

Annual Report 2022–23



Acknowledgment

We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of country throughout Victoria, their ongoing connection to this land and we pay our respects to their culture and their Elders past, present and future.

Front cover: Streetscape of Traralgon
Photograph by: Chris Hopkins

Published by the Victorian Government

Regional Development Victoria Annual Report 2022–23

September 2023
Melbourne Victoria

© Copyright State Government of Victoria 2023

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

Authorised by the Victorian Government, Melbourne

ISBN 1448-9341 (press)
ISBN 2652 2101 (pdf/online/MS word)

Contact

Regional Development Victoria
Level 31, 121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne 3000
T: 13 22 15
E: rdv@rdv.vic.gov.au
Web: rdv.vic.gov.au

Designed by DJSIR Design Studio
Printed by Finsbury Green

Disclaimer

The information contained in this report is provided for general guidance and assistance only and is not intended as advice. You should make your own inquiries as to the appropriateness and suitability of the information provided. While every effort has been made to ensure the currency, accuracy or completeness of the content we endeavour to keep the content relevant and up to date and reserve the right to make changes as required. The Victorian Government, authors and presenters do not accept any liability to any person for the information (or the use of the information) which is provided or referred to in the report.

Except for any logos, emblems, trademarks, artwork and photography this document is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence.

Accessibility

This document is available in PDF
at rdv.vic.gov.au

Contents

Chief Executive foreword	3
RDV Executive team	4
Regional Victoria – a vital part of our state	5
An overview of Regional Development Victoria	5
Organisational structure	6
Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund	7
Regional Partnerships	8
Reporting on Regional Partnerships	10
Barwon	10
Great South Coast	12
Wimmera Southern Mallee	14
Central Highlands	16
Ovens Murray	18
Goulburn	20
Mallee	22
Loddon Campaspe	24
Gippsland	26
Regional Development Australia	28
Cross Border Commissioner	30
Regional Economic Development Strategies	31
Geelong City Deal	32
2022 Victorian flood recovery	34
Regional reports	36
Barwon South West	36
Gippsland	38
Grampians	40
Hume	42
Loddon Mallee	44
Financials 2022–23	47
2022–23 output targets and performance against Budget Paper 3 measures	48
Revenue and expenses	49
Contact information	50



Chief Executive foreword

Regional Development Victoria (RDV) works to support prosperous and inclusive communities across regional Victoria and cross-border areas through the delivery of place-based policy, programs, projects, and engagement.

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 this population growth continues, RDV harnesses its enduring relationships with local governments, industries and other stakeholders to support new and ongoing opportunities.

The 9 regional partnerships continue to advocate to government on behalf of local communities on the matters important to regional communities. Last year, multiple partnerships identified a need to improve the supply of affordable and appropriate accommodation. Priorities ranged from suitable housing to attract and retain key workers through to addressing youth homelessness.

Over the 2022–23 year, the Victorian economy experienced pressures that have not been a major concern for well over a decade – increasing interest rates, high inflation and significant cost of living pressures – while continuing to navigate both social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigating human-driven causes of climate change. Despite the significant economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, regional Victoria has rebounded strongly with employment exceeding pre-pandemic levels, unemployment at a record low and our regional economy is worth almost \$100 billion, growing \$2.2 billion each year since 2015.

RDV plays a key role in supporting the response of regional communities to these pressures through facilitating investment in the regions, working locally with different sectors and leading government response to industry transition. Through the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund, 68 grants totalling \$35.78 million were approved in 2022–23.

The Geelong City Deal is in its fourth year of delivery, with 11 of 26 projects now complete and its flagship project, the \$294 million Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre Precinct Development on track for completion in 2026.

In 2022–23, RDV also played a key role in the Victorian Government's response to the October 2022 floods. Recovery projects ensured support was available to aid the economic recovery of regional businesses and communities. These included extra support for the hardest-hit towns, ensuring the supply of essential goods and support for business viability and recovery.

The Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) have proven to be a pivotal tool for engaging with regional stakeholders and how we work across government to support regional prosperity. The REDS were developed to enable regional Victoria to leverage strategic strengths and comparative advantages, and to drive sustainable growth and long-term economic development. The REDS continue to inform the delivery of key Victorian Government commitments in net zero transition and housing, underpin emerging initiatives in regional food and fibre sector value-adding, strengthened regional innovation ecosystems and the factors that impact workforce and skills challenges.

In 2022–23 RDV continued to deliver on the innovative Regional Workforce Pilot Program, tackling specific barriers to workforce attraction and unlocking fit-for-purpose solutions such as unlocking land for housing, facilitating worker transport solutions and supporting migrant resettlement programs. This place-based program reaffirmed the challenge of housing workers as a key barrier faced by our regional economies and has provided valuable insights into supporting worker housing.

The Victorian Government's announcement to bring forward the cessation of native timber harvesting in state forests to 2024 has significant impacts for the local communities that have relied on this industry. RDV has played a key role in coordinating transition support for impacted communities, creating connections into government and, with other key stakeholders, assisting with access to program support and grant funding and providing key regional advocacy for challenges and opportunities.

Our regions include cross border communities. Throughout 2022–23, Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner supported border communities by advocating across government on their behalf. An example of this work was partnering with industry stakeholders to successfully advocate for extending Victoria's apprentice registration discount scheme to cover Victorian residents who work across the border.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the work and dedication of RDV staff. The knowledge, skills and passion of RDV staff, and their deep connections to the communities in which they live and work, are central to all that RDV delivers for regional Victorians.



Beth Jones
Chief Executive
Regional Development Victoria

RDV Executive team



Beth Jones
Chief Executive



Anthony Schinck
Executive Director,
Regions



Brett Ince
Regional Director,
Barwon South West



Jeremy Levine
Executive Director,
Rural and Regional Policy
and Strategy



Leanne Rosewall
Regional Director,
Loddon Mallee



Matt Nelson
Regional Director,
Hume



Sara Rhodes-Ward
Regional Director,
Gippsland



Sarah Henderson
Acting Regional Director,
Grampians



Regional Victoria – a vital part of our state

Rural and regional Victoria is home to one in 4 Victorians. It accounts for 864,000 jobs and 21.9% of the state's small businesses (defined as employing one–19 staff). Victoria has a regional economy that generates over \$97 billion and accounts for 19.5% of Victoria's total economy.

An overview of Regional Development Victoria

Regional Development Victoria 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 uniting the government 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 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, facilitates local solutions and supports long-term, sustainable recovery. Another 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 and Suburban Development (RSD) group of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.

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 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
- Regional Jobs Fund
- Investment Fast-Track Fund

In 2022–23, RJIF funding was boosted by \$30 million that supported 52 projects across a broad range of regional development initiatives.

Regional Jobs Fund

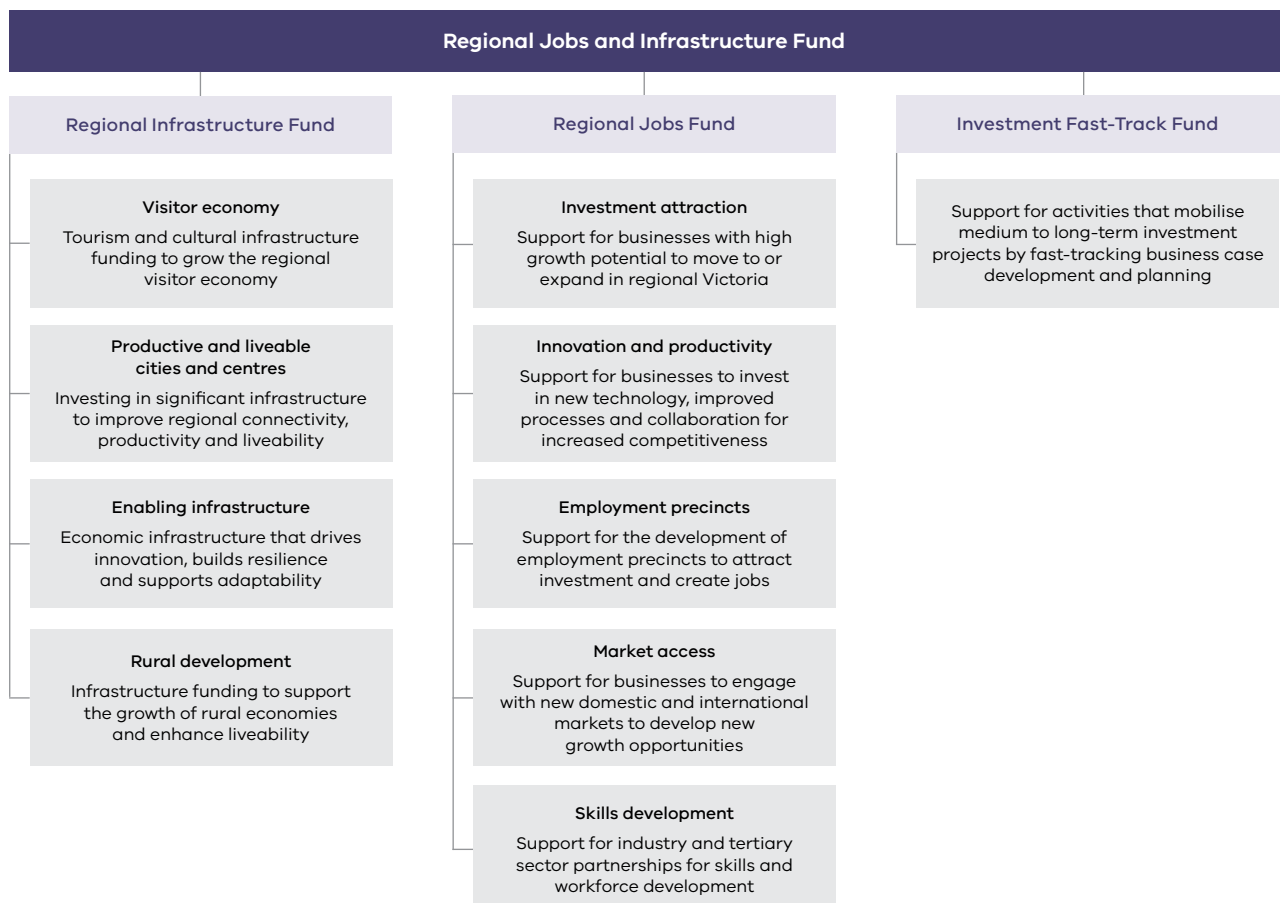
The Regional Jobs Fund (RJF) provides grant funding to attract new investment, create new jobs and retain existing ones, and help businesses improve their productivity and competitiveness.

