) requirement for rural families as an incentive to use childcare services and free up family carers to join the regional workforce.

Central Highlands

In 2023-24, the Central Highlands RP continued to work closely with the Victorian Government and its regional partners to advocate for better jobs, more social and affordable housing and improved transport connectivity.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- **Jobs** – Workers and businesses thrive in the Central Highlands
- **Housing** – The Central Highlands has the housing that it needs and receives its proportionate share of social and affordable housing from the Regional Housing Fund
- **Connectivity** – Improved transport accessibility and connectivity enhance the Central Highlands' economic vibrancy and social cohesion.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Led the development of the Central Highlands Victoria Tourism Investment Prospectus to facilitate investment into our visitor economy to increase visitation, create new jobs and drive economic prosperity for our communities
- Successfully attracted \$625,000 from the Victorian Government's Visitor Servicing Fund for the Goldfield Gateways project. Goldfield Gateways will attract visitors arriving for specific events or attractions and disperse them throughout the region, creating a deeper exploration of the area
- Developed a set of guiding principles to inform the Victorian Government's implementation of the Regional Housing Fund to ensure this much-needed housing investment will deliver place-based housing solutions that meet the specific needs of Central Highlands communities

- Commenced a collaboration of regional housing stakeholders to assess the benefits of implementing a Housing First model of social housing provision in the Central Highlands. The results of this work will inform regional housing providers and ongoing engagement with the Victorian Government as it delivers more social housing under the Regional Housing Fund
- Advocated for DTP funding to support the Ballarat Regional Integrated Transport Study – a regionally-significant study of public transport routes that recognises the important relationship between Ballarat, as a regional service, employment and education centre, and broader communities in surrounding local government areas of the Central Highlands. The study is being funded by the Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils and will be delivered in 2025
- Co-funded the Western Victorian Grain Supply Chain Study. Victoria's grain industry plays a pivotal role in the agricultural sector, accounting for 39% of all national exports. Rail and road transport are vital to the domestic and bulk export supply chain, transporting produce from farms and regional areas to storage facilities and ports. Despite recent improvements to the regional transport infrastructure, there are still opportunities for further enhancements to bring lasting benefits and enhance freight efficiency to the grain industry and supply chain network.



219,186

Population
(2023)



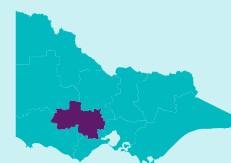
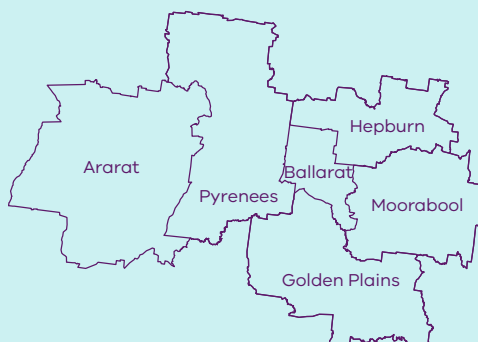
25.3%

Population growth
(2023–2036)



\$12.4B

Gross Regional Product
(2023)





CASE STUDY

Regional Investment Attraction Project (RIAP)

RIAP grew out of a collaboration between the Central Highlands RP, the Wimmera Southern Mallee RP and RDA Grampians to deliver the Grampians Value Add in Agriculture (GVAA) project.

The GVAA project sought to address a key opportunity in the region's agriculture sector, where approximately 77% of raw product developed in the Grampians is exported internationally, interstate or to metropolitan Melbourne before being processed to a higher value product. The value of this work was recognised by the Victorian Government when it provided \$1.5 million to establish RIAP across all Victorian regions based on the learnings of the GVAA.

RIAP draws on deep subject matter expertise from a consortium of education providers – led by the CSIRO and in partnership with RDV – to accelerate strategic food and fibre opportunities with regional stakeholders, industry and across government. In 2023-2024, 7 projects were hosted across Victorian regions under the RIAP banner. Findings from these projects will be available in late 2024.

Ovens Murray

In 2023-24, the Ovens Murray RP focused on strengthening regional collaboration, deepening our understanding of transformational opportunities, ensuring our region's unique perspective is included in government strategies and advocating for investments into key enablers for achieving economic, social and environmental prosperity in the region.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- **Economic resilience and prosperity** – Drive regional economic growth and prosperity by leveraging our key and emerging sectors – agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and logistics, and addressing housing and workforce shortages
 - **Climate change and renewable energy** – Position Ovens Murray as a climate adaptation leader with a renewable energy future that protects and leverages our natural environmental assets, is central to our regional offering and builds on our climate change resilience and competitive advantages for economic and community benefit
 - **Connectivity as a crucial enabler** – Connect Ovens Murray to other regions and the world by establishing strong telecommunications networks, a digitally-literate population and innovative industries. Ensure an efficient, effective and integrated transport network that connects our communities and enables industry supply chains.
- Deepened our understanding and advocacy while focusing on the renewable energy transition, housing and the Plan for Victoria. Met with government and submitted formal and informal responses to ensure the region's unique perspectives are considered
 - Researched key issues for the local health system. Key challenges identified reinforced the Ovens Murray RP's focus on leveraging operational-enabling factors of housing for key workers and digital transformation. Addressing these will enable well-resourced health services and improved quality of care close to home
 - Communicated our region's priorities in an engaging and clear manner by producing short promotional videos for 7 of our priority projects seeking investment. These videos appear on the Ovens Murray RP website and have been shared with ministers and other stakeholders as part of our advocacy efforts. These include:
 - Further developing our unique and iconic tourism offerings including leveraging our natural assets such as alpine resorts, epicurean tourist routes and our cycle tourism i.e. further investment into the highly successful Ride High Country marketing campaign and the first stage of the Prosecco Trail linking 9 wineries in the King Valley
 - Positioning the region for investment in pumped hydroelectric storage with a prospectus, business case and grant to build social licence
 - Addressing the region's growing food insecurity demands, future-proofing the region's ability to respond to natural disasters and boosting workforce training opportunities by investing in a purpose-built Food Unity Hub
 - Supporting the 90% of our 13,056 small to medium businesses that do not feel sufficiently digitally skilled to get their businesses online and automated with the help of ClickRegion – a locally-produced digital training platform.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Built stronger regional collaborations to advance crucial growth enablers for our region in digital and transport connectivity
- Operated and reinvigorated the Ovens Murray Digital Futures Coordination Group which developed a new digital plan and expanded its membership this year
- Allocated Regional Partnership Development Funds and successfully advocated for matched funding and support from DTP for the preparation of an Integrated Transport Strategy. The planning process involved consultation and engagement across multiple public and private sector organisations to ensure a robust and achievable strategy is produced



136,440

Population
(2023)



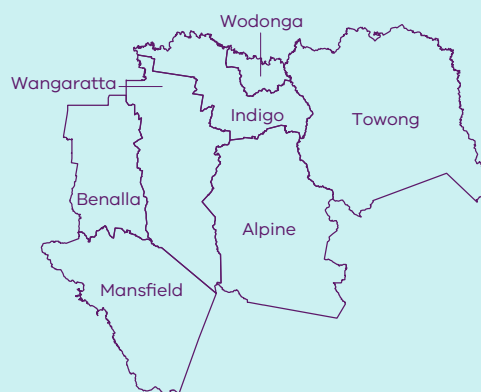
12.5%

Population growth
(2023–2036)



\$8.3B

Gross Regional Product
(2023)





CASE STUDY

Ovens Murray Digital Plan and Digital Futures Coordination Group

The first Ovens Murray Digital Plan was launched in 2019 under the Victorian Government's Connecting Regional Communities Program. With the help of the Ovens Murray Digital Futures Coordination Group (a working group of the Ovens Murray RP), this plan proved highly valuable in supporting collaboration across a wide range of key stakeholders, and in attracting over \$8 million in investment into digital and telecommunications projects within the region.

In 2023-24, the Ovens Murray RP allocated funding through the Regional Partnership Development Fund to complete a comprehensive update of the digital plan. The new plan maintains the vision of 'leading the way in digital inclusion, innovation and entrepreneurship – creating a smart region that connects people, attracts talent, encourages innovation, and creates jobs and growth for the 21st century' under 2 themes: 1) enable and lift regional ambition, and 2) reduce the digital divide.

The plan recommends actions under 6 pillars:

- Digital awareness
- Digital skills
- Digital safety
- Digital data use
- Digital connectivity
- Digital governance.

The new Ovens Murray Digital Plan was developed with detailed desktop research, 33 key stakeholder interviews and 2 very well-attended key stakeholder workshops with 64 individuals representing a wide range of sectors across government, councils, business, not-for-profit organisations, health, education, telecommunications and community groups. This collaborative process has reinvigorated the Ovens Murray Digital Futures Coordination Group, which now boasts 46 members representing 30 organisations across multiple sectors.

Goulburn

In 2023-24, the Goulburn RP continued to focus on the requirements of the region.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- **Support community-led governance for Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID) economic transition** – embedding the principles of resilience and adaptation outlined in the Goulburn Murray Resilience Strategy
- **Support sustainable growth and peri-urban development opportunities** – advocating for projects that capitalise on peri-urban growth such as the Seymour Revitalisation initiative
- **Support First Nations prosperity** – through the Goulburn Murray Regional Prosperity Plan to achieve greater economic inclusion and parity for Aboriginal people in the region.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Held a joint meeting with the Loddon Campaspe RP and Goulburn RP Resilience Taskforce at Girgarre and Tatura where the 2 committees collaboratively identified the economic drivers for change and areas for intervention to support the prosperity of this highly productive and nationally significant agricultural region
- Supported the continued operation of the Goulburn Murray Resilience Taskforce in partnership with Loddon Campaspe RP to implement interventions that address economic transition to a lower-water future in the GMID
- The Goulburn Murray Resilience Taskforce was featured in an international study led by the Australian National University (ANU) on community-led governance and presented at the GO GREEN Partner Conference, 1-3 May 2024. It was also highlighted as a case study at an international symposium in Copenhagen, Denmark

- Provided seed funding towards the Seymour Revitalisation Initiative (SRI), a project that defined place-based opportunities to enhance the investment attractiveness of Seymour, capitalising on peri-urban growth and addressing persistent socio-economic disadvantage
- Successfully advocated for \$15 million in funding for the Seymour Community Wellbeing Hub as part of the SRI. This funding was secured through the Australian Government's Growing Regions Program in partnership with the Hume RDA
- Advocated for critical infrastructure needed to support regional growth and community safety such as reliable power across Strathbogie Shire
- Held a meeting at Beveridge in Mitchell Shire highlighting the significant population growth occurring on Melbourne's urban fringe. Explored challenges in service delivery and maintaining a high standard of liveability as well as the critical infrastructure required to cater to this growth and provide employment opportunities for residents in place going forward
- Explored opportunities for First Nations businesses in renewable energy generation and retailing, connected major employers to First Nations employment services and career pathways, and contributed to a network of government and industry champions collaborating on opportunities to close the gap in Aboriginal economic and social outcomes.