Regional Infrastructure Fund

The 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.

Investment Fast-Track Fund

The 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.



Regional Partnerships

Overview

The Victorian Government established Victoria's Regional Partnerships in 2016, recognising that local communities are in the best position to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by their regions.

Partnerships ensure that regional communities not only have a greater say in what matters to them through ongoing consultation, they also enable voices of these communities to be heard directly by government.

The 9 Regional Partnerships involves more than 150 committed local leaders, including business and community members, Regional Development Australia (RDA) representatives, local government CEOs and appointed senior Victorian Government officials.

Membership of Regional Partnerships reflects the diversity of Victoria's regions. Over successive years, more First Nation members have joined Regional Partnerships and there is a greater representation of women, LGBTIQ+ communities and people with disability.

Since inception, the Regional Partnerships program has achieved valuable outcomes for its communities, securing support for regional priority projects across areas such as tourism, early childhood education, digital connectivity, mental health and agriculture.

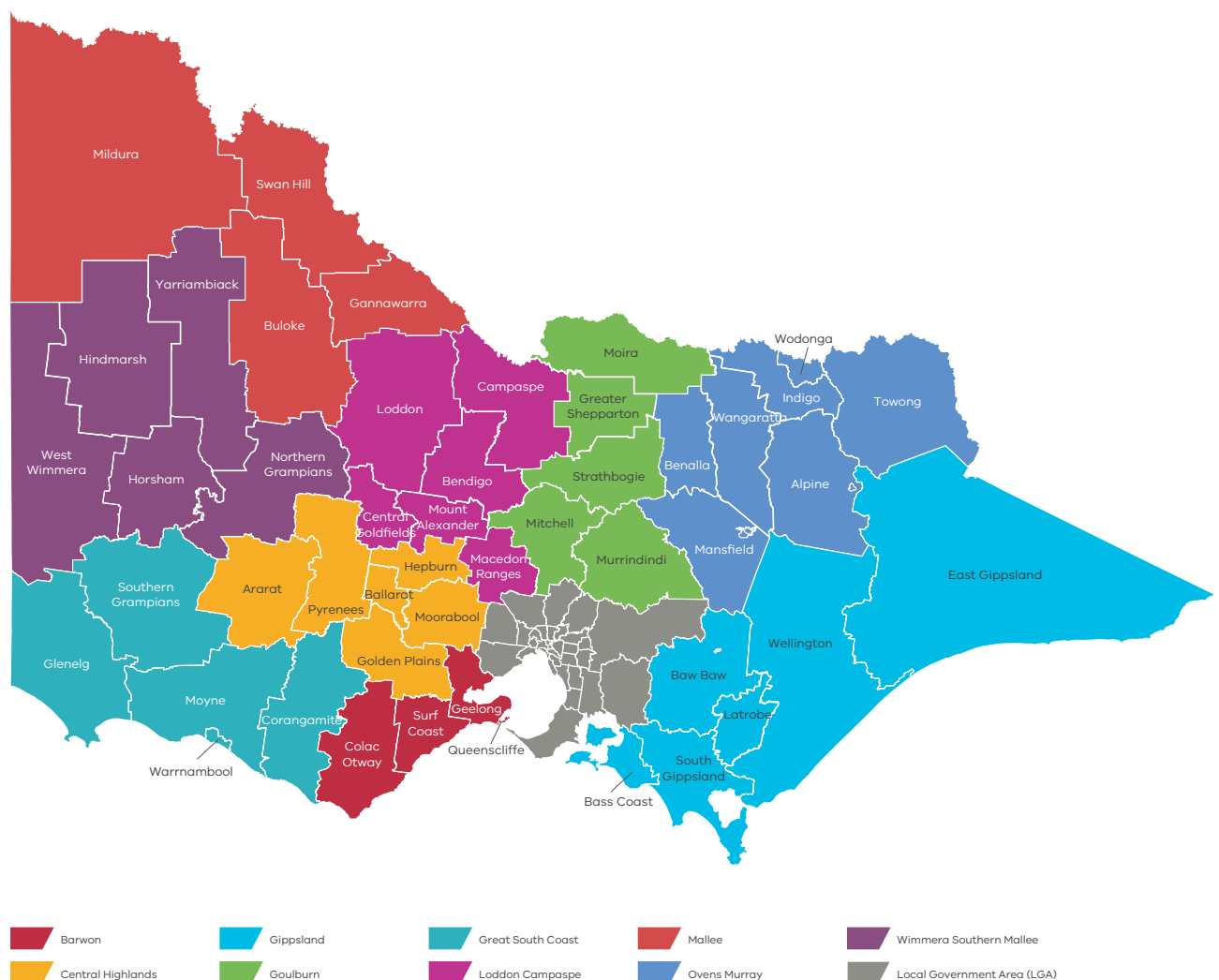
Key achievements for 2022–23

Regional Partnerships successfully advocated for priorities that supported:

- clean economy transition and workforce readiness
- investment in regional tourism attractions and the visitor economy
- new and improved regional health and education infrastructure
- more frequent, more reliable and more affordable public transport
- better opportunities and services for young people living in regional Victoria
- self-determination and economic prosperity for First Nations communities
- improved access to rural childcare.

As a direct result of Regional Partnerships' advice on the need for housing and accommodation solutions to address workforce shortages, the Victorian Government funded 4 workforce pilots and more than 30 projects in areas where shortages were most acute.

The projects included civil and service infrastructure to enable new residential developments; supporting the use of prefabricated units for worker accommodation; and planning for developments to increase housing supply.



Reporting on Regional Partnerships

Barwon

In 2022–23, the Barwon Regional Partnership (BRP) focused on place-based initiatives that align with its focus on 'Good Growth'. The Barwon region is rapidly expanding with a projected growth of 27% by 2036. The Regional Partnership concentrated on how to ensure that what attracts people to the region is not diminished or damaged by this rapid growth. Instead its strengths should be leveraged to enhance these benefits sustainably – so they can be experienced by all.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES:

- **Manage growth** – worked with the Victorian Government to address the key enabling factors of transport and housing and their intersection with strategic land use planning. This included:
 - accelerating the availability of government-owned land for social and affordable housing
 - a comprehensive review of the Greater Geelong public transport network with subsequent phased uplifts to the network over the next 4 years
- **Accelerate transition to a clean economy** – enabled and coordinated a regional-scale effort for the rapid transition to a renewable energy and circular economy with a focus on investment in innovative renewable energy and water projects
- **Care for country** – drawing on the rich knowledge and advice of Traditional Owners, created spaces of cultural, social, economic and environmental benefit. Specifically, the geographical areas within the Barwon region of:
 - Kitjarra-dja-bul bullarto langi-ut
 - Porrongitj Karrong cultural and community precinct
 - Murrk Njubitj Yarram Yalok.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Identified potential rail precincts across the region that would benefit from coordinated land use, transport and density planning to facilitate sustainable population growth, urban renewal and improved liveability
- Partnered with RDA Barwon South West to support the delivery of the G21 Geelong Region Plan refresh. The project aims to answer the question of 'What does good growth look like and how can we achieve this together?'
- Through the Regional Partnership Development Fund the BRP is supporting the development of a business case for a Circular Economy Commercialisation (CEC) Hub to develop local manufacturing capability, jobs and exports by taking innovative circular economy projects to commercial readiness
- With funding support from the Regional Partnership Development Fund, the BRP supported Brand Geelong Stage 3, aiming to sustain the campaign's momentum, ensure a cohesive, positive narrative showcasing Geelong and bolster community pride
- Worked with the chairs and deputy chairs of the Great South Coast Regional Partnership and RDA Barwon South West to advance advice on common priorities, such as accelerating the transition to a clean economy and addressing key worker housing shortages across the region.



340,109

Population
(2022)



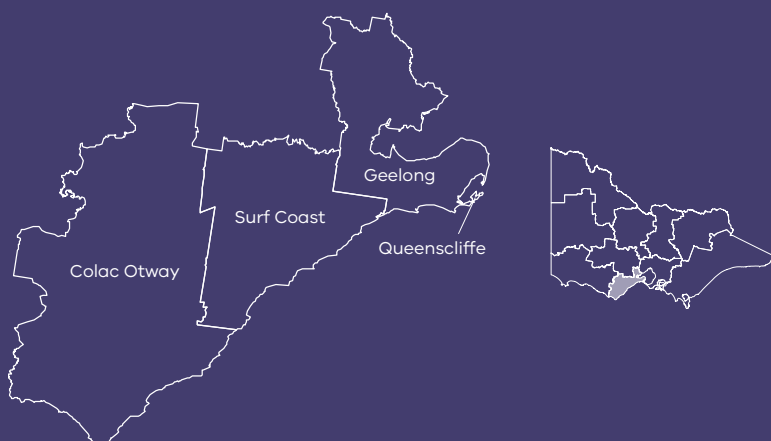
26.8%

Population growth
(2022–2036)



\$21.2B

Gross Regional Product
(2022)





CASE STUDY:

Work with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

Through the Regional Partnership Development Fund, support was provided to Barwon Water to work with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation in conducting essential knowledge gathering activities to advance the Porronggitj Karrong project.

Porronggitj Karrong, a Barwon Regional Partnership priority project, aims to create a new cultural, recreational and community precinct that respects both Aboriginal culture and heritage, as well as European heritage values of the aqueduct. This work involved essential knowledge gathering activities, including developing an ecological monitoring framework that combined scientific and Wadawurrung values and survey methods; conducting a Wadawurrung cultural values assessment of the project area; and creating a seasonal calendar to understand the relationships between people and the seasonal cycles of resource availability on the site. The project is due for completion by December 2023.

Great South Coast

In 2022–23, the Great South Coast Regional Partnership (GSCRP) focused on advocating to government for priorities that will help unlock the region's potential. The priorities were based on regional evidence and research, and included clean energy, high-value agriculture and key worker housing.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES:

- **Enable high-value agriculture** – to drive efficiency gains and growth in agriculture, the partnership seeks water reform, improved road networks and adoption of new technologies. The partnership advocated for water policy reform, funding for digital connectivity and technology adoption on farms, along with prioritised investment in the region's nationally significant road network
- **Improve housing supply and affordability** – to address workforce shortages, the GSCRP supported interventions outlined in the Barwon South West Key Worker Action Plan, including funding for seasonal worker housing, bridging the construction-revenue gap for key worker dwellings, and planning facilitation and delivery.
- **Lead in green hydrogen** – the region aims to become a global leader in sustainable transport, tourism and renewable energy production by progressing the hydrogen heavy vehicle mobility transition. The partnership advocated for funding for a portable hydrogen refueller, a mobile hydrogen hub and policy support for the Warrnambool Hydrogen Mobility project.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Partnered with RDA Barwon South West to better understand the aspirations, opportunities and associated barriers preventing higher-value and value-add opportunities in the food and fibre sector from being realised
- Facilitated opportunities that aligned with Great South Coast Economic Futures to diversify the region's visitor economy and high value agriculture and clean energy investment, including working with investors and developing a prospectus for geothermal tourism investment
- Facilitated discussions with private sector and representatives from the Victorian Government on opportunities for and barriers to the clean energy sector in the Great South Coast. As these conversations continue, GSCRP is partnering with RDA Barwon South West to undertake analysis that will inform advice to all levels of government on enablers required to grow the clean energy sector in the region
- Through funding provided by the Regional Partnership Development Fund, GSCRP led consultation with more than 200 community and industry stakeholders in 2022–23 to inform actions and advice on Regional Partnership priorities. Consultations included Great South Coast Economic Futures, Great South Coast Social Futures, and Unlocking Value in Great South Coast Food and Fibre focus areas
- Worked with the chairs and deputy chairs of the Barwon Regional Partnership and RDA Barwon South West to advance advice on common priorities, such as accelerating the transition to a clean economy and addressing key worker housing shortages across the region.



105,345

Population
(2022)



2.2%

Population growth
(2022–2036)



\$6.8B

Gross Regional Product
(2022)





CASE STUDY:

Great South Coast Social Futures

Funded through the Regional Partnership Development Fund, the Great South Coast Social Futures report was delivered this year, providing insights into how to uplift place-based economic participation and increase economic outcomes for all community members in the region. While the region had low unemployment rates, some areas still struggled with disadvantage and poverty, with low rates of education and employment participation. To tackle these inequities, the report offers tangible advice and strategies on:

- optimising the benefits to the region from the Victorian Government's Social Procurement Framework by leveraging industry's need to create social licence in local communities through the Community Benefit Fund/s
- equipping local businesses with the capability to engage vulnerable cohorts in sustainable employment and actively participate in large infrastructure projects for the benefit of the region
- strengthening families, carers and care ecosystems to provide essential support for young people to engage in learning and secure sustainable employment.

The report emphasises *shared action, accountability and outcomes* – encouraging collective community involvement. The recommendations from this work will inform advice to the Victorian Government for 2023–24.

Wimmera Southern Mallee

In 2022–23 the Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnership (WSMRP) continued to advocate for key enablers to achieving economic, social and cultural development within the Wimmera Southern Mallee community.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES:

- **Economic diversification** – established the Grampians Agricultural Investment Taskforce to increase the in-region value adding of agricultural production through new investment in food manufacturing and extractive industries (a shared priority with the Central Highlands Regional Partnership)
- **Improve housing supply and affordability housing** – implemented the Wimmera Southern Mallee Housing Blueprint developed by the Wimmera Development Association. The blueprint was designed to significantly expand the regional housing stock to meet strong demand in the regional jobs market and population growth. The blueprint aims to drive the release of more land for housing, key worker and affordable housing development and growth of the regional construction sector through new building trades hubs and construction sector business support programs
- **Education and workforce** – advocated for more childcare services in smaller rural townships where there is limited or no childcare currently available. This will help reduce the high level of early years developmental deficits amongst children in rural and remote locations. It will improve economic outcomes for families and regional businesses by tapping a latent workforce able to seek part-time or full-time work. It also has the potential to elevate the level of female workforce participation in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region that is currently lagging behind average participation in regional Victoria by 12% for 45 to 54yo women and 5% for 35 to 44yo women.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Completed *Horizon Highway: Wimmera Southern Mallee 30 Year Vision and Roadmap*, which includes a 30-year vision for the region to achieve a population of 90,000, generating gross annual regional output of \$9 billion with net zero emissions
- Successfully advocated for \$1.25 million funding from the Australian Government to support a new 4G digital network to be built across rural and remote districts of the region
- Established a collaborative relationship with the Grampians Interim Advisory Committee on Mental Health and Wellbeing to uplift in-region mental health support services. This includes the future establishment of a regional mental telehealth service
- Commissioned the Sustainable Childcare for Rural Kids project to be delivered across Wimmera Southern Mallee, Mallee and the Loddon Shire working with 10 rural township communities to identify customised childcare solutions
- Continued advocating for 12 new-build family crisis accommodation residences across the region over 4 years, reflecting that no suitable dwellings are available in the local housing market.



48,166

Population
(2022)



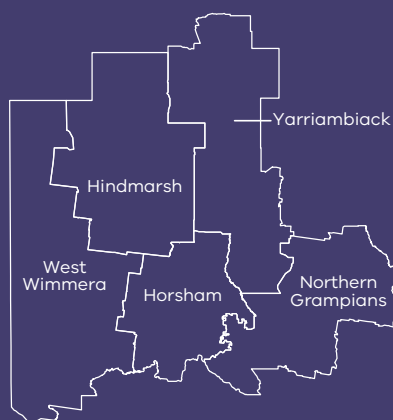
-8.7%

Population growth
(2022–2036)



\$3.2B

Gross Regional Product
(2022)





CASE STUDY:

A vision for the Wimmera Southern Mallee region

'By 2052 Wimmera Southern Mallee will have a population of 90,000; gross annual regional output of \$9 billion; and net zero emissions.'

Horizon Highway: Wimmera Southern Mallee 30-Year Vision and Roadmap is an ambitious plan to reverse decades of regional population decline. It seeks to achieve this by realising economic opportunities in construction, agriculture and food manufacturing, tourism and the rapidly emerging renewable energy and mineral sand mining sectors.

WSMRP secured \$109,000 through the Regional Partnerships Development Fund to develop the *Horizon Highway: Wimmera Southern Mallee 30-Year Vision and Roadmap*. The roadmap to 2052 is split into 3 phases of 5, 10 and 15 years – each with identified milestones to guide the achievement of the 30-year vision.

WSMRP, the 5 local government areas and key stakeholders are now focussed on achieving the goals laid out for the first 5 years of the plan, in particular addressing the accommodation needs to support a growing region.

Central Highlands

In 2022–23, the Central Highlands Regional Partnership (CHRP) continued to progress priorities across the partnership’s 3 pillars of jobs, housing and connectivity.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES:

- **Jobs** – developed a tourism investment prospectus to provide direction for sustainable product or infrastructure developments within the visitor economy and creative sector in the Central Highlands region. The prospectus aims to identify several priority projects that can be delivered to improve the region’s visitor experience outcomes
- **Improve housing supply and affordability** – advocated for research into the best social and affordable housing model for the Central Highlands region
- **Connectivity** – worked with partners and advocated for an integrated transport strategy. The strategy aims to contribute to the frequency, reliability and convenience of public transport routes and services in the Central Highlands region.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Continued collaborating with RDA Grampians to implement outcomes of the For Want of a Worker project, which identified place-based solutions to the Grampians’ workforce supply challenges
- Advocated successfully for Federation TAFE, which received \$6 million in the Victorian Government’s 2023–24 State Budget for the Asia Pacific Renewable Energy Training Centre (APRETC) Stage 2
- Continued advocating for domestic mobile roaming in collaboration with RDA Grampians, leading to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) undertaking the Regional Mobile Infrastructure Inquiry.



215,568

Population
(2022)



23.5%

Population growth
(2022–2036)



\$11.4B

Gross Regional Product
(2022)





CASE STUDY:

Accessible and connected public transport

The partnership identified accessible and connected public transport as a priority for the region. This will help enable access to employment, education, services and civic participation for some of the most disadvantaged communities in the region.

Through the Regional Partnership Development Fund, CHRP commissioned the Improving Public Transport Connectivity in the Central Highlands project. The research engaged community stakeholders to identify the immediate opportunities for improving public transport connectivity in the region.

CHRP continues to work with the Department of Transport and Planning to identify funding streams for implementation of the recommendations.

Ovens Murray

In 2022–23 the Ovens Murray Regional Partnership (OMRP) focused on advocacy for strategic investment into its economic and social infrastructure.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES:

- **Tourism infrastructure and natural assets** – continued to advocate for funding to develop iconic tourism infrastructure such as epicurean tourist routes, cycling infrastructure, alpine resorts and cultural experiences
- **Support community resilience, health and wellbeing** – continued advocating for place-based responses to social and economic disadvantage. OMRP successfully secured funding for 2 new Youth Foyers in Wodonga and Wangaratta – providing housing for students experiencing or at risk of homelessness. OMRP welcomed funding for services and programs such as the Mansfield Autism Statewide Services and the Tomorrow Today Foundation in Benalla
- **Connectivity** – continued to promote the region's strengths in digital innovation and leadership by coordinating a Digital Futures group to advocate for ongoing infrastructure investment.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The Ride High Country initiative continued to attract cycling visitors to the region and supported the development of accommodation, cycling services and experiences to further build Australia's premier cycling destination
- Secured \$220,000 funding for further business case development for the Wangaratta Digital Hub to provide critical education and support for people navigating the digital world and workplace
- Successfully advocated for funding to develop the Wodonga and Wangaratta Youth Foyers to provide critical housing and support services for students at risk of homelessness
- Secured ongoing funding for the Tomorrow Today program in Benalla which takes a place-based approach to improving early childhood development outcomes and engagement with education and employment
- The OMRP Digital Futures group delivered projects in healthcare technology trials, boosting digital workforce capacity and the development of free public Wi-Fi networks.



135,054

Population
(2022)



14.7%

Population growth
(2022–2036)



\$7.7B

Gross Regional Product
(2022)





CASE STUDY:

The Ovens Murray Regional Partnership develops strategies and advocates for cycle tourism in the region's High Country. Since 2017, the Ride High Country initiative has attracted over \$12 million in funding, leading to significant increases in cycling-focused visitors and supported the development of key infrastructure to grow the cycle-tourism offering in the region.

This includes projects such as the recent \$8.5 million investment in the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail enhancements and \$3 million in private sector activation funding for various accommodation, bike hubs and services, food and beverage offerings and tours.