180,693

Population
(2023)



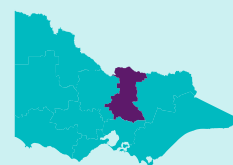
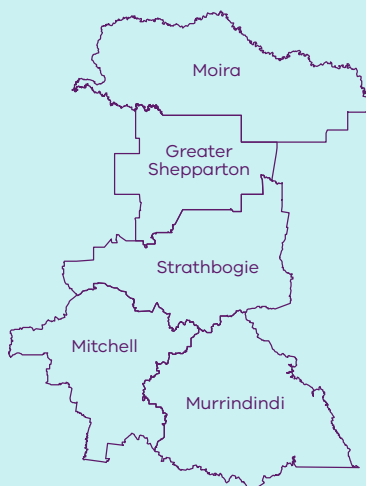
45.1%

Population growth
(2023–2036)



\$10.3B

Gross Regional Product
(2023)





CASE STUDY

Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence

As part of the Goulburn Murray Regional Prosperity Plan, the Goulburn RP has been a steadfast supporter of the Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence. This state-of-the-art educational, sporting, cultural and community hub, located on Yorta Yorta Country in Shepparton, is designed to serve both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. With a significant investment from the Victorian Government of \$30.2 million, the centre is poised to become a beacon of opportunity and development in the region.

The construction of the Munarra Centre was a remarkable project, driven by the expertise of TVN On-Country, a construction company that is 70% First Nations-owned. This collaboration not only focused on the physical creation of the centre, but in line with the Prosperity Plan, provided substantial employment opportunities for First Nations peoples during the construction phase of the project. With construction of the Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence complete, the facility is set to be launched shortly. As a key advocacy priority for the Goulburn RP, this centre will serve as a pivotal hub for First Nations education, health and aspiration, fostering a brighter future for the community.

Mallee

In 2023-24, the Mallee RP continued to focus on key issues of priority across the region.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- **Improve access to worker housing** – Workforce attraction is an issue in communities across the Mallee, with available housing a barrier to workforce attraction and retention
- **Alternative energy production** – Over the past 3 years Mallee RP has worked with Loddon Mallee RDA to realise the potential for the Mallee in building a green hydrogen economy
- **Childcare for rural communities** – The Mallee, Wimmera Southern Mallee and Loddon Campaspe RPs identified sustainable childcare as a key social and economic priority of the region to address issues of equity and disadvantage, workforce and women's economic inclusion.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Collaborated with the Wimmera Southern Mallee and Loddon Campaspe RPs to progress a project to examine the pressing need to expand childcare services in rural townships across West, North West and North Central Victoria
- Contributed to the Cross-border Future Industry Workforce Forum with over 120 delegates from across industry, business, RDA and all levels of government to discuss emerging workforce opportunities in renewable energy, mineral sands mining and irrigated horticulture for the cross-border region of North West Victoria, South West NSW and North East South Australia
- Working with members of the Mildura Hydrogen Technology Cluster (part of the Mallee Regional Innovation Centre – MRIC), the Mallee RP prepared proposals for projects that utilise green hydrogen including hydrogen-fuelled trucks on the Adelaide to Mildura route and the production of ammonium fertilisers for domestic use
- Undertook work to investigate least-cost freight solutions for the Mallee region. The Mallee RP continues to progress the establishment of a platform for future higher productivity freight planning and investment across the region
- Participated in the Swan Hill Bricks and Mortar Housing Summit in November 2023, engaging on issues related to the provision of affordable, sustainable and inclusive housing and a focus on the emerging workforce in the Swan Hill region.



95,226

Population
(2023)



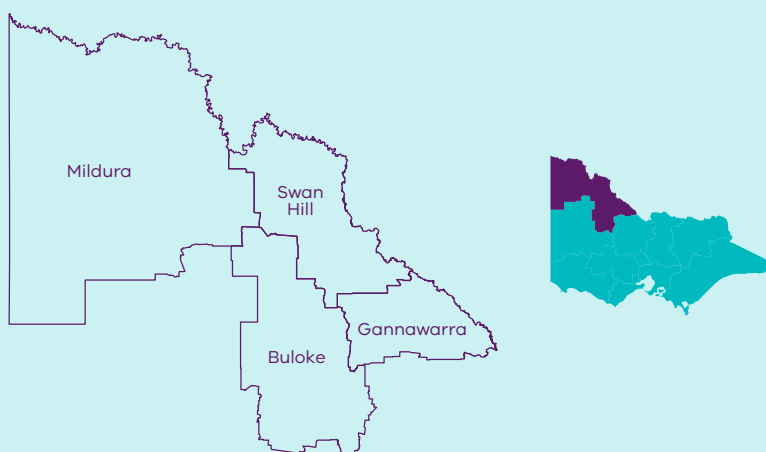
4.5%

Population growth
(2023–2036)



\$6.3B

Gross Regional Product
(2023)





CASE STUDY

Tri-State Economic Zone (TSEZ)

The Mallee region is Victoria's only tri-state region, bordering New South Wales to the north and South Australia to the west, creating economic and social flows that stretch well beyond the Victorian state borders.

Following a range of engagement activities during the development of the REDS, the Mallee RP mapped the substantial economic activity and opportunities of the region's cross-border zone. The project identified transformational investments that will drive economic and social impacts for the region. Working closely with stakeholders, the Mallee RP and Loddon Mallee RDA are leading a collaborative effort to better understand opportunities to collaborate to realise these investment opportunities.

The Mallee RP will continue to work with all levels of government, partners in the Department of Regional NSW, RDA committees, cross-border commissioners, local councils and industry to explore the benefits of a TSEZ to ensure a prosperous economic future for the region.

Loddon Campaspe

The Loddon Campaspe RP in Central Victoria has a diverse population and a buoyant economy based on agriculture, retail, health and manufacturing.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- **Regional Employment and Innovation Corridor development** – Support regional scale economic growth planning to support the region's growing industry and employment base
- **Digital Futures** – Ensure digital economy advancement as a key enabler for growth across the region
- **Bendigo Youth Foyer** – Create a youth foyer which would provide dedicated accommodation to meet an urgent and enduring need for young people who become homeless, or who are leaving care into homelessness and experiencing high levels of disengagement, lacking specific facilities to support learning.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Supported the Loddon Mallee Housing Leadership Group to deliver a more holistic joint partnership to facilitate improved planning and investment thinking across all levels of government on place-based housing opportunities
- Continued to lead and support the region's priorities in skills development, placing seed funding and resources into establishing the Tourism and Hospitality Skills Roadmap Report
- Collaborated closely with the members of the Bendigo Education Plan to extend the existing Health Skills Roadmap into Stage 2. This involved updating priorities with key employers such as Bendigo Health and providing support to the Northern Victoria Education Partnership's Victorian Skills Authority funded project 'Aligning Health & Care Education in Northern Victoria'

- Hosted the Bendigo Digital Summit in partnership with Loddon Mallee RDA attracting over 260 participants to discuss how to progress regional connectivity skills and capability
- Continued to broker partnerships, develop concepts and create investment opportunities for the deployment of a Regional Digital Hub – a partnership between private and public sectors across multiple tiers of government. The hub also provides an opportunity to leverage local partnerships such as the newly-established La Trobe University and Deloitte partnership
- Held a highly successful Regional Growth Summit in preparation for Plan for Victoria announcements. Outcomes included the development of a joint proposal to focus on key precincts and activity centres in the region and investigating transit-orientated development opportunities along the rail corridor aligned to integrated asset planning across the region utilising the Digital Twin Victoria platform
- Supported DJAARA to successfully obtain investment to progress renewable energy opportunities (policy focus)
- Progressed outcomes from the 2023 Regional Climate Summit held in Castlemaine (130 participants)
- Brokered partnerships and supported recommendations for better understanding of energy transition with regional-scale projects that support VicGrid and REZ Community Benefits discussion areas.



257,290

Population
(2023)



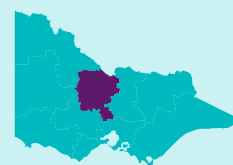
16.7%

Population growth
(2023–2036)



\$15.7B

Gross Regional Product
(2023)





CASE STUDY

Supporting community-led governance for GMID economic transition

RDV Hume and RDV Loddon Mallee continued to support the Goulburn Murray Resilience Taskforce. This community and industry-led taskforce works across government and regional stakeholders to embed the principles of resilience and adaptation outlined in the Goulburn Murray Resilience Strategy, and to implement interventions that address economic transition in the GMID.

A key achievement of the Resilience Taskforce was a joint meeting of the Loddon Mallee and Goulburn RPs where the committees collaboratively identified economic drivers for change and areas for interventions, such as support for Traditional Owner self-determination, water and energy transition options and worker housing that supports the long-term prosperity of this highly productive and nationally-significant agrifood region. The Resilience Taskforce was recently featured in an international study on community-led governance presented at GO GREEN Partner Conference, 1-3 May 2024. It was also highlighted as a case study at an international symposium in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Gippsland

In 2023-24, the Gippsland RP built upon the work undertaken the previous year to progress its priorities around workforce housing solutions, migration attraction and retention, and the transition to clean energy.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- **Improve workforce housing solutions** – Ensure that the region has accessible and affordable accommodation for its growing workforce
- **Attract and retain migrants across Gippsland** – Ensure community buy-in for a migration attraction and retention plan
- **Understand and support Gippsland's energy transition** – Focus on opportunities that the energy transition will bring to the region.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Engaged local consultant Aerium Pty Ltd to run a 3-month series of workshops and interviews with over 50 Gippsland industry stakeholders to capture insights and experiences of regional housing and deepen the understanding of workforce housing challenges. The resulting Gippsland Workforce Housing Review detailed findings from these engagements and provided a summary of proposed solutions to improve workforce housing outcomes. These valuable insights informed planning for Round 1 of the Regional Worker Accommodation Fund
- Worked with Federation University's Collaborative Evaluation & Research Centre to progress our migration attraction and retention priority. This project laid the groundwork to establish a regional vision and ensure community buy-in for a migration attraction and retention plan. Federation University delivered 2 stages of engagements. The first captured the lived experience of migrants in Gippsland and the second workshopped the themes identified in the first stage. Findings will be reported back to the Gippsland RP in August 2024 for further consideration and action

- Welcomed the Deputy Secretary of Energy, Elizabeth Molyneux onto the Gippsland RP as the Victorian Government senior representative. Her participation has strengthened the Gippsland RP's focus on energy transition opportunities for Gippsland and has instigated quarterly energy briefings to gain insights and provide feedback on the progress of Victoria's energy transition
- Participated in consultations with VicGrid regarding the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework and Community Benefits Sharing to ensure the community's voice is heard
- Participated in an MBA showcase in August 2023, which acknowledged the Gippsland RP's role in providing scholarships to Gippsland students to strengthen leadership and access to opportunities in the region
- Collaborated with local council CEOs through dedicated out-of-session conversations to build upon existing relationships and buy-in
- Participated in a reconciliation workshop delivered by Reconciliation Australia and reported back to the group to strengthen understanding and awareness around reconciliation and self-determination
- Sponsored the 2023 Gippsland New Energy Conference.