Goulburn

The Goulburn Regional Partnership (GRP) continued to identify and advocate for opportunities that aligned with its strategic directions and regional strengths.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES:

- **First Nations prosperity** – Goulburn is home to the largest Indigenous population outside of metropolitan Melbourne. The Goulburn Murray Regional Prosperity Plan highlights \$150 million in economic benefit from closing the gaps in economic and social outcomes between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people. The first sod was turned for the Munarra Centre of Regional Excellence which will provide a regional hub for education, sporting and cultural excellence
- **Support sustainable growth and peri-urban development opportunities** – continued to advocate for projects that capitalise on peri-urban growth such as the Seymour Revitalisation initiative. This identified issues with the lack of baseline infrastructure which is limiting the growth potential and liveability of our region – such as the reliability of power in Euroa and Nagambie and the various planning constraints being experienced due to increased regional migration
- **Activate key regional tourism assets** – continued to progress activation of Lake Eildon as an underutilised tourism asset for the region. Despite attracting over one million visitors a year, Lake Eildon lacks suitable accommodation and tourism products to encourage longer stays and greater spending in the region.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Advocated for First Nations prosperity by providing funding for the Goulburn Murray Woka Yurringa Feasibility Study which highlights an opportunity for Aboriginal-owned renewable energy development in the region
- Supported the development of a business case for the Skyline Road Tourist Route and continued to advocate for much-needed planning support to unlock strategic land parcels
- Facilitated a stakeholder meeting at Thompson's Beach in Cobram and endorsed a new masterplan for the precinct as a regional priority for advocacy.



177,825

Population
(2022)



33.2%

Population growth
(2022–2036)



\$9.1B

Gross Regional Product
(2022)





CASE STUDY:

The Goulburn Regional Partnership supported the development of the Goulburn Murray Resilience Strategy and subsequent formation of a Resilience Taskforce for the Goulburn Murray region. The taskforce meets regularly to identify and support opportunities to enhance the region's resilience to future shocks through diversification, adaptation and transformation.

The taskforce is comprised of and driven by community leaders – with key government agencies and stakeholders also involved. To date the taskforce has convened regional forums on opportunities in the circular economy, developed an investment prospectus for the region and advocated to Victorian and Australian governments for the transition challenges being experienced in the region.

Mallee

The Mallee Regional Partnership (MRP) strives to achieve long-term economic and social outcomes for the individuals, families and communities who live in and visit our region.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES:

- **Economic diversification** – the MRP advocated for funding for the Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West through to Kerang to enable increased renewable energy contributions to the electricity grid from the Mallee region
- **A resilient Mallee** – increase access to childcare in rural areas particularly targeting the need for improved services in Red Cliffs, Birchip and Charlton. To be viable, services need to be integrated with other early years services such as kindergartens, maternal and child health services and primary education
- **Green hydrogen** – promoted the early adoption of green hydrogen within key industries including the use of hydrogen to replace diesel in the logistics sector and the production of green ammonium fertilisers to replace fertilisers imported into the region.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Commenced building the Murrayville Permanent Fuel Station after \$400,000 was provided through the Victorian Government's Regional Infrastructure Fund, an identified priority of the MRP
- Successfully advocated for resources for visiting researchers. The Birchip Cropping Group's Nexus project is one step closer after receiving \$215,000 through the Victorian Government's Investment Fast-Track Fund towards preparing the design brief, construction costing and staging
- The Australian and Victorian governments both confirmed funding for the estimated \$3.3 billion VNI West project. VNI West is a proposed new, high capacity 500 kV double-circuit overhead transmission line which will deliver vital new transmission infrastructure to carry renewable energy through Victoria
- The Regional Partnership Development Fund provided funding of \$211,000 for a joint project between the Mallee, Loddon Campaspe and the Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnerships to work through ways of providing childcare in approximately 10 locations across the northwest of Victoria
- A further \$50,000 of Regional Partnership Development Funds was secured to help develop green hydrogen opportunities in the Mallee. This work will detail consortia to take forward a logistics sector project utilising hydrogen and confirm the viability of another proposal to realise the production of green ammonium fertilisers within the region
- Provided support to Buloke Shire through the Victorian Government's Small Town Big Difference Fund which distributed \$120,000 of funding to smaller community-based projects. Funding for these activities was provided by community banks, local government and the Victorian Government.



95,001

Population
(2022)



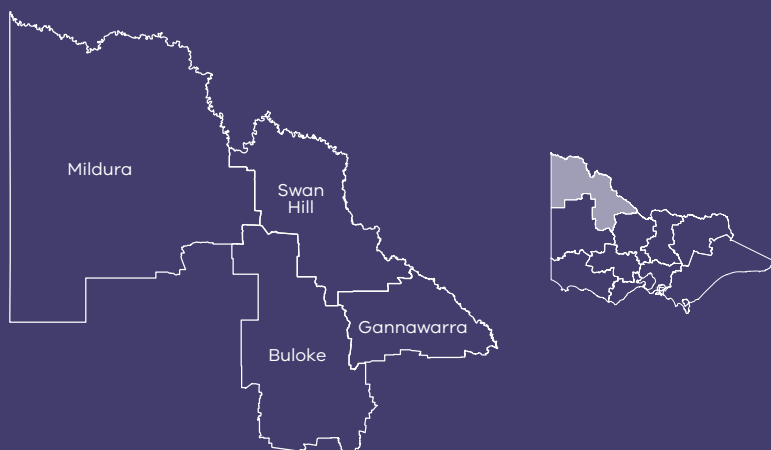
3.2%

Population growth
(2022–2036)



\$5.9B

Gross Regional Product
(2022)





CASE STUDY:

Improved models of childcare in rural areas

In sparsely populated areas of the state, thin markets make it unattractive for commercial childcare providers. Where childcare does exist, it is usually due to substantial subsidies from local government.

By co-locating and integrating early years services – such as childcare, kindergartens, primary schools and maternal and child health services – there is an opportunity to share premises that allows for cost savings. Additional benefits of integrating services are the continuity it provides and the provision of a collaborative and family-centric setting.

The Mallee, Loddon Campaspe and Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnerships are working together to find models of childcare that are viable for 10 locations throughout rural areas of northwest Victoria once funding is secured.

Loddon Campaspe

The Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership (LCRP) continued to focus on the region's diverse population and buoyant economy based on agriculture, health, professional services, education and manufacturing.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES:

- **Healthy Loddon Campaspe** – The LCRP successfully advocated for the continuation of funding for the Healthy Loddon Campaspe initiative. \$6.6 million was provided to continue the good work encouraging healthy eating and more active lifestyles.
- **A great environment to live** – Bendigo Creek restoration. Led by the Dja Dja Wurrung, restoration would see the creek regain the function and form it had prior to the gold rush and become a valued community asset
- **Rural childcare** – advocated for childcare facilities to be established in Boort and Inglewood through models of childcare that benefit from the integration of a range of early years services that potentially include primary school, kindergarten and maternal and child health services. The Loddon Shire municipality currently has no childcare services.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Completed the authoring of the Loddon Mallee Housing Action Plan led by Swan Hill Rural City, including 4 pilots demonstrating successful methods of overcoming barriers to housing supply
- Brought together potential partners to progress the development of a proposal for the Bendigo Digital Innovation Hub
- Following advocacy from LCRP, VicTrack sought tenders to commercialise spare capacity on its high-speed digital cabling
- Completed work identifying requirements needed to realise the potential of the Regional Employment and Innovation Corridor.



254,711

Population
(2022)



18.1%

Population growth
(2022–2036)



\$13.8B

Gross Regional Product
(2022)





CASE STUDY:

Regional Employment and Innovation Corridor (REIC)

In late 2022, the partnership completed a strategic roadmap to leverage the unique assets of the commuter corridor between Gisborne and Bendigo and then onto Echuca. The vision for this corridor is to create a leading knowledge and creative region that ignites innovation and entrepreneurship and harnesses lifestyle, sustainability and community.

The recent work has identified 5 clear objectives that will help see the REIC thrive:

1. Plan for liveability and growth
2. Provide for connecting and enabling infrastructure
3. Build pathways to skills and employment
4. Encourage innovation, entrepreneurship and investment
5. Ensure that there is good governance and leadership in place

Through the coordinated efforts of all local government areas, work is progressing against each of these 5 objectives.

Gippsland

In 2022–23, the Gippsland Regional Partnership (GRP) continued to deliver its migration planning, workforce housing, positive advocacy campaign and digital literacy and access priorities for the region.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES:

- **Improve housing supply and affordability** – undertook an environmental scan and developed a workforce housing report in close collaboration with Gippsland’s local councils. The report identified housing challenges and potential solutions for the following key sectors:
 - Offshore wind
 - Agriculture and primary production
 - Tourism and visitor economy
 - Education
 - Health
- **Attract migration** – identified a migration attraction priority to address workforce shortages and enhance the support available for newcomers. In 2022–23 the partnership consulted with Talia Stump, Churchill Fellow who researched regional migration in Europe and North America. Subsequently the partnership developed a detailed strategy that identified the next steps including undertaking broad community engagement to establish a vision and practical guide to delivering this priority
- **Positive advocacy campaign** – promoted a positive narrative for Gippsland, focusing on advocating for opportunities of the region. The partnership published 4 advertorials in local paper *Gippslandia* in collaboration with the Regional Development Australia Gippsland Committee, highlighting the work of the 2 bodies and the positive development news stories across the region.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Successfully advocated for West Gippsland Health/ Warragul Hospital to receive funding
- Undertook a workforce housing report for the Gippsland region
- Successfully advocated for the geothermal industrial loop design study to receive funding to explore renewable energy potential in the Latrobe Valley
- Supported future leaders of Gippsland by providing 15 scholarships for students to undertake the Master of Business Administration course at Federation University’s Churchill Campus
- Continued to support united advocacy for Gippsland, participating in the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group to enhance coordination and minimise duplication of strategic advocacy efforts.



303,850

Population
(2022)



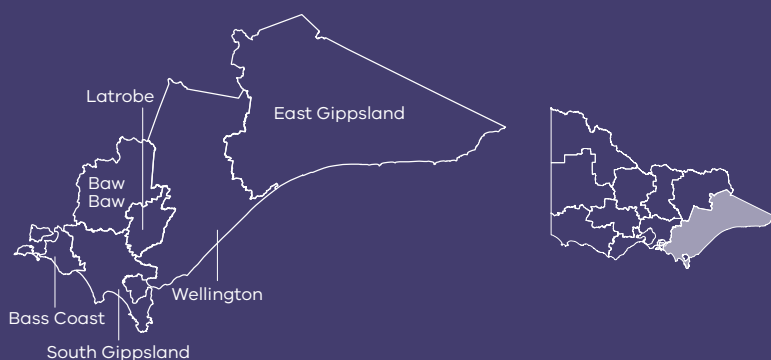
13.9%

Population growth
(2022–2036)



\$17.8B

Gross Regional Product
(2022)





CASE STUDY:

Gippsland positive advocacy campaign

The Gippsland Regional Partnership executed a marketing and communications strategy to promote Gippsland as a region of opportunity for business investment and lifestyle. A series of attention-grabbing media has been developed to showcase positive stories about Gippsland and Gippsland leaders, including print and online publications and social media tiles.