307,653

Population
(2023)



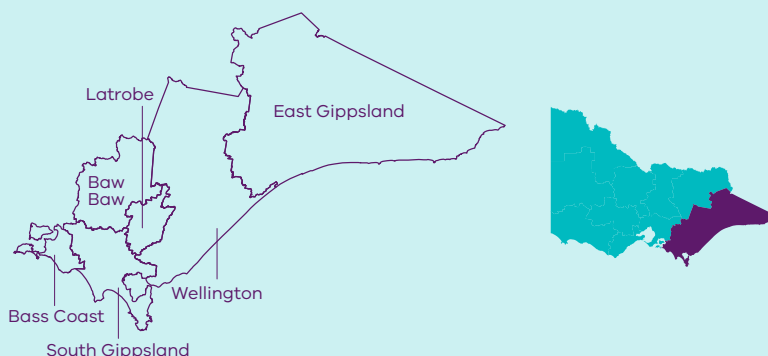
16.2%

Population growth
(2023–2036)



\$22.5B

Gross Regional Product
(2023)





CASE STUDY

Walking together: Reconciliation and Treaty readiness in Gippsland

The Gippsland RP has deepened its commitment to and awareness of the opportunities and challenges facing Gippsland in relation to reconciliation and Treaty readiness over the past year. The Gippsland RP has embedded the ethos of respecting and recognising Traditional Owners and Aboriginal People through their journey towards self-determination into their work and advocacy.

In August 2023, representatives of the Gippsland RP attended a workshop run by Reconciliation Australia in Morwell hosted by Federation University. The attendees reported back to the Gippsland RP, sharing resources and prompting deeper consideration around reconciliation, the Uluru Statement from the Heart, the Voice Referendum and how to be a good ally.

Following on from this, in February 2024, the Chair of Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), Troy McDonald, gave a presentation to the Gippsland RP on Treaty readiness in Gippsland, alongside GLaWAC CEO and partnership member, Daniel Miller. Troy highlighted the significant work that has occurred to establish the required architecture for successful Treaty negotiations and discussed the opportunity to work together to create positive outcomes for the whole community. The Gippsland RP is committed to building upon this work to support positive outcomes for Gippsland's First Nations communities.

Regional Development Australia

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees are a national network made up of local people creating local economic opportunities.

In Victoria, RDA Committees are unincorporated advisory bodies supported by RDV. Amongst the 6 RDA committees – Barwon South West, Gippsland, Grampians, Hume, Loddon Mallee and Melbourne – there is close collaboration with the RPs, 3 tiers of government and relevant place-based authorities to solve challenges and harness opportunities for economic growth.

The Victorian RDA initiative has a strong network of chairs who meet regularly throughout the year to advance state-wide issues impacting regional and rural Victoria. RDA chairs, with the support of RDV, have been effective in developing submissions, providing strategic advice to government and supporting regional investment attraction.

In 2023-24, RDV supported Victoria's RDA Committees to deliver a work program which supported 4 state-wide themes:

- Key worker housing
- Transitioning to renewable energy
- Skilled workforce
- Digital connectivity.

Highlights

- Advocated to the Victorian and Australian governments for key worker housing and continued to build the evidence base to support housing investment in regional Victoria
- Provided a regional and rural voice for housing challenges and the challenges associated with attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, informing policy development
- Facilitated the opportunity for RDA to support renewable energy transition in the regions, analysing the ecosystem that supports the transition to renewable energy and its associated opportunities
- Provided regional insights and advice for supporting settlement and retention of skilled migrants
- Aligned workforce needs with targeted skills in regions, in particular supporting training and qualification of planners
- Advocated for alternative operational and delivery models of childcare to address access and availability in areas where childcare is unviable to operate, supporting more people to engage in work
- Identified digital opportunities to support productivity and innovation through the development of 9 innovation profiles
- Continued to support regional Victoria by promoting the awareness and opportunities of Australian Government programs, working closely with proponents
- Supported the delivery of a state-wide project which drew on subject matter expertise from a consortium of education providers led by CSIRO, and in partnership with RDV. The project aimed to accelerate strategic food and fibre opportunities with regional stakeholders, industry and across government
- Appointed a project director to lead the RIAP on behalf of all RDA regions. Progressed 7 projects within the funding available, with completed reports submitted 30 June 2024. These projects will set up opportunities for regional innovation, investment attraction, jobs creation, and workforce and skills development in the next financial year.



BARWON SOUTH WEST

Renewable hydrogen and energy investment opportunity

In 2023-24, RDA Barwon South West successfully advanced the region's renewable energy potential through the Barwon South West Renewable Hydrogen and Energy Investment Opportunity project.

Funded by RDA Barwon South West and delivered by Deakin University's Hycel Technology Hub and the Centre for Regional and Rural Futures on behalf of RDV, the project assessed the region's potential for renewable hydrogen and energy investment.

The project mapped existing and planned renewable hydrogen and energy projects across public and private sectors, resulting in a comprehensive regional snapshot. The findings from the mapping exercise indicated a significant deployment of renewable energy projects in the Barwon South West region.

The report also highlighted the potential for relevant regional development entities and Victorian Government institutions to take on leadership roles in progressing the recommendations to enable investments and maximise their benefits.

RDA Barwon South West remains dedicated to advancing growth and innovation by continuing to collaborate with key stakeholders to progress renewable energy opportunities in the region.

GIPPSLAND

South Gippsland and Latrobe City Renewable Energy Impact and Readiness Study

In 2023-24, RDA Gippsland extended its focus on the critical theme of 'Creators of a New Economy.' It identified the importance of broadening its work on the Wellington Renewable Energy Impact and Readiness Study completed in 2022-23 to deliver a tailored plan for South Gippsland and Latrobe City, due to the geographical significance of both local government areas as the region transitions from traditional to new energy opportunities. Additionally, the RDA invested in a study to understand the potential benefits of the overflow of commercial growth in the southeastern corridor.

RDA Gippsland provided \$50,000 from the Regional Partnership Development Fund to fund this extension work, based on the framework of the well-received Wellington Renewable Energy Impact and Readiness Study. Now complete, the South Gippsland and Latrobe City Renewable Energy Impact and Readiness Study provides the context upon which to strategically plan for long-term renewable energy investment, with a view to optimise the economic benefits and mitigate challenges.

The study highlights the need to plan for urban land supply and how to meet supply chain requirements as they relate to business, labour and housing. It was developed in partnership with South Gippsland Shire Council and Latrobe City Council, renewable energy proponents, local water authorities and energy suppliers. Draft action plans to address each of the identified themes were developed and will be reviewed and adopted by each council by the end of 2024.

GRAMPIANS

Digital mobile roaming

RDA Grampians continues to advocate for domestic mobile roaming, particularly critical in remote areas in the event of an emergency. The committee engaged a public relations firm to assist in this advocacy campaign.

In 2023, the ACCC released the final report which resoundingly supported substantial advancements in the pursuit of mobile roaming. It underscored the feasibility and necessity of mobile roaming and recommended both government and industry collaborate to establish frameworks and protocols with mobile network operators for the seamless initiation and deactivation of temporary mobile roaming.

This development will undoubtedly save lives and create a significant shift in Australian telecommunications policy.

In 2024, Telstra released a statement advising that it had been working with all network providers to develop a temporary disaster roaming (TDR) solution. The solution it investigated would enable mobile roaming between networks within a localised area during natural disasters, for a short, specified duration. Simulation testing has been conducted with successful results.

The Australian Government's Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts and the National Emergency Management Agency were jointly tasked with scoping TDR capability. RDA Grampians provided commentary on the TDR scoping report provided to the Australian Government.

RDA Grampians will continue its advocacy and collaboration with other RDAs across Australia to support the implementation of TDR and increase telecommunications equality for all regional and rural Australians. It is a great example of the strength of combined advocacy to achieve a national impact.

HUME

Falls Creek landslip recovery

RDA Hume successfully lobbied the Victorian Government to provide \$2.9 million in support to Falls Creek businesses impacted by a major landslip that dramatically isolated the resort in October 2022.

Following heavy rain, a landslip measuring 100 metres wide and 70 metres high cut off the main road to the village and resort — which is a major tourist destination in Victoria's high country.

This prevented the village from being accessed by visitors during the peak of the summer 'green season' and reduced residents to a 6-hour round-trip via a 4-wheel drive track for supplies, medical attention, etc.

One of 5 popular alpine resorts within Hume, Falls Creek is a critical part of the region's economy and a key platform for RDA Hume's strategic focus of growing the region's tourism.

The landslip resulted in \$64 million in lost expenditure from the expected 90,700 visitors and workers unable to access Falls Creek for recreation or to deliver infrastructure works over the summer construction period.

RDA Hume utilised its place-based intelligence on the scale of the impact on businesses and the community to advocate to the Victorian and Australian Governments about the significance of the event and the inability of affected businesses to access support through existing emergency funding packages due to its unique nature.

RDA Hume heavily advocated on behalf of the Falls Creek community across the Victorian Government and was successful in securing financial support for the region to prevent business closures and further job losses. Members of the RDA Hume Committee were at the forefront of urging the Victorian Government to repair the road as quickly as possible to restore the economic viability of tourism and hospitality operators in the region.

Both lanes of the Alpine Tourist Road opened late May 2024 assisting to accelerate the recovery of the local economy across the Hume region.

LODDON MALLEE

Loddon Mallee Housing Leadership Group

Building upon the recommendations of Loddon Mallee Housing Action Plan, a previous RDA project, RDA Loddon Mallee, in partnership with all local government areas within the region, created the Loddon Mallee Housing Coordinator role and convened the Loddon Mallee Housing Leadership Group.

The first output of this initiative after appointing the coordinator, was identifying opportunities to accelerate social and affordable housing opportunities in the region. The work builds upon and ties into the Victorian Government's Housing Statement and the REDS and will add value to work occurring across the Victorian Government.

MELBOURNE

Regional Business Innovation Profiles

In 2023-24, RDA Melbourne continued to build on its capital city RDA mandate by assisting Victorian regional RDAs to realise their strategic directions, investigate collaborative opportunities and develop projects to benefit the Victorian community.

RDA Melbourne supported a project to better understand innovation across different parts of the state. The funding provided by RDA Melbourne was augmented with additional funding from RDV.

The objectives of the project were to provide a deeper understanding of innovation activities undertaken by Victorian businesses and provide an overview of what innovation looks like across each of the 9 RP regions and Greater Melbourne. This included an analysis of the different barriers and drivers of innovation at a geo-spatial level.

The Regional Business Innovation Profiles provide a summary of the information collected from innovation activities at a place-based level from the following sources:

- DJSIR Regional Victoria Innovation Analysis
- 2023 Victorian Innovation Survey
- Analysis of the ABS Business Characteristics Survey and insights from focus group discussions in each region
- A workshop held with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to test findings against global trends.

Recommendations have been put forward to support further advancements in productivity, digital adaptation, skill development and continuous improvement – all characteristics of a strong innovation system.

Phase 2 of this project will examine how innovation hubs and their relationship with regional businesses can be further optimised. This will be undertaken in 2025.