This project activated a partnership priority to embed a positive culture in Gippsland and is a cornerstone to the work it delivers. It is also an enabler to showcasing positive stories about Gippsland and Gippslanders, ultimately boosting pride in place.

Through the positive advocacy campaign, the partnership promoted the Elecsome project to the broader Gippsland community. The partnership continues to harness the positive advocacy campaign to ignite interest and advance actions that leverage future opportunities in the region.

Regional Development Australia

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is an Australian Government initiative that aims to develop confident regional economies that harness their competitive advantages.

Victoria's 6 RDA committees (Barwon South West, Gippsland, Grampians, Hume, Loddon Mallee and Melbourne) are part of a network of 53 committees across Australia's capital cities and regions, including the Indian Ocean territories and Norfolk Island. The committees work with all tiers of government, and business and community groups to support regional economic development.

Australia's regions are incredibly diverse and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. RDA committee members are passionate and dedicated local leaders who function as an effective conduit across government, industry and the community to support the development of their regions. They bring a broad range of experiences from local government, the private sector and community and not-for-profit sectors.

RDA committees collaborate with their key stakeholders to identify key priorities that will benefit the economic future of their region.

RDA key priorities matrix topics include:

- infrastructure investment
- economic development
- skills and ready workforce
- environmental and natural assets.

RDA committees in Victoria are unincorporated advisory committees supported by staff employed by the Victorian Government. RDA committees work in partnership with RDV, DJSIR and the Regional Partnerships. This ensures integrated and aligned arrangements for regional engagement and economic development across the state and regional communities.

In 2022–23, RDV supported Victoria's RDA committees to increase their collaboration and alignment with Regional Partnerships to:

- identify areas of collaboration and opportunity between the Australian and Victorian governments for regional Victoria
- address cross-jurisdictional barriers faced by regional Victorians
- support informed regional planning
- consult and engage with communities on economic development
- liaise with governments and local communities about government programs, services, grants and initiatives for regional development
- contribute to business growth plans and investment strategies
- promote increased awareness of Australian Government programs in their RDA region.

Barwon South West case study

Spirit of Tasmania ferry relocation – economic impact and opportunities

With funding provided from the Regional Partnership Development Fund, RDA Barwon South West led 2 studies that focused on the relocation of the Spirit of Tasmania ferry service from Port of Melbourne to GeelongPort. The studies assessed the economic impact and explored opportunities arising from the relocation. The Spirit of Tasmania ferry service commenced operations from GeelongPort in October 2022.

Collaborating with Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine, Great Ocean Road Tourism, RDA Tasmania, GeelongPort and Avalon Airport, the studies revealed opportunities in key sectors, including manufacturing, tourism, food and agri-business, and green energy. They also provided valuable insights into transportation modes and support services such as warehousing, storage and freight.

This project enabled RDA Barwon South West to successfully forge a relationship with RDA Tasmania, fostering an ongoing collaboration and joint opportunities. RDA Barwon South West remains committed to partnering with regional stakeholders to implement the 2 studies' recommended actions.

Gippsland case study

Gippsland Freight Infrastructure Masterplan refresh

In 2022–23 the RDA Gippsland Committee showed leadership and its collaborative approach by supporting the Gippsland region through projects, advocacy and engagements as it experienced significant change.

RDA Gippsland provided \$80,000 from the Regional Partnership Development Fund to fund the refreshed Gippsland Freight Infrastructure Masterplan. Prepared in partnership with industry, it lays out the infrastructure priorities for the effective movement of freight across the region over the next 5 years. RDA Gippsland presented the updated Gippsland Freight Infrastructure Masterplan to the Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories, The Hon. Kirsty McBain at a Committee for Gippsland industry event.

Meaningful engagement continued with business and key industry bodies. It ensured that RDA Gippsland remained informed of regional economic activities, industry needs and opportunities. The committee toured the Australian Sustainable Hardwoods facility in Heyfield and welcomed updates from Gippsland's largest renewable energy providers, the Port of Hastings Corporation and Barry Beach regarding offshore wind supply chain opportunities.

RDA Gippsland also assisted with the development of a submission to the Australian Government in support of the proposed offshore renewable energy infrastructure area for Bass Strait off Gippsland.

Grampians case study

Digital mobile roaming

The RDA Grampians Committee continued to advocate for domestic mobile roaming, particularly in the event of an emergency.

Following a long advocacy campaign that included collaborating with other RDAs across Australia, the ACCC conducted a Regional Mobile Infrastructure Inquiry. In April 2023, the ACCC released the draft report that included the admission that 'temporary mobile roaming during natural disasters is technically feasible.'

RDA Grampians will liaise with telecommunication providers to further explore the findings from the inquiry and implement mobile roaming during emergencies, pending the release of the final report.

Hume case study

Hume Economic Development Network

The Hume Economic Development Network (HEDN) comprises members from all 12 of the region's local government agencies and newly formed Alpine Resorts Victoria. HEDN is briefed on critical issues that impact the whole of Hume region to broaden the members' knowledge and understanding beyond their own LGA. The briefings also provide a more integrated method to collecting insights and data across the region.

The program for 2022–23 focused on skills development and training required to advance local economic viability and sustainability. The sessions were conducted by highly skilled and respected experts in their field.

HEDN's role expanded from skills and knowledge capacity development to include reporting functions back to RDA Hume to provide deeper place-based communications and feedback to all 3 levels of government.

Loddon Mallee case study

Growing Industry 4.0 investment

The new industrial revolution is being led by artificial intelligence, autonomous robots, big data, the Internet of Things and augmented reality as the forefront of Industry 4.0.

With Industry 4.0 jobs increasing by 67% across the Loddon Mallee region in one year, the RDA Loddon Mallee Committee has taken an interest in what it can do to support the growth of this sector, partnering with consultant group Delos Delta to understand where its competitive strengths lie and what can be done to establish the right environment for the growth of this sector.

The first output from this work was a maturity assessment for the region, a report that has identified the region's competitive advantages in the uptake of Industry 4.0 technologies, especially in the healthcare, agricultural and advanced manufacturing sectors.

RDA Loddon Mallee's work has also resulted in an investment prospectus designed to attract potential businesses to the region and an action plan to help improve the attractiveness of the region to high tech businesses.

Melbourne case study

2023 Avalon Airshow advanced manufacturing event

The RDA Melbourne Committee noted that a number of the Victorian regional economic development strategies (REDS) related to the promotion of advanced manufacturing, Industry 4.0 and innovation in their respective regions.

Drawing on the knowledge and networks of RDA Melbourne Committee members, an event showcasing advanced manufacturing was put together by RDA Melbourne and held at the Avalon Airshow in February 2023. Victorian regional RDAs and their stakeholders were invited with 70 participants attending the event.

Attendees heard presentations from a range of stakeholders, including:

- Swinburne University's Industry 4.0 program
- Gangi Germicidal Systems – a company which had undertaken the program
- Integra Systems – a company which has adopted Industry 4.0 in Melbourne's north
- Textron Systems – which discussed the drone economy
- NORTH Link – which runs the Melbourne's North Advanced Manufacturing Group – a project sponsored by RDA Melbourne and DJSIR.

Cross Border Commissioner: Asking the border question

Throughout 2022–23, Victoria’s Cross Border Commissioner continued to support border communities by advocating across government on their behalf.

During the year, the Cross Border Commissioner worked on a range of issues affecting border communities, including:

- successfully advocating for coverage of Victoria’s free nursing scholarship program to cover border residents accessing study in Mount Gambier, Bega and Albury
- assisting government to extend application of the regional public transport fare cap across border areas
- partnering with industry stakeholders to successfully advocate for extending the apprentice registration discount to cover border apprentices
- assisting government departments and agencies to ‘Ask the Border Question’ by analysing impacts of government decisions on border communities to avoid or reduce border anomalies
- placing particular emphasis on several significant cross-border priorities. This included road rule information for young drivers, vocational education and training access, improving access for our border communities to state-based grant programs and encouraging government agencies to consider impacts on cross border communities while designing legislation and/or government policies and programs

- visiting isolated border communities and working with government departments and agencies to ensure that government programs had explicit provision for these communities
- working with the New South Wales Cross Border Commissioner to progress joint work under the Memorandum of Understanding for Cross Border Collaboration between Victoria and New South Wales
- liaising with South Australia’s new Cross Border Commissioner, who commenced in April 2023, to facilitate efforts addressing anomalies on that border.

The Commissioner hosted several forums including events in Mildura for social services agencies from the border areas of Victoria, NSW and South Australia, as well as joint meetings of local government leaders from western Victoria and southeast South Australia.

The Cross Border Commissioner continued to participate in Victoria’s emergency management structures pursuant to Recommendation 16 of the Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian fire season (Phase 1) report by Victoria’s Inspector-General for Emergency Management, and provided input on cross-border impacts during the 2022 Victorian flood emergency.

Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS)

The Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) were released in May 2022.

The REDS provide a consistent, evidence-based framework to understand each of Victoria's 9 Regional Partnership regions and identify economic opportunities in agriculture, clean economy, manufacturing and visitor economy to support Victoria's diverse regional economies. Each REDS is accompanied by a one-page summary and supporting analysis providing detailed regional economic insights and data.

The public REDS data dashboard complements the REDS as an online interactive resource to maintain a contemporary evidence base and inform further research, analysis, strategic planning and investment.

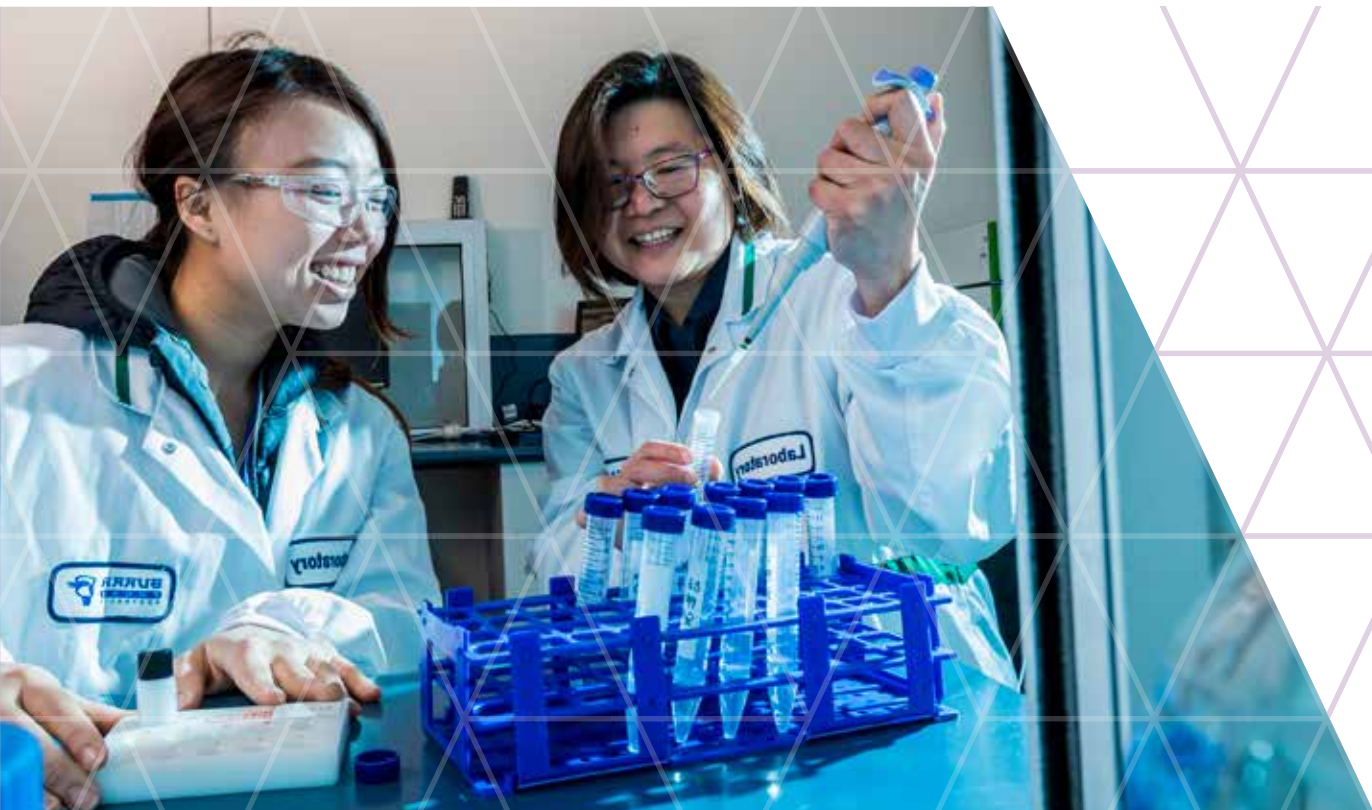
Since their release in October 2022, the REDS have underpinned policy development and engagement with other government portfolios, strengthening regional policy input to strategic land use planning, food and fibre sector development opportunities, housing, and workforce and skills initiatives.

The REDS strategic policy directions and strong evidence base support the development and delivery of several key Victorian Government initiatives.

Victoria's world-leading targets to cut the state's greenhouse gas emissions and achieve net zero emissions by 2045 present significant opportunities for regional communities. The REDS underpin a place-based approach to supporting Victoria's net zero transition, including an evidence-based approach to identifying opportunities to capture regional economic benefits.

The REDS' strategic directions have also catalysed new program development to drive value-adding opportunities in the regional food and fibre sector, which is a cross-cutting strategic direction across all 9 REDS. The work identifies opportunities to integrate and capture value from Victoria's key agriculture and manufacturing sectors to boost regional development.

The REDS underpin further policy research to better understand key regional innovation performance factors and how these can uplift economic development. Beyond their core policy applications, the REDS have also been applied to grant assessment and administration, providing a strategic framework for the assessment of applications to the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund throughout the year.



Geelong City Deal

The \$502.48 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 2022–23 financial year marks the fourth year of GCD delivery, with 11 of 26 projects now complete and its 2 major projects (the \$294 million Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre Precinct Development and \$108.15 million Twelve Apostles Precinct redevelopment) on track for completion in 2026.

A 3-year review of the GCD program was finalised in late 2022, assessing long-term progress towards its agreed objectives. Based on extensive stakeholder interviews, the review highlighted the positive collaboration between the Victorian and Australian governments, as well as successful integration of investment across the region

Key achievements in 2022–23

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, in late 2022 the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC) appointed a senior project advisor to support its collaboration on GCD projects based on Wadawurrung Country.

In April 2023, the GCD's ongoing partnership with the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) was formalised with the assistance of additional partnership funding. As with WTOAC, the partnership with 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.

Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre

The Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCEC) is the GCD's flagship major project and it made significant progress in 2022–23, including completion of the request for proposal (RFP) stage.

GCEC will be delivered as an innovative public private partnership that transforms the Geelong waterfront, driving significant economic, social and cultural growth for the whole city and broader Geelong region.

In August 2022, 3 of the state's most experienced construction teams were shortlisted. RFPs closed in March 2023 and proposals – including masterplanning of the entire precinct and detailed design for the convention and exhibition centre, public spaces and a 200-room hotel – were evaluated over several months.

The preferred bidder and design is due to be announced in early 2023–24, with construction on track to commence shortly after.

Twelve Apostles Precinct redevelopment

The GCD is delivering \$108.15 million of investment in priority projects along the Shipwreck Coast including the Twelve Apostles Precinct redevelopment.

Development Victoria is delivering the project and appointed Grimshaw Architects as the head design consultant in 2022.

Planning and design work are underway, with Grimshaw Architects working in partnership with the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCAPA) and EMAC.

From April to May 2023, the first stage of community engagement was undertaken. It sought to better understand how people use and value the precinct. Feedback will be taken into consideration by the design team with further stages of community engagement planned for the 2023–24 financial year.

The GCD's Shipwreck Coast Priority Projects commitment also includes the \$23.4 million Private Sector Business Enablement Fund (PSBEF). Projects funded under Round 1 are underway, including Princetown Enabling Public Works; Great Ocean Road Retreat; and the 12 Apostles Hot Springs Resort. The first Round 1 project at Kangaroo Camp was completed in October 2022.



Progress of other GCD projects underway in 2022–23

Significant progress was made across the remaining GCD projects, including completion of the Laneways Breakthrough project and the Queenscliff Ferry Terminal Upgrade.

- **Laneways Breakthrough project** – completed in March 2023, it provides a direct link from Malop Street to Geelong’s exciting Little Malop Street restaurant, bar and retail precinct
- **Queenscliff Ferry Terminal Upgrade** – construction was completed in late 2022 and the terminal officially opened in April 2023, offering passengers a world-class gateway to Geelong, the Bellarine and the Great Ocean Road.

Other key project progress in 2022–23 included:

- **Deakin University Geelong Future Economy Precinct Road Upgrade project** – Epworth Place extension reached practical completion and will be opened to the public following finalisation of all local government requirements
- **Geelong Arts and Culture Precinct Public Realm** – construction took place in 2022–23 and is pending final completion
- **Green Spine** – Block 3 started preliminary works in June 2022. Construction is expected to be completed in 2023–24
- **Moolap Management Masterplan** – the RFP to appoint professional services to support the preparation of the masterplan was released in September 2022 and evaluation is currently underway
- **Great Ocean Road projects** – An extensive review of GCD Great Ocean Road-based projects was undertaken in 2022 to address environmental, planning and budget concerns. It resulted in GORCAPA, as the relevant land manager, taking over delivery responsibility. In 2022–23, the GCD team worked closely with key stakeholders to ensure the overall and intended outcomes of the projects were achieved for this iconic visitor destination, while balancing the environmental needs of the sensitive coastline.

2022 Victorian flood recovery

Under state emergency management arrangements, the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) works with communities, business and industry partners impacted by emergency events.

The consequences of emergencies and economic shocks are particularly challenging for parts of rural and regional Victoria that have a narrower economic base, smaller numbers of key or anchor businesses, and more limited access to staff, resources and digital connectivity.

Following major floods in October 2022, RDV worked with partners on the ground, including local government and business associations, to ensure support was available to aid the economic recovery of regional businesses and communities. This included extra support for the hardest hit towns such as Rochester and Falls Creek, to facilitate the supply of essential goods and support business viability and recovery.





Regional report Barwon South West



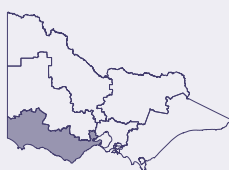
Regional Director's report

The Barwon South West (BSW) region is the smallest of Victoria's regions in geographic area but has the largest population of 445,454 and the largest economy with 225,535 jobs. The region had \$28.0 billion in Gross Regional Product in 2022.

In 2022–23, RDV Barwon South West worked with regional businesses to help create 171 jobs and generate almost \$96 million in investment.

The Portland office continued to work closely with industry and government agencies to identify and deliver initiatives to support the region. This included support for regional manufacturer FormFlow to establish a facility to build relocatable houses to address regional housing challenges. The office also hosted staff from Glenelg Shire Council during the year after significant storm damage to Glenelg Shire's head office.

We worked in partnership with Gunditjmara Traditional Owners on significant projects to develop and protect cultural landscapes at Budj Bim and Tower Hill. We are supporting Wadawurrung Traditional Owners to assess their cultural assets and develop a cultural tourism plan. We also continued to support and promote the work of the Geelong Aboriginal Employment Taskforce which brings together local Aboriginal community representatives, employer groups and businesses to drive better employment outcomes for Aboriginal people.



The team continued to work across government portfolios to support Regional Partnerships and the RDA Barwon South West Committee to help facilitate positive outcomes for regional communities and progress our regional priorities.

It was exciting to see the Spirit of Tasmania commence daily services from its new home port in Geelong. RDA BSW led two studies to assess the economic impact opportunities arising from the relocation. The studies are ongoing.