Cross Border Commissioner: Asking the border question

Throughout 2023-24, Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner actively supported border communities by advocating on their behalf across the government.



Brett Davis assumed the role of Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner in February 2024, succeeding the inaugural Commissioner, Luke Wilson, who retired from the Victorian Public Service. Brett operates from RDV's Portland Office and regularly travels across the state.

In the Commissioner's first 100 days he:

- travelled over 13,000 kilometres, the equivalent of completing a trip around Australia
- visited numerous cross-border communities, from Nelson in the southwest to Murrayville, Mildura, Wodonga and Tallangatta in the northeast
- engaged with hundreds of individuals in border regions, including local government officials, health services staff, emergency responders, commerce groups and community members.

The commissioner prioritised community and stakeholder engagement, seeking firsthand insights into the unique challenges faced by cross-border communities. Building on the work from the outgoing commissioner, the work throughout the year included:

- advocating for the extension of Victoria's Free Teaching Scholarship program to cover border residents studying in neighbouring states
- assisting government agencies in considering cross-border impacts when making decisions to prevent or reduce anomalies
- focusing on key cross-border priorities, such as road rule information for young drivers, vocational education access and improved grant program access for border communities

- ensuring explicit provisions for isolated border communities within government programs
- collaborating with the NSW Cross Border Commissioner to renew the Memorandum of Understanding for cross-border Collaboration between Victoria and NSW
- exploring opportunities for further collaboration with the South Australia Cross Border Commissioner.

Additionally, the commissioner hosted forums, including events in Mildura for health service providers from Victoria, NSW and South Australia, as well as joint meetings of local government leaders in Albury Wodonga, South East South Australia and South West Victoria.

The commissioner's initial findings highlight increased interest in economic zones that could facilitate synchronised regulatory controls and create additional opportunities for thriving border communities. Synchronised regulatory controls could create a more harmonious and conducive environment for economic development, trade and community wellbeing in border areas.

He actively participated in Victoria's emergency management structures, providing input on cross-border impacts during the 2024 Victorian Avian Influenza emergency.

Geelong City Deal

The \$676.15 million Geelong City Deal (GCD) is a 10-year partnership between all 3 levels of government working with industry, community, the private sector and First Peoples to revitalise Geelong and unlock the potential of the Great Ocean Road economy.

The 2023-24 financial year marks the fifth year of GCD delivery, with 14 of 32 projects now complete and its 2 major projects (the \$449.1 million Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre (GCEC) and the \$126.42 million Twelve Apostles Precinct Redevelopment) both on track for completion in 2026.

Key achievements in 2023-24

First Peoples partnerships

Building strong and meaningful relationships with First Peoples continued to be a key priority for the GCD. With the help of GCD-dedicated funding, the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC) is leading the first 2 stages of developing the Wadawurrung Urban Design Guidelines, which once complete, will ensure Wadawurrung Traditional Owner cultural values and knowledge can be embedded into the built form and public realm within Central Geelong.

The GCD's partnership with the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) recognises Eastern Maar's ongoing connection and intrinsic relationship with Country and will ensure that First Peoples culture is at the forefront of project design, delivery and future outcomes. In October 2023, EMAC appointed a project coordinator to support its collaboration on the Twelve Apostles Precinct Redevelopment and the Great Ocean Road projects on Eastern Maar Country.





Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre

GCD's flagship major project, the Nyaal Banyul GCEC made significant progress in 2023-24. Construction works commenced and the project, one of regional Victoria's largest, is on track for completion in 2026.

Nyaal Banyul GCEC is being delivered as an innovative Public Private Partnership that is transforming the Geelong Waterfront Precinct, driving significant economic, social and cultural growth for the whole city and broader Geelong region.

In August 2023, the WTOAC gifted the name of Nyaal Banyul to GCEC. This name is returning Wadawurrung language to Country at a site that was originally used for gatherings known as 'baier.' The name Nyaal Banyul means 'open your eyes to the hills.'

In December 2023, a formal Partnerships Victoria agreement was signed between the Victorian Government and private sector, appointing Plenary Conventions to develop the project. Plenary Conventions has confirmed an initial investment of \$120 million to secure what will be Geelong's largest hotel, with a further \$130 million earmarked to create a mixed-use development within the precinct at a later date.

Twelve Apostles Precinct Redevelopment

The GCD is delivering \$126.42 million of investment in priority projects along the Shipwreck Coast including the Twelve Apostles Precinct Redevelopment.

Development Victoria is managing the project, and together with Grimshaw Architects, is working in partnership with the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCAPA) and EMAC on co-design and delivery.

In May 2024, the Victorian Government announced an additional \$18 million investment in the project as it moves towards construction phase. A request for proposal (RFP) for shortlisted builders opened in June 2024 with a head contractor anticipated to be appointed in the 2024-25 financial year.

The centrepiece of the project will be the construction of a world-class new visitor experience centre along with supporting infrastructure and amenities. This will strengthen the region as a leading tourist destination and support economic benefits to flow to local communities.

The GCD's Shipwreck Coast Priority Projects commitment also includes a further 4 projects announced in 2024 under the Private Sector Business Enablement Fund (PSBEF). These include the construction of the Power Street footbridge in Timboon, enabling infrastructure at the Villas Anglesea Golf Club, expansion of the Apollo Bay Fishermen's Cooperative building, and safety and accessibility improvements to the intersection adjacent to the Apostle Whey Cheese Factory. The PSBEF will leverage over \$150 million in private sector investment.

Progress of other GCD projects underway in 2023-24

Significant progress was made across the remaining GCD projects, including completion of the Green Spine – Block 3 (southside), the Geelong Arts and Culture Precinct Public Realm Improvements and the Deakin University Geelong Future Economy Precinct Road Upgrade.

Other key project progress in 2023-24 included:

- **Moolap Management Masterplan** – appointed a consultant to complete the environmental management masterplan with work progressing
- **Apollo Bay Harbour Redevelopment** – appointed a head consultant to work with the community and key stakeholders including EMAC, the Apollo Bay Fishermen's Co-operative and the Community Reference Group, to help inform and prepare a draft precinct plan
- **Point Grey Redevelopment, Lorne** – appointed NMBW Architecture Studio to develop a revised masterplan for the precinct, working closely with community and key stakeholders
- **Improvements to tourism infrastructure at Kennett River** – appointed a community reference group that will support the delivery of an updated precinct plan following a range of engagement activities in 2023.

Council Support Package

The Council Support Package supports local councils across all Victorian regions to invest in projects that will create long-lasting value for their communities.

The package had 2 streams of funding support:

Stream 1

Set funding for cities that are major regional hubs, including Greater Geelong, Greater Bendigo, City of Ballarat, City of Latrobe and Greater Shepparton.

Stream 2

A competitive funding stream open to Victoria's other rural and regional councils. The fund aims to help eligible councils deliver projects and activities that:

- drive visitation to the regions
- create better public spaces for socialising and hosting events
- empower volunteers
- strengthen businesses and communities
- promote Traditional Owner culture, participation and leadership.

By supporting these projects, the fund will deliver lasting economic, social, environmental, sporting and wellbeing benefits for regional and rural Victorians.

Tiny Towns Fund

The Tiny Towns Fund supports local communities to deliver quality tourism and community facility projects, such as local sporting club overhauls, playgrounds, community halls, walking tracks and more.

The Tiny Towns Fund is a four year program, with Round 1 delivered in 2023–24.

Towns with a population of up to 5,000 people in the 48 LGAs of regional Victoria are eligible to apply, as well as alpine resorts and Melbourne's 10 interface outer-metropolitan LGAs.

In June 2024 successful Round 1 projects were announced. A total of 188 Tiny Towns Fund projects were supported across regional Victoria, allocating \$6.1 million of funding. A maximum grant amount of \$50,000 per town was allocated to enable a geographic distribution of funding across all parts of regional Victoria.

A second round of the Tiny Towns Fund is to open in 2024–25.

Regional Worker Accommodation Fund

The \$150 million Regional Worker Accommodation Fund provides new housing and accommodation for regional communities where workers in key industries and their families are struggling to find places to live.

The fund assists employers to attract and retain workers by supporting projects that create more affordable housing and accommodation. This stimulates economic growth and supports our regions to thrive.

The fund supports the delivery of housing, accommodation and related infrastructure across all Victorian rural and regional LGAs. It will be funded over 3 years and began in 2023–24.





Natural disaster relief

RDV played an important role connecting businesses and communities to information and support during and after natural disasters across Victoria in 2023-24.

Through our Tiny Towns Fund we invested \$200,000 to enable South Gippsland Shire Council to establish a Mirboo North Community and Business Resilience Hub and to support the Mirboo North Winterfest event.

The funding helped to support community recovery and resilience activities following an extreme storm event. It assisted the community of Mirboo North with emergency food supplies and maintaining medical and telecommunication devices. The hub facility provides off-grid solar panels, a satellite link and the installation of emergency cold storage.

To assist with natural disaster recovery, we have provided \$200,000 to Ararat Rural City Council through the Tiny Towns Fund. This was to establish a community hub for Pomonal's 300 residents that were impacted by a bushfire. Locals were able to access support and disaster-relief assistance under one roof in the hub located at the Pomonal Community Hall. The community is supporting its own recovery through the hub, that includes hosting community meetings and events. Tools and equipment to assist with bushfire recovery were purchased from the Tiny Towns funding allocation to help the cleanup effort at properties and public spaces.

Regional report Barwon South West



Regional Director's report

Brett Ince

Regional Director, Barwon South West

Despite being the smallest of Victoria's regions geographically, Barwon South West has the largest population (453,569) and the largest economy (235,883 jobs).

Diversification activities in Portland continued with 5 tranches of projects processed and a further \$7 million of potential projects under development.

Working closely with the Geelong Priority Precincts team, the Nyaal Banyul GCEC and the Twelve Apostles Precinct Redevelopment are advancing. These projects show the success of a partnership model across 3 levels of government, industry, community, private sector and First Peoples.

We developed a business case and masterplan for a new cultural and tourism hub collaborating with Traditional Owners across the region including the Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation. Gunditj Mirring's Budj Bim cultural visitor experiences development is being designed, with new experiences planned for Lake Condah and the Tae Rak Traps.

Our support of GORCAPA is delivering better protection and management of the iconic coast and parks of Victoria's Great Ocean Road. The Apollo Bay Recreation Reserve Masterplan was finalised and will be advancing further next year.



RDA Barwon South West supported a project to map existing and planned renewable hydrogen and energy projects across public and private sectors, resulting in a comprehensive regional snapshot.

Our team liaised with advanced manufacturing tenants at ManuFutures, Hycel Technology Hub as they continue developing practical hydrogen technologies, products and pathways to support the transition to a zero emissions future. Camperdown Production Precinct Masterplan advanced its work in adding sustainable value to the food and fibre sector. Both of these are groundbreaking initiatives in their respective areas.

Partnering with local councils to unlock housing projects in Terang, Simpson and Timboon, and the Colac and Elliminyt Wetlands project are changing the way land is developed to improve housing outcomes for our region. This year the Barwon Regional Partnership developed a proposal for governments to consider investing in Geelong Region Priority Precincts as a mechanism for the planning and delivery of 10 priority precincts to address housing and transport needs.

We value our relationships with key stakeholders across private industry, local government and community and look forward to delivering further prosperity together in the year ahead.

Regional highlights

- Revitalised the historic Fyansford Paper Mill by regenerating the sewer system. The Arts and Cultural Precinct currently has 20 tenants. It received \$1 million in support from the Regional Infrastructure Fund. Eliminating the need for on-site septic tanks and frequent waste trucking significantly improved public toilet facilities and site safety. This enhanced infrastructure has the potential to unlock private investment for the precinct
- Supported the commencement of construction for a restaurant and art gallery at Oakdene's Lighthouse with over \$2 million in investment from the Regional Tourism Investment Fund. Set in beautiful gardens overlooking the vineyards, olive grove and Swan Bay, these new facilities, complement the existing cellar door. This investment is expected to attract wine, food and art enthusiasts, further enhancing the Bellarine as a sought-after tourist destination
- Progressed works to upgrade infrastructure and the nature reserve at Tower Hill in partnership with Parks Victoria and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation. The \$6.7 million project includes conservation works for the Robin Boyd-designed visitor centre and upgrades to amenities. Other upgrades include enhanced trails, a new viewing platform and signage to celebrate Eastern Maar's connection to Koroitj – a significant Aboriginal cultural site. An upgraded dance ground with a new shelter will support cultural events and celebrations by Traditional Owner communities. The project is on track for completion in the second half of 2024
- Supported the delivery of a new trail connecting the townships of Timboon and Port Campbell, linking with the Camperdown Timboon Rail Trail to create a continuous route for biking and hiking enthusiasts. This connectivity has driven increased visitor numbers across all age groups and abilities, benefiting local businesses along the trail and in townships. Since completion, private sector investment has enhanced economic activity in Port Campbell and Timboon. The trail has also encouraged more residents and visitors to choose active transport options, promoting better health, wellbeing and safety. Funded through the Pandemic Crisis Committee of Cabinet Infrastructure Stimulus program with \$4.5 million, the project has delivered tangible economic and community benefits to the region.

Key outcomes

Geelong and Surf Coast Laundry

Supported Geelong and Surf Coast Laundry to improve efficiency and boost employment with the installation of a new high-tech ironing line and towel folders, along with a semi-automatic sorting system. The new machinery will improve staff production and efficiency by more than 40%, while significantly reducing staff fatigue. Since it was commissioned, the company has already hired 8 new staff and secured 6 new clients.

Mount Duneed Estate accommodation

Supported construction of 8 boutique, private luxury one-bedroom pods at the iconic Mt Duneed Estate. With \$259,133 from the Regional Tourism Investment Fund, the accommodation supports a growing function and events precinct, including music festival 'A Day on the Green,' encouraging longer visitor stays in the region.

Geelong Waterfront Safe Harbour Precinct

Achieved significant progress on the upgraded Royal Geelong Yacht Club with construction commencing on the Maritime Education Complex building – a shared-use facility between the Victorian Sailing School and the Royal Geelong Yacht Club. Previous upgrades and current construction have improved safety, capacity, access and now education for members and the public.

St Leonards Memorial Hall: Main hall floor refurbishment

Supported the historic 1926 St Leonards Memorial Hall with a flooring upgrade to improve safety and expand community activities, enabling the hall to attract new users and hirers. The improved facilities will increase community engagement and expand the range of events held at the hall for better economic and social outcomes for the region.

Dunkeld Visitor Hub and Grampians Peak Trailhead

Delivered the Dunkeld Visitor Hub and Grampians Peak Trailhead backed by a \$450,000 grant from the Regional Infrastructure Fund. The development includes a covered platform, town-themed landscaping, improved parking and a safer pedestrian crossing. Enhanced pathways, wayfinding and interpretive signs now seamlessly connect the trailhead, information centre, public toilets and memorial park, boosting tourism and enriching the visitor experience.

Penshurst Volcanoes Discovery Centre upgrade

Completed the upgrade of the Penshurst Volcanoes Discovery Centre with a \$290,000 grant from the Regional Tourism Investment Fund. This transformation has enhanced the visitor experience, connecting people with scientific, geological and historic interests in a unique way. Completed in June 2024, the project includes refurbished displays, contemporary digital solutions, a revitalised education space and outdoor geological interpretation areas with learning spaces, rest areas, landscaping, and purpose-designed tables and seating. These improvements are expected to attract more visitors and deepen their understanding of the volcanic landscapes surrounding Penshurst.

Cape Bridgewater Foreshore Masterplan implementation

Supported the Glenelg Council to deliver the Cape Bridgewater Foreshore Masterplan implementation, focused on enhancing the natural environment and aesthetics of the location while ensuring visitor safety and minimising environmental impact. The \$1.5 million project preserves natural habitats and ecosystems such as sand dunes with erosion-combating revetment installations. It includes strategically placed all-abilities beach access points to minimise foot traffic in sensitive areas. Upgrades to carparks and drainage systems control water runoff and reduce erosion. The works feature extensive native vegetation plantings and signage designed in conjunction with Birdlife Australia to educate visitors on the presence of protected hooded plovers and how to avoid beach nesting areas.

Portland H2 Hydrogen Hub

The Portland Diversification Fund supported Portland H2, a subsidiary of HAMR Energy which received \$500,000 towards a feasibility study to establish a plant to convert plantation forestry residue to green methanol for use as shipping fuel. The project will determine if the investment is viable and could attract more than \$800 million investment into Portland, creating 80 long-term jobs and up to another 200 during construction. The study is an important step in assisting the renewable hydrogen and sustainable fuels sectors to work towards Victoria's energy transition targets.

Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation Business Case and Masterplan

Supported Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation (WMAC) to develop a business case and masterplan to be investment-ready for a cultural and tourism hub, art retail space, café, native nursery and a home for WMAC-Budj Bim-employed rangers. The planning works, with the backing of \$40,000 from the Enabling Tourism Fund, identified the opportunity to leverage the UNESCO-listed Budj Bim Cultural Landscape to increase tourism activity in the region by creating a cultural and tourism hub.

Energy Hydraulics Scoping Study

Continued support of Energy Hydraulics Ltd to undertake a scoping study into establishing a manufacturing facility in Portland that would produce wave generators and reverse osmosis water supply units. Backed by the Portland Diversification Fund, the \$232,000 grant will determine if the investment can move forward to create up to 80 jobs and sustain more than 40 ongoing jobs post-completion, while bolstering Portland's manufacturing industry and creating exports for South Pacific markets.



Regional report Gippsland



Regional Director's report

Sara Rhodes-Ward

Regional Director, Gippsland

The Gippsland region has a proud history as Victoria's foremost energy producer however the energy landscape is changing. Carbon-intensive industries are undergoing significant transition and new industries are emerging. This year, the awarding of offshore wind feasibility licences affirmed our continuing significance in Australia's energy system. As a region we understand that the energy transition will bring opportunity and that our experience in energy production, workforce skills and existing transmission infrastructure is an area of unique advantage.

With energy at the core of our activities this year, RDA Gippsland supported South Gippsland Shire Council and Latrobe City Council to develop a Renewable Energy Impact and Readiness Study. The main driver of the project was the need to understand and strategically plan for long-term renewable energy investment to optimise economic benefits and mitigate any potential issues or barriers to facilitation and delivery.

The RDV Gippsland team is grateful to have had the opportunity to work with GunaiKurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation on economic projects that support employment and prosperity for Traditional Owners. The Wangun Amphitheatre has created a beautiful permanent space to yarn, heal, teach, celebrate and share cultural knowledge and stories. It provides an opportunity for visitors to learn about Aboriginal culture through storytelling and knowledge sharing, fostering mutual understanding and respect. We have further supported the development of a business case for Gunya Yanakie Nanjet Brataualung (Nanjat), a proposed world-class cultural-immersion destination at Yanakie, on the doorstep of Wilsons Promontory.



In February, a severe storm hit the picturesque town of Mirboo North with devastating effect. The courage, resilience and mobilisation of the Mirboo North volunteer community was remarkable and efforts to recover and support cohesion remain ongoing. The government was proud to provide support from the Tiny Towns Fund program, enabling the 2024 Mirboo North Winterfest to proceed as a fully-funded community event. Energy resilience will be improved moving forward with the development of the Business and Community Resilience Hub, providing power for charging essential devices and remaining digitally connected.

The RDV Gippsland team remains committed to working with our partners across the region. We thank our partners, industry, businesses and stakeholders for a year of collaboration and partnership and look forward to continuing to work together to deliver positive outcomes in the region.

Regional highlights

- In July 2023, the Victorian Government established the Gippsland Supply Chain Resilience Program (GSCR) to support supply chain businesses impacted by changes to white paper manufacturing in Gippsland. With a focus on small-to-medium enterprises, its objectives are to develop new opportunities and strengthen resilience to industry sector changes. Eligible businesses can access up to \$20,000 to engage qualified service providers for business resilience assessment and planning, and for plan implementation
- Since the launch of the GSCR in March 2024, 75 Victorian businesses have been engaged by the RDV program team. Of these, 23 are now progressing through eligibility assessments for potential grant applications. The delivery of business resilience plans will continue through to June 2025
- Progressing delivery of the Regional Car Parks Fund (RCPF) program. In total 900 spaces will be delivered in the Latrobe Valley, of which 245 car spaces (101 in Moe and 144 in Morwell) have opened for public use and 655 are in planning with construction due to commence in 2025 for completion by mid-2026
- Completed the \$1.88 million Wangun Amphitheatre project, funded through the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund, the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program and Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC). It includes an outdoor all-weather amphitheatre and yarning circle for the community. Gunaikurnai people can now hold cultural education programs and perform ceremonies at the Forestec site at Kalimna
- Progressing the Gunya Yanakie Nanjet Brataualung project with a detailed feasibility study, business case, conceptual designs and investment prospectus to support the sequenced activity to achieve the vision for a premiere cultural immersion destination at Yanakie. The project aligns with GLaWAC's Aboriginal Economic Self-determination Strategy to enhance economic resilience and independence.

Key outcomes

Support following the storm event in February 2024

A grant of \$200,000 was provided to South Gippsland Shire Council after a significant storm caused major damage and power outages in Gippsland in early 2024.

The grant will establish a community and business resilience hub to ensure locals have emergency food supplies, can charge medical devices and access communication services in storms, bushfires and other severe events. The 2024 Mirboo Winterfest went ahead with \$20,000 from the \$200,000 grant. The event provided a much-needed economic uplift in the town and fostered community connection and support recovery.

Latrobe Magnesium – contributor to the net zero economy

Latrobe Magnesium Limited (LML) received Victorian Government financial assistance through the Regional Jobs Fund to facilitate a \$49 million investment in the first stage of a magnesium production facility in the Latrobe Valley. The facility will produce up to 1,000 tonnes of magnesium per annum, creating 43 new FTE jobs and an estimated 75 indirect jobs during the construction phase.