Brett Ince
Regional Director, Barwon South West

Regional highlights

- Facilitated the FormFlow housing facility project in Portland, with funding from the Portland Diversification Fund. The project will transform an unused Portland airport hangar into a \$2.35 million housing manufacturing facility capable of producing up to 200 relocatable houses a year for the Glenelg Shire and surrounding regions, creating 50 new jobs and an estimated 150 indirect jobs
- Continued to support Gunditjmara Traditional Owners to develop the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape. Previous investments in the Tae Rak Aquaculture Centre and Bush Tucker Café contributed to higher visitor numbers in 2022–23. The Victorian Government increased its investment in Tae Rak (Lake Condah) with an additional \$7 million for Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to develop an amphitheatre, yarning circle, boardwalk and associated interpretation of the World Heritage listed Tae Rak eel traps
- Achieved significant progress on the Timboon to Port Campbell stage of the 12 Apostles Trail. The project will deliver a 20 km off-road cycling and walking trail joining the Camperdown-Timboon Rail Trail to the heart of Port Campbell. The Timboon to Port Campbell section of the 12 Apostles Trail will offer a quality nature-based experience allowing visitors to enjoy even more of the Great Ocean Road region. It will help distribute economic benefit from the coastline through to the hinterland and increase visitor yield for the local economies of Port Campbell and Timboon
- Commenced works on the Port Campbell town centre revitalisation following a \$6 million investment from the Victorian Government's Regional Infrastructure Fund. The project will deliver public improvements in the town's retail, commercial and foreshore areas. Works on Tregea Street were completed.

Key outcomes

Invested in advanced manufacturing – Edencraft

Supported Moolap-based boat manufacturer Edencraft International to install advanced manufacturing machinery at its workshop with support from the Regional Jobs Fund. This will help increase production and reduce manufacturing timeframes to support the company to build up to 100 boats per year, up from 30.

Innovative and sustainable businesses – Think Fencing

Supported Portarlington manufacturer Think Fencing to expand its innovative line of products and hire new staff thanks to an investment from the Regional Jobs Fund. Think Fencing produces fencing and decking with its decking product helping reduce PVC waste going to landfill. The company's products leverage new research undertaken in partnership with the CSIRO.

New jobs created in Newcomb – Jayco Prestige

Created 15 new jobs including workshop technicians, sales and administration staff at Prestige Jayco Caravans Geelong, one of Victoria's largest motorhome and caravan dealerships. With support from the Regional Jobs Fund, the local business will redevelop its existing sales centre in Geelong to meet growing demand. The new roles were in addition to the 41 staff the business already employed at its Geelong site.

Camperdown-Timboon Rail Trail upgrade

Invested \$374,885 from the Regional Infrastructure Fund to replace 2 bridges on the Camperdown-Timboon Rail Trail. The 2 new footbridges between Glenfyne and Curdies River Bridge will ensure more visitors can enjoy the full length of the trail.

Affordable housing units for seasonal workers

Supported construction of 5 affordable housing units at Moyne Koroit Caravan Park, with \$465,000 funding from the Regional Recovery Fund. This will provide local businesses in Moyne Shire with more options to support key seasonal workers in the region.



Regional report Gippsland



Regional Director's report

Gippsland's regional economic strengths in clean and renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, food and fibre, and healthcare and social assistance continue to drive innovation and attract investment and people to the region.

Gippsland is at the forefront of offshore wind development which will bring a clean, advanced and sustainable energy technology that will power homes and businesses and provide jobs for the region and across the state. This year, the Australian Government declared an area in the Bass Strait off Gippsland as suitable for offshore wind energy development – a first for Australia.

RDV Gippsland is also supporting a feasibility study into commercial applications for the abundant geothermal energy that lies beneath the Latrobe Valley through a partnership with Melbourne University.

Local businesses and communities continue to benefit from a wide range of projects we support such as the Envite Environment program. This provides young people with skills to set them on a career path that will be highly valued in the East Gippsland wilderness coast region.

In May 2023 the announcement was made for a revised timeline for Victoria's native timber transition. With native timber harvesting in Victoria's state forests now ending on 1 January 2024, RDV worked with stakeholders to commence facilitating the government's support package.

The team also worked with the Latrobe Valley Authority on the Latrobe Valley and Gippsland Transition Plan. This important work allows the Gippsland community to set out their long-term vision for the region with a plan to help create more jobs and develop economic growth in the region.



Our valuable partners in supporting our community include the Gippsland Regional Partnership members and RDA Gippsland. Their work continues to both inform investment decisions as well as influence and shape policy. In 2022–23 the RDA Gippsland Committee supported Wellington Shire Council in developing the Wellington Renewable Energy Impact and Readiness Study – an important assessment of the offshore wind opportunities for Wellington Shire Council and its community.

RDV Gippsland appreciates the work of our staff, partners across our community, business and industry, educational institutions, our 6 councils as well as many other local and regional peak bodies and associations. We work together for our community and our determination to be the most liveable region in the country is stronger than ever.

Sara Rhodes-Ward
Regional Director, Gippsland

Regional highlights

- Facilitated the Living Local – Regional Community Grants Fund to purchase equipment and undertake minor building refurbishments and maintenance works to help support local communities. Highlights included the Walhalla Goldfields Railway, Gippsland Employment Skills Training Inc. Moe, Paynesville Neighbourhood Centre and Mirboo North Opportunity Shop
- Supported renovation of the Maffco Brewery & Taphouse, transforming the century-old dairy factory into a modern brewery and paddock-to-plate restaurant. The grand opening weekend in May 2023 celebrated the project completion 6 months ahead of schedule. Up to 15 jobs were created during the renovation with an additional 8 ongoing roles already filled. Funding of \$400,000 was provided from the Regional Tourism Investment Fund
- Delivered the Metung Hot Springs project, with \$1.5 million funding each from the Tourism Infrastructure Program – Flagship Projects and the Local Economic Recovery Regional Economic Programs Fund, for a total co-investment of \$4.5 million. The project has produced Australia's first hot springs golf course, with more than 30 people employed and up to 200 patrons visiting the hot springs daily
- Continued to support the Bullock Island Masterplan with funding of \$1.9 million. This has contributed to the redevelopment of Bullock Island's public spaces and will help support and facilitate further private sector investment in the area. Upgrades to visitor facilities will enhance recreational fishing and crabbing activities while supporting the visitor economy in Lakes Entrance and more broadly the Gippsland Lakes.

Key outcomes

Yes Youth Hub – Backyard project

Supported the Yes Youth Hub – Backyard project with \$15,681 funding from the Living Local – Regional Fund. Yes Youth Hub Bass Coast is a community-driven space for young people to come together, connect, grow and have fun. Improving the backyard area has allowed for greater attendance, improved experiences, and provided more opportunities for young people to connect and participate.

Habitat Creations

Supported Habitat Creations in progressing a \$613,000 investment to expand its plant nursery growing area and develop its new head office at Yarragon. The project will create up to 8 new jobs in the Latrobe Valley providing the site with a plant holding area under a multi-span shade house structure for more efficient irrigation and improved plant health.

Wood Street Windows Pty Ltd

Supported expansion of Wood Street Windows in Bairnsdale. The \$700,000 project will deliver an uplift of 30% in manufacturing capability ensuring that more people in the region can build their homes with locally manufactured components. The expansion will create 10 new jobs.

Conservation and Land Management program

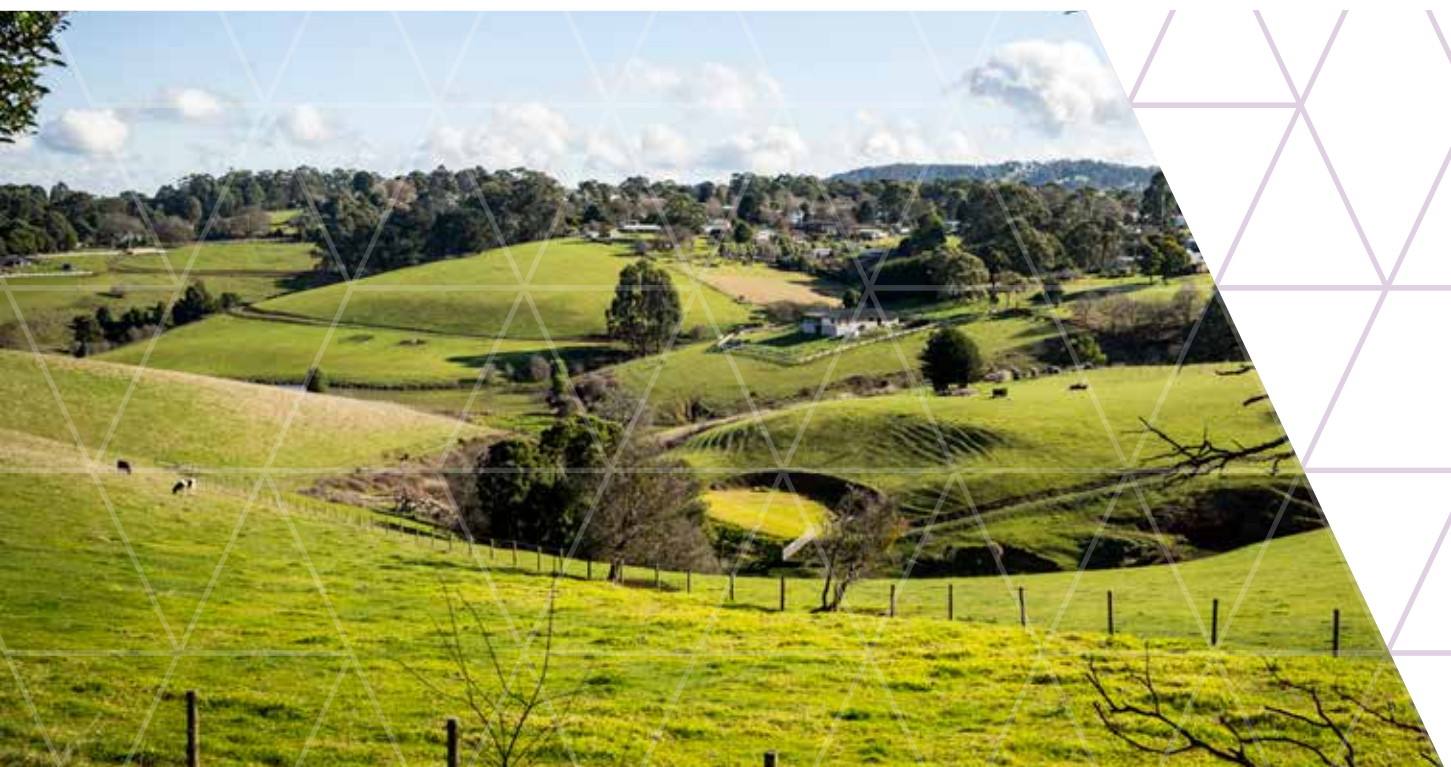
Supported the Conservation and Land Management program with \$851,600 funding from the Local Economic Recovery Regional Economic Programs Fund. The program aims to empower young people by building their confidence, providing a sense of purpose and creating direction through education and work experience. A total of 20 trainees and 6 school-based trainees aged 14–18 participated in the program with 17 trainees successfully transitioned into work and/or further education. The project supported more than 40 bushfire-impacted landowners and 15 community projects resulting in positive social and environmental outcomes in the East Gippsland community.