Australia imports 100% of the 8,000 tonnes of magnesium metal that it consumes per annum. This project creates the opportunity for a significant level of import replacement in addition to servicing and growing export markets.

LML will utilise its combined hydromet/thermal reduction patented extraction process for magnesium, converting coal mine fly ash into magnesium metal, produce cementitious materials and 3 by-products including a char-rich product, high-iron product and calcium carbonate.

Buchan Caves Reserve – Stage 1

Working with Parks Victoria, RDV Gippsland has supported the re-establishment of project approvals and designs following multiple environmental event impacts to Buchan Caves Reserve. This recovery project presents a unique opportunity to significantly enhance the visitor offering and Gunaikurnai cultural experiences. Jointly managed by Gunaikurnai Traditional Owners and Parks Victoria, the caves are a major tourist attraction and a significant employer in East Gippsland, attracting more than 120,000 visitors per annum.

Buchan Caves were significantly damaged by the 2019 Black Summer fires. Parks Victoria received \$2 million from the 2020 Bushfire Tourism and Business Fund for the resulting rebuild. Subsequent environmental events caused further closures. Through these difficulties RDV Gippsland has worked with Parks Victoria and partners to deliver this project.

Sailors Grave Brewing – Dunetown

Sailors Grave Brewing is a purpose-built, circular brewery facility at Dunetown, Marlo, south of Orbost, due for completion in 2024. The \$6.2 million project, supported with funding from the Local Economic Recovery – Regional Economic Programs Fund, was impacted by the pandemic and global supply issues but is now well on track to create a new cellar door/barrel room, tap room beer garden and a pilot malthouse.

This destination experience will be a highlight of visiting East Gippsland. The new facility will draw and anchor visitors to the Orbost district and demonstrate best practice environmental sustainability utilising circular economy principles.

Ecoliv Buildings Pty Ltd – Sustainable living and off-grid construction facility project – contributor to the net zero economy

Located at The Gurdies in Bass Coast Shire, Ecoliv is undertaking a \$1.58 million investment in a sustainable living and off-grid construction facility. Supported by the Regional Jobs Fund, the project will deliver 14 new jobs to the community. Ecoliv is a prefabricated modular building construction company and the first modular builder to introduce a 7-star energy rating to its homes. The project includes an expanded construction facility, administration office and staff amenities as well as a display home for Ecoliv's carbon-neutral range of EcoGeneration modular design homes.

The expanded operations of EcoLiv have seen the company delivering modular homes as far as Mallacoota in East Gippsland and into New South Wales, contributing much needed housing solutions to ease the state's housing shortage.

Dalyston Football Netball Club – Dalyston Recreation Reserve Playspace

Living Local – Regional Grants provided funding for the Dalyston Football Netball Club to undertake the Dalyston Recreation Reserve Playspace project. The project is now complete and to the delight of the community group, the use of the playspace has already exceeded expectations. The Ninja course is attracting interest from young and older children, with seating and tables to encourage enhanced social connection.

Elecsome solar panel recycling facility in Kilmany – contributor to the net zero economy

Ojas Group Pty Ltd (Ojas) received financial assistance through the 2020-22 Regional Jobs Fund to facilitate a \$3.65 million investment in establishing an end-of-life (EOL) solar panel recycling plant in Kilmany. The project will create 30 new FTE jobs in the Latrobe Valley.

At the end of 2023, there were over 3.69 million PV installations in Australia, with a combined capacity of over 34.2 gigawatts (GW). There are approximately 100 million panels in operation with many already at the end of their life.

This project is being executed by Elecsome Pty Ltd which is a fully-owned entity of Ojas. The new facility has a target capacity of 180 kilotonnes (kt) of waste processing per annum and is the first of its kind in Victoria. Using innovative and advanced technology, Elecsome would be the first company to achieve up to 98% extraction from EOL solar panels. Elecsome will add further value by processing the reclaimed glass into a sustainable-bagged rapid concrete product.

Gippsland Logistics and Manufacturing Precinct

The Gippsland Logistics and Manufacturing Precinct (GLaMP) in Morwell will build on Gippsland's strength as a major food and fibre producer for the state. The 2014 election commitment is nearing completion, with the first stage of the 69-hectare precinct soon to be released, delivering much needed industrial land in Gippsland. The precinct is expected to support up to 1,000 jobs when fully operational and will bring together advanced manufacturing, transport and logistics sectors, and supply chain industries.

Geothermal Energy Business Case – contributor to net zero economy

The Smart Geothermal Energy Loop project is a joint initiative between RDV, University of Melbourne and Latrobe City Council to design and leverage the Latrobe Valley's unique, world-class geothermal energy asset. The geothermal energy study focused on supporting manufacturing within the region by reducing energy costs, presenting exciting opportunities for decarbonisation. Geothermal energy currently heats the Latrobe City Council Gippsland Regional Aquatic Facility saving over \$700,000 per annum in heating costs. With the feasibility study complete, a detailed business case is currently underway.

Food and fibre initiatives

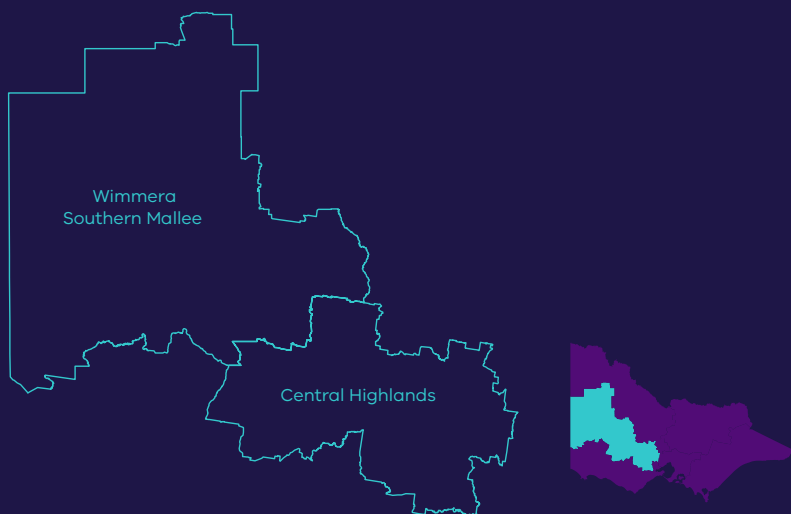
The Gippsland region currently exports over 70% of its food and fibre product in its raw state. RDV Gippsland in partnership with Food and Fibre Gippsland and the CSIRO are exploring opportunities to capture and create greater value from this product within the region.

This regional investment and attraction project is exploring opportunities for the establishment of a Food and Fibre Innovation Hub to increase research and development and value-add manufacturing in the region. The project acknowledges that Gippsland has one of the lowest rates of value add in Victoria, but produces significant agricultural product to the state, national and international markets. Securing greater value-add activity in Gippsland will have significant benefits for the regional economy and further enhance Gippsland's reputation as one of Victoria's premier food and fibre regions.

RDV Gippsland supported a range of export-focused businesses to deliver a number of expansion and value-add projects over the past year, including Frais Farms in the Lindenow district enhancing its facility with the capacity to process into meal-ready products for the South Korean market.



Regional report Grampians



Regional Director's report

Sarah Henderson

Regional Director, Grampians

The Grampians region is facing significant land-use change as development opportunities arise from the clean energy transition. With its unique natural environment, the Grampians region will host critical minerals mining, renewable energy and transmission infrastructure projects to not only help power the state, but Australia and the rest of the world.

The RDV Grampians team is committed to ensuring these significant economic opportunities are well-managed, with maximum benefit and minimal disruption for host communities. Our connection into and across project proponents, landholders and community groups continues.

The strength and resilience of some of our smaller communities across the Grampians region was demonstrated in 2023-24 as bushfires damaged and threatened many communities. In February, bushfires raged across parts of Gariwerd National Park and across the Pyrenees and Golden Plains. In Pomonal, 46 homes were destroyed in less than 24 hours, wiping out more than half the community.

The visitor economy continued to be impacted across Gariwerd, particularly in Halls Gap where reduced visitation through the summer was felt by all businesses.



The RDV Grampians team worked closely with impacted communities prior, during and post the immediate bushfire threat ensuring local councils, businesses, industry and communities felt supported and linked into government support services. This work involved connecting business into the Partners in Wellbeing program and Jobs Victoria, as well as providing communities with available services through Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV).

Despite the significant damage caused by the bushfires, the region continues to grow with 2 of our LGAs now among the fastest growing in the state (Moorabool and Golden Plains). To support and sustain this growth, our team remains committed to strengthening our existing relationships with key business and community leaders to ensure decision-making and investment meet our regional needs. The key challenges associated with housing and workforce continue to present opportunities for flexibility and creativity in our approach. We look forward to working with our RPs and RDA committees to deliver solutions for our local economies and embedding ourselves in a place-based approach moving forward.

Regional highlights

- Delivered 16 self-contained cabins across several Wimmera Mallee townships to improve visitor accommodation options. The chosen locations are linked closely to nature, arts and cultural attractions that have been increasingly recognised. The cabins allow visitors to pre-plan and book their experiences at multiple trails and destinations in the region. They provide 6 full-time ongoing employment positions in the region and will generate close to \$1 million in annual economic contribution
- Completed Stage 1 and 1b at the Ballarat West Employment Zone (BWEZ). This project, delivered by Development Victoria, is a \$30 million joint initiative between the Victorian Government (\$25 million) and the City of Ballarat (\$5 million). It will create room for economic growth in the Grampians Region. Of the 22 land lots in Stage 2, 7 have been sold. Civil works are underway including the installation of in-ground services such as water, gas, electrical and the National Broadband Network (NBN). Internal roads are also under construction with all works due for completion in mid-2025
- Installed pedestrian lighting around the Lake Wendouree Moneghetti track in partnership with the City of Ballarat to increase community safety, enable expanded use and support growth of evening-based events and tourism opportunities. Through a \$2.5 million grant, the project will also create a well-lit link to Victoria Park
- Supported an \$60 million project to double processing capacity and increase exports by up to \$80 million dollars at Thomas Foods in Stawell. The project will deliver the construction of new infrastructure, including cold-room storage facilities, and the purchasing and installation of innovative technology, resulting in a modern meat processing plant. The project will increase job numbers at the abattoir from 500 to 750.

Key outcomes

Pomonal community-led recovery

Following the devastation of the Grampians bushfires in February 2024, a \$200,000 grant was provided to Ararat Rural City Council (ARCC) to help Pomonal residents establish a community hub and purchase clean-up equipment to enable their self-led recovery efforts.

Perridak Art Gallery

In partnership with the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BADAC), RDV proudly delivered the Aboriginal Community Art Gallery – Perridak Arts.

The Gallery, completed in early 2024, enlivens Ballarat's Entertainment Precinct and supports Aboriginal communities across Western Victoria via the creation of a BADAC-owned and operated Aboriginal community art gallery. The project contributes to Ballarat's vibrant CBD and gives many Aboriginal artists a place to display and sell their art.

Bullarto Station redevelopment

The Bullarto Station redevelopment project has been delivered with a Regional Infrastructure Fund grant of \$500,000. This redevelopment included the construction of a replica of the original station building. The Bullarto Station Precinct project expands the unique tourist product offered through the current vintage railway that operates between Daylesford and Bullarto. The building displays original railway memorabilia, hosts events and provides passenger comfort facilities for Daylesford Spa Country Railway's popular heritage train service.

Hamilton Street Pedestrian Bridge – Horsham

The new Hamilton Street Pedestrian Bridge was delivered as a result of \$1.225 million in funding from RDV in combination with \$1.1 million from the Australian Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) program. The enhanced bridge supports safer connections for pedestrians and bicycle riders to the central activity district, local schools, recreation facilities and the Wimmera Base Hospital

Trentham Community Hub

Through a \$3.5 million grant, RDV in partnership with Hepburn Shire Council and the Trentham community has delivered a multi-purpose community hub development at the site of the Trentham Mechanics Institute, incorporating original elements of the Trentham Mechanics Hall. Opened in June 2024, the Trentham Community Hub includes a library, visitor information centre, customer service, meeting and function rooms, and the original main hall. This project was one of the highest priorities of Hepburn Shire.

Lethbridge Play Space

Golden Plains Shire Council has utilised a \$200,000 grant from the Victorian Government's Living Local – Regional Grants Fund to upgrade the existing play elements, street furniture, paths and landscaping at the Lethbridge Play Space. The upgrade increases utilisation, encourages physical activity, social connection and increases the appeal of Lethbridge as a stopping point for travellers.

Regional report Hume



Regional Director's report

Mark Byatt OAM

Acting Regional Director, Hume

Hume region is a diverse region comprising 12 LGAs – incorporating regional cities and an assortment of rural councils across 2 distinct sub-regional settings – Goulburn and Ovens Murray. It also features 5 of Victoria's 6 alpine resorts – operating under Alpine Resorts Victoria (ARV). The region is recognised for its substantial national, state and regional economic contribution, across sectors including manufacturing, food production, agriculture, transport, defence, health, education and training, and tourism. The region's distinctive natural assets and strategic positioning along national waterways and transport corridors contribute to its strength.

RDV Hume leverages its extensive place-based knowledge, networks and connections in providing a whole-of-government approach to implementing government policies, programs and reforms. The team provides support to grow and sustain local economies and communities as they develop and move through recovery from industry transition, for example the impacts of native timber harvesting closure, and from natural disasters including floods and bushfire. We also work closely with key stakeholders to maximise place based comparative advantages to deliver priority growth and development opportunities.



The team has a strong supporting role for both the Goulburn and Ovens Murray RPs and Hume RDA Committee, as the alliances undergo a reinvigoration of membership and shift focus to economic objectives and outcomes. The work of these groups is crucial to ensuring the voices of regional communities are heard by government and priorities are reflective of local needs and deliver place-based benefit. We pass on our regional appreciation and thanks to outgoing members for their contributions, and welcome new members to these important regional groups.

RDV Hume team has continued its focus on implementing the key government regional priorities in cooperation with our critical delivery partners across all tiers of government, local communities and the private sector including the Regional Worker Accommodation Fund, Tiny Towns and the Council Support Package.

We appreciate and thank our colleagues across Victorian Government departments who we continue to work closely with in developing and landing our regional priorities and opportunities. Their partnership has ensured we provide a whole-of-government response to seize opportunities and mitigate issues across Hume.

Regional highlights

- Supported the development of the \$9.2 million Alpine Gateway Precinct at Mt Hotham, which consists of a new multi-level carpark and a visitor amenity facility. This project contributes to the ongoing focus of developing Hume's alpine resorts as a key driver of the state's visitor economy. It significantly increases visitor capacity and experience at Mt Hotham and includes the first covered, disabled-access point and amenities to the ski fields. Victoria's alpine resorts contribute \$2.14 billion towards the state economy and support more than 12,000 jobs across the winter season and a growing green season. This project will support the alpine resorts' strong continued growth and their ongoing recovery from a challenging period of interrupted activity since the 2019-20 bushfires and the pandemic
- Continued to support efforts through the Goulburn Murray Regional Prosperity Plan to achieve greater economic inclusion and parity for Aboriginal people in the region. This work includes exploring opportunities for First Nations businesses in renewable energy generation and retailing, connecting major employers to First Nations employment services and career pathways, and participating in a network of government and industry champions that collaborate on opportunities to close the gap in Aboriginal economic and social outcomes. Construction of the Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence has been completed and will be launched shortly. A key advocacy priority for the Goulburn RP, this state-of-the-art facility will provide a hub for First Nations education, health and aspiration
- Successfully advocated for \$15 million in funding for the Seymour Community Wellbeing Hub. This funding was secured through the Australian Government's Growing Regions Program in partnership with the Hume RDA. The Goulburn RP provided seed funding towards the Seymour Revitalisation Initiative (SRI) which developed the business case for this project. The SRI is a project that defines place-based opportunities to enhance the investment attractiveness of Seymour, capitalising on peri-urban growth and addressing persistent socio-economic disadvantage.

Key outcomes

Ovens Murray Digital Plan refresh

The Ovens Murray RP completed a refresh of the Regional Digital Plan, funded through the Regional Partnership Development Fund. The refresh acknowledged the significant achievements that the initial plan had led to in areas of digital upskilling, community access and uptake of new technologies across the region. The project was delivered in partnership with Start-Up Shakeup and was driven by the Digital Futures Coordination Working Group that the partnership established. It highlights opportunities to invest in the region's digital connectivity and capacity, critical enablers for economic growth, efficiency and innovation.

Upper Murray Place-based Power Plan

Supported Upper Murray Inc. to deliver a project that improved power reliability across the region. This project was funded in response to the 2019-20 bushfires and focused on building more resilience within the local power network to improve liveability and lessen the economic impact of power outages. The \$3 million project has installed critical infrastructure, such as community-scale batteries, energy nodes and efficient heat pumps within households that are improving the reliability and affordability of power in the Upper Murray. This project provides important economic stimulus for a community heavily impacted by the bushfires and invests in ongoing community and infrastructure resilience to natural disasters. This work forms part of RDV's ongoing place-based work in the Upper Murray by supporting the region, local businesses and communities as they navigate often complex challenges and build locally sustainable economic development and growth opportunities.

Supporting community-led governance for GMID economic transition

RDV Hume and RDV Loddon Mallee supported the continued operation of the Goulburn Murray Resilience Taskforce. This community-led taskforce – established as a working group of the RPs – works across government and regional stakeholders to embed the principles of resilience and adaptation outlined in the Goulburn Murray Resilience Strategy. It also implements interventions that address economic transition in the GMID. A key achievement of the Resilience Taskforce was a joint meeting of the Loddon Campaspe and Goulburn RPs where the committees identified the economic drivers for change and areas for intervention to support the prosperity of this highly productive and nationally-significant agricultural region. The Resilience Taskforce was recently featured in an international study on community-led governance and highlighted as a case study at an international symposium in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Project Zeman

Provided support for a \$6.8 million investment by Cobram Manufacturing CG&C Group in its advanced manufacturing capacity. This investment saw the installation of modern technology and machinery to increase the business' capacity and efficiency and meet increased demand in the industrial and commercial construction sector. The project supported through the Regional Jobs Fund saw the creation of 40 new jobs and significant up-skilling opportunities for the manufacturing workforce.

Evolve North Coffee Roasting

Provided support for the development of a \$6 million state-of-art coffee roasting manufacturing, distribution and training facility in Shepparton. This facility capitalises on the Goulburn region's advanced manufacturing and logistics strengths and builds on its identity as the nation's food bowl. RDV provided funding through the Regional Jobs Fund and facilitated across government to address regulatory considerations throughout the development of the facility. The project created 12 new jobs in manufacturing, logistics and distribution.

Supporting place-based coordination

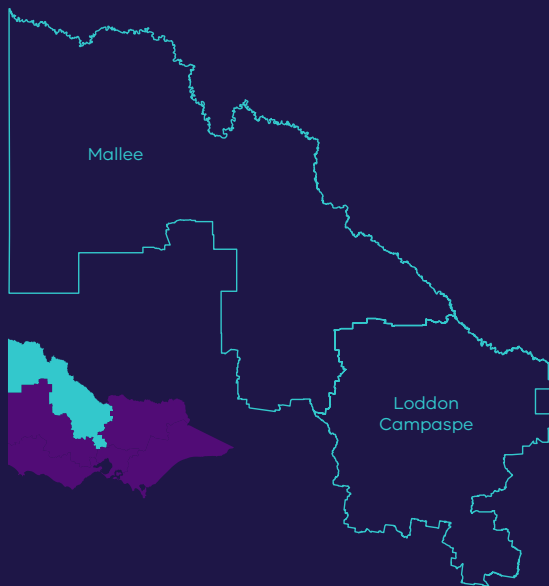
RDV Hume continued to provide guidance and support for a range of place-based priority economic initiatives including the development opportunities for Lake Eildon and surrounds, Thompson's Beach at Cobram, a series of key priorities across the alpine resorts, further development of industrial precincts across the region, and the continuing work in delivering the cross-border Albury-Wodonga Regional Projects initiative.

The Albury Wodonga Regional Projects initiative

Continued collaborating and partnering with all levels of government, focused on advancing the \$80 million commitment within the cross-border region for 8 Albury Wodonga Regional Projects, which are pivotal for the region's growth and prosperity. A significant milestone was achieved with the realisation of Wodonga TAFE's \$22 million Heavy Vehicle Technology Program. This state-of-the-art initiative will revolutionise the training of heavy vehicle operators, improving safe driving practices and better preparing them for the rapidly evolving transport and logistics industry. RDV continues to work in close collaboration with all project partners to ensure the effective implementation of each of the 8 initiatives, and to ensure tangible results with positive economic impacts for the region in the areas of housing, health and cross-border harmonisation.



Regional report Loddon Mallee



Regional Director's report

Leanne Rosewall

Regional Director, Loddon Mallee

The Loddon Mallee region occupies more than a quarter of Victoria and with one of the most consistently warm climates in the state, people flock to the region for the waterways of the Murray River, acclaimed restaurants and wineries, heritage towns and unique forests.

Loddon Mallee has a growing economy in tourism, viticulture, horticulture, crops, cattle, manufacturing and wool production. As a major food producing area, the region is also home to a vibrant manufacturing and service sector. The Bendigo Bank is the only Australian bank to be headquartered in a regional area.

A major achievement of the 2023-24 year was the official opening of Galkangu – Bendigo GovHub. Galkangu, means 'build together, we make together, make things happen together, more connected to Country' in the Dja Dja Wurrung language and is a new state-of-the-art building that is living up to its name and driving collaboration across its various public sector tenants.



Bringing together key functions across DJSIR, DEECA, DTP and the City of Greater Bendigo, as well as other government agencies, the building was officially opened in September 2023. The building has been designed in partnership with Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners and benefits from strong First Nation's design elements throughout the building and surrounding landscape.

RDV Loddon Mallee has continued to support key business investment to drive economic outcomes across the region. Cobram Estate Olives successfully completed a mill expansion in Boort that will process up to 100,000 tonnes of olives each season and cement the company as one of the largest olive producers in the southern hemisphere. Funding from RDV will support the creation of 30 new full-time jobs at the expanded mill.

Driving enhanced liveability and prosperity continues to be a focus with RDV supporting key projects across the region including the delivery of a new terminal at Bendigo Airport, relocation of WorkSpace Castlemaine and the completion of the Powerhouse redevelopment in Mildura.

Regional highlights

- Opened the Galkangu Bendigo GovHub to create jobs, boost the local economy and revitalise the city centre. A \$133 million project, Galkangu provides accommodation for up to 1,000 Victorian Government and City of Greater Bendigo Council staff to work together in the heart of the city and gives locals a one-stop shop for government services
- Supporting the delivery of the \$54 million Bendigo Art Gallery Redevelopment Project which is expected to increase annual visitation to the gallery by 60,000 people, with the current average visitation between 150,000 and 200,000. The Victorian Government has committed \$21 million to the project. The City of Greater Bendigo is seeking to secure remaining funding through philanthropic streams and Australian Government funding
- Supported the City of Greater Bendigo for the Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct. A 294-hectare multi-staged industrial precinct on the outskirts of Marong, the precinct will address a shortage of industrial land and provide essential planning works to enable infrastructure. A grant of \$6 million in 2023-24 Victorian State Budget will deliver planning works and enabling infrastructure
- Supported the completion of the Bendigo Airport terminal redevelopment that provides a bigger and better terminal. The project was supported by \$4.5 million from the Victorian Government's Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund. Thousands of additional passengers and staff will now experience new check-in facilities and departure lounge, café, screening area, restrooms, office space and equipment shed. The completed project will enable future passenger growth and supports the airport's vision for more flights to more locations. An additional \$4.5 million from the Australian Government was provided to deliver an airport business park that's ready for activation.

Key outcomes

Attraction of Deloitte to Bendigo

Facilitated the attraction of Deloitte to Bendigo, to open its new Digital and Business Process Operations Centre at the La Trobe University (LTU) campus with a goal of growing 200 new employment opportunities within the region.

Bendigo Tramways expansion

Delivered the iconic Bendigo Tramways expansion that has created space for Victoria's classic Melbourne W-class trams currently in storage in Melbourne to be relocated to Bendigo for future restoration. Increased tourism with a new Tram Café and renovated the museum. This \$10.7 million partnership was delivered by the Victorian Government, City of Greater Bendigo and Bendigo Heritage Attractions.

Workspace Australia – sustaining and enhancing Workspace Australia in Castlemaine

Relocating Workspace Australia to a new site to drive local entrepreneurial spirit in Castlemaine was a \$4.96 million project supported by \$3 million from the Regional Infrastructure Fund. The project created 40 jobs in the construction phase and will support 80 direct jobs and \$7 million in economic output in regional Victoria. Up to 40 small businesses will be able to operate in the new business incubator's office and commercial kitchen workspaces, which have been tailor-made for the craft food sector.

Cobram Estate mill expansion

Cobram Estate Olives received funding from the Regional Jobs Fund to support the completion of the mill expansion, which can process up to 100,000 tonnes of olives each season when at full capacity. This will allow the mill to produce more than 17 million litres of olive oil each year. The project will create 30 new full-time jobs at the Boort mill, cement Cobram Estate Olives as one of the largest producers in the southern hemisphere and place Northern Victoria on the map as a key player in the global olive oil industry.

New walnut processing facility in Campaspe Shire

The Australian Walnut Company in Campaspe Shire has established a new walnut processing and value-adding facility. The new facility will have the capacity to process 3,000 tonnes per annum and opens up export opportunities including walnut milk. The project is expected to create 14 jobs by 2026.

Murray River Adventure Trail

Supported the Murray Regional Tourism Board to develop a business case for Murray River Adventure Trail Stages 2 and 3 to drive visitation to the region. The project will deliver detailed designs for construction of a trail from Koondrook to Mildura and Barmah to Albury Wodonga. The project is supported by a \$500,000 Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund grant and will deliver project planning, designs and development of an implementation plan.

Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement activation

Supported the activation of the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement through a \$450,000 Regional Tourism Investment Fund grant. The project, which includes 2 ongoing jobs, was completed in August 2023 and has created a leading heritage attraction through new audio-visual and laser shows.

Mildura Riverfront Powerhouse redevelopment

Delivered Stage 2 of the Mildura Riverfront Powerhouse redevelopment project with \$500,000 funding from Regional Infrastructure Fund. The \$1 million project transformed the historic powerhouse building into a vibrant community and tourism hub with social enterprises, retail and farmers' market-style spaces. The upgraded 430 square metre building features Indigenous cultural displays, versatile exhibition areas and pop-up performance entertainment zones. The project created 123 new jobs during the project period and 10 new ongoing jobs. The redevelopment of Powerhouse Place won 3 awards at the 2024 Victorian Architecture Awards.

Accessible fuel from the Murrayville community

Established a permanent fuel solution supported by Mildura Regional Development to provide the Murrayville community with accessible fuel supply for residents. The \$500,000 project involved the construction of an unmanned fuel station. It consists of an all-weather platform with large tanks, payment terminals and a formal vehicle access road. The fuel station is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

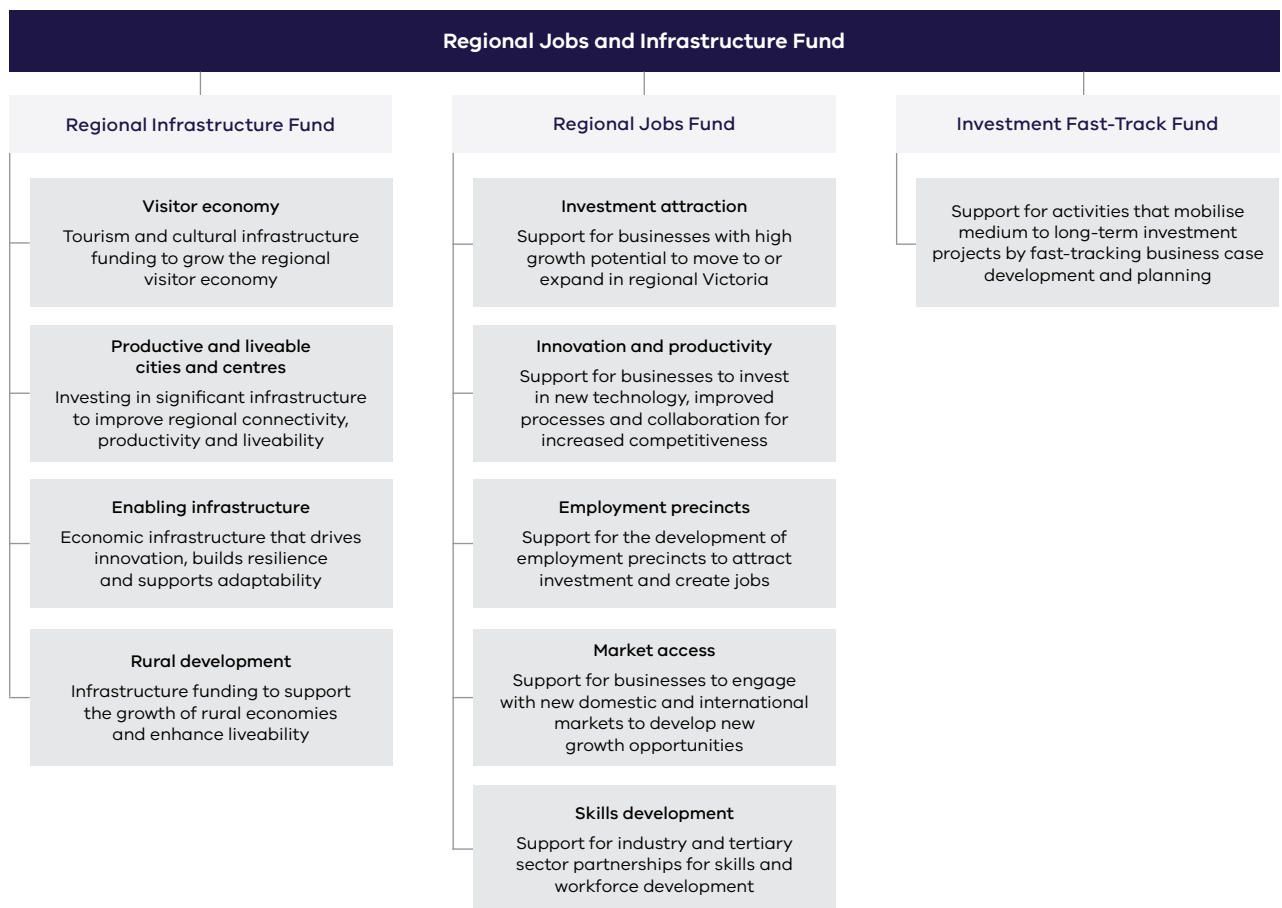


Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund

Since July 2015, the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund (RJIF) has facilitated economic and community development in Victoria's regions. RJIF helps create or retain approximately 13,000 jobs and supports approximately 1,000 projects in regional Victoria. It also enables jobs growth, provides infrastructure support and assists with community development throughout rural and regional Victoria.

The fund has 3 main components:

- **Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF)** – seeks to assist the growth of rural and regional Victoria by providing grants for infrastructure projects that have the potential to stimulate economic and community development
- **Regional Jobs Fund (RJF)** – provides grant funding to attract new investment, create new jobs and retain existing ones, and helps businesses improve their productivity and competitiveness
- **Investment Fast-Track Fund** – supports activities that mobilise medium to long-term investment projects by fast tracking business case development and planning. It aims to increase the pipeline of investment-ready projects to boost employment and improve the liveability of rural and regional Victoria.



Financials 2023-24

2023-24 output targets and performance against Budget Paper 3 measures

Performance measures	Unit of measure	2023-24 actual	2023-24 target	Performance variation (%)
Quantity				
Actual export sales generated for regional businesses as a result of participation in government programs	\$ million	49.7	35	42.0%
Economic development and service delivery projects supported	number	205	120	70.8%
Jobs in regional Victoria resulting from government investment facilitation services and assistance	number	1554	500	210.8%
New investment in regional Victoria resulting from government facilitation services and assistance	\$ million	598.4	350	71.0%
Participant satisfaction with implementation of Regional Development Victoria programs	per cent	93	90	3.3%

Income and expenditure report

Controlled income and expenses for the period ended 30 June 2024

Regional Development Victoria

2024 (FY)
(\$'000's)

2023 (FY)
(\$'000's)

Income from transactions		
Output appropriations	150,694	179,314
Grants	3,449	3,562
Interest income	10,537	7,089
Other income	–	1
Total income from transactions	164,680	189,966

Expenses from transactions		
Grants and other transfers	(133,498)	(111,256)
Employee expenses	(22,979)	(24,543)
Depreciation and amortisation	(281)	(370)
Interest expense	(16)	(30)
Other operating expenses	(26,543)	(34,479)
Total expenses from transactions	(183,317)	(170,678)

Net result from transactions (net operating balance)	(18,637)	19,288
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