Latrobe Valley Smart Geothermal Industrial Loop feasibility

Provided support through the Investment Fast-Track Fund for Melbourne University to undertake a design study for the Smart Geothermal Industrial Loop (SGIL) with a focus on industrial-zoned areas of Morwell, to advance the development of the SGIL to the pre-tender stage. The aim of the project is to sustainably develop and use the geothermal resource in the Latrobe Valley for the benefit of business and the community. The findings from the feasibility study will be available late 2023 and will inform further investigation into detailed design and governance modelling.

Energy transition project

Facilitated the development of Victoria's first end-of-life solar panel recycling plant at Kilmany near the Latrobe Valley. A state of the art project supporting the region's strategic energy transition, along with the creation of 30 ongoing jobs, Elecsome Pty Ltd has constructed a \$3.65 million facility with a target capacity of 180 kilotonne (kt) of waste processing per annum. It leverages innovative and advanced technology to achieve up to 98% extraction from end-of-life (EOL) solar panels.



Regional report Grampians



Regional Director's report

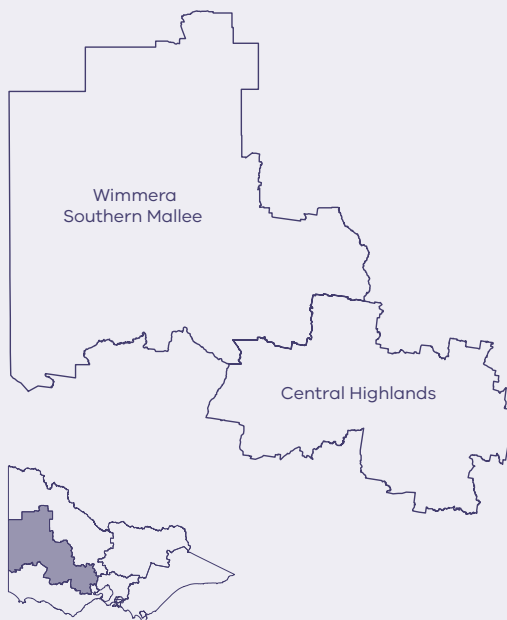
The 2022–23 financial year has been a time of rapid population growth in the Central Highlands region, particularly in Ballarat as more people discover the advantages of living in regional Victoria. Across the Wimmera, population numbers have tended to stabilise. The RDV Grampians team has supported our communities to embrace new-found opportunities for investment, growth and liveability.

The 2 Regional Economic Development Strategies for our region continue to provide clear direction – guiding investment and support that will effectively capitalise on our region's attributes and address challenges. This was evident in the Wimmera Southern Mallee where the REDS highlighted strengthening and diversifying local agriculture and food produce manufacturing as a strategic direction for the region.

The year has not been without its adversities. The floods in October and November 2022 impacted many businesses, communities and people across our region and workforce shortages remain in some sectors. Nevertheless, through collaboration and co-design with our project partners we have unlocked more than \$174 million worth of capital investment.

Key projects included renovations to Her Majesty's Theatre, construction of the Hamilton Street bridge in Horsham and lighting installation at Lake Wendouree. Our team is proud to have played a role in helping communities realise other vital priorities such as sharing Aboriginal art and stories through the recently opened Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative's (BADAC) Perridak Art Gallery.

RDV Grampians continues to benefit from the passion and expertise of committee members on the Wimmera Southern Mallee and Central Highlands Regional Partnerships and Regional Development Australia.



The 3 committees have worked behind the scenes to successfully advocate for new strategic projects and collaborations that will help meet our regions' challenges in priority areas including housing, childcare, digital connectivity and tourism.

Together, businesses and communities in the Grampians can look back on the year with a sense of achievement. As a team, we highly value the relationships we have with our key stakeholders across private industry, local government and community and look forward to delivering further prosperity with them in the year ahead.

Sarah Henderson

Acting Regional Director, Grampians

Regional highlights

- Supported by \$2.1 million in Victorian Government funding, delivered Hammon Park Trailhead in the heart of Creswick. The trailhead was designed for people of all abilities to build their mountain biking experience before tackling Creswick Trails within the neighbouring network. This comprehensive project also delivered new accessible toilets, picnic and barbecue areas, and a new play space for young people.
- Completed works at the Perridak Art Gallery. Run by Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC), the gallery showcases Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories and art with the wider community. The Perridak Art Gallery supports employment, creates training opportunities for Aboriginal people in retail, management, framing and display, and will drive Aboriginal cultural experiences in the Ballarat region for the economic, social and cultural benefit of the whole community.

- Continued to transform the Wimmera riverfront to create a new riverside destination and public realm at the southern end of Horsham's main street. The project allows the Wimmera riverfront's natural beauty to be appreciated by a greater number of visitors, improves the visitor experience, and communicates the history and ongoing importance of Aboriginal culture to the area
- Supported the Stawell Underground Physics Laboratory with a \$5 million investment each from the Victorian and Australian governments. Built 1 km underground in disused sections of a working gold mine in Stawell, a team of scientists and engineers is working to discover the elusive nature of dark matter.
- Revitalised the suburb of Sebastopol in Ballarat through 13 projects that have so far delivered extensive tree plantings, street landscaping, and new infrastructure including a skate facility, 3 x 3 basketball court at M.R Power Park and additional lighting to support the junior soccer teams at St George's Reserve.
- Supported Regional Workforce Pilots that are strategically located across the state to help rural and regional communities attract more skilled workers which they need to grow. The Grampians resettlement program is supporting new migrants in Ararat to engage directly with local employers to provide pre-employment education and training relevant to local industry needs.

Key outcomes

Investment in the Asia Pacific Renewable Energy Tech-Transition Centre

Central Highlands Regional Partnership successfully advocated for investment in Stage 2 of the Asia Pacific Renewable Energy Tech-Transition Centre (APRETC) at Federation TAFE in Ballarat. The \$6 million allocated to the centre in the Victorian Government's 2023–24 State Budget will help Federation University Australia establish the state-of-the-art centre focused on training, research-led maintenance and innovative diagnostics. The centre will serve as an education career pathway for workers in the renewable energy industry.

Independent living community for Aboriginal Elders

Commenced construction of a culturally safe village for Aboriginal Elders in Ballarat. Led by Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BADAC), the build consists of 4 one-bedroom units and 4 2-bedroom units, onsite manager's quarters, treatment rooms for visiting medical personnel, a large central hall, garden, and cultural themes and spaces. This independent living community will help BADAC support Aboriginal people in the Central Highlands to have culturally appropriate support as they age.

Sustainable childcare for rural kids

Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnership recognised that there was a need to extend sustainable childcare services into small rural townships. This project is providing potential solutions to overcome barriers to achieving sustainable rural childcare, including workforce shortages, lack of suitable infrastructure and limitations on the co-location of childcare with kindergartens.

Bannockburn Southwest Industrial Estate

Supported construction of the Bannockburn Southwest Industrial Estate through private investment and \$2 million from the Regional Infrastructure Fund. The project delivered an onsite water retarding basin, pump system and earthworks on a 1.7 km table drain. The expansion addressed a critically short supply of industrial-zones land in the area and will attract new and expanding businesses into approximately 70 lots on 21 hectares of land.

Digital mobile roaming during emergencies

Advocated for domestic mobile roaming, particularly in emergencies, through the Regional Development Australia (RDA) Grampians Committee. Following a sustained advocacy campaign in collaboration with other RDAs, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) conducted a Regional Mobile Infrastructure Inquiry. In April 2023, the ACCC released a draft report that concluded that 'temporary mobile roaming during natural disasters is technically feasible.'

Investment in high energy efficient windows

Provided support from the Regional Jobs Fund to JG King Pty Ltd to establish a new \$6.5 million project windows and doors facility in Ballarat. The facility will house a modern production line capable of manufacturing high energy efficient windows to reduce the heating and cooling requirements of homes. The facility will create 15 new full-time equivalent jobs.

Regional report Hume



Regional Director's report

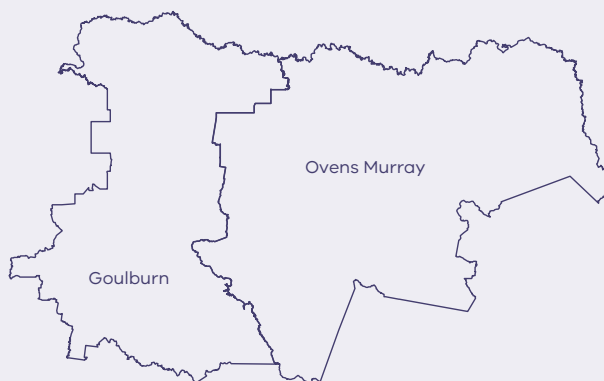
Located in northeast Victoria, the Hume region is recognised for its national economic contribution to manufacturing, food production, agriculture, transport and the visitor economy. Hume is home to 5 of Victoria's 6 alpine resorts and accounts for more than a quarter of the region's visitation.

Challenges continued for Hume in 2022–23. After bushfires and floods in recent years, our businesses and communities were impacted by heavy rain and flooding – including the landslide on and closure of Bogong High Plains Road (the pathway to Falls Creek) – and bringing forward the exit date for the Victorian Forestry Transition program. While any transition is a challenge, the region continued to prove that place-based local knowledge, connections and relationships, and sheer regional passion and determination can pull it through the toughest of times.

We have completed 48 projects under various funding streams, supporting the creation of 383 new jobs in the region through the delivery of \$159 million in business-related capital expenditure projects.

We continued to work closely with our 5 alpine resorts, advocating across government to aid recovery from a range of high impact events. Support was also given as they diversified their green season product offering, future proofing their operations through ongoing expansion and improvement to each resort's key infrastructure.

Our team continued its work supporting our Regional Partnerships and Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committee, advocating for key local projects and priorities. This work was crucial in ensuring the voices of our local communities were heard by government and that funding was allocated where it was needed most.



I would like to thank our colleagues across Victorian Government departments who we work closely with daily. Your support and partnership ensure we provide a whole-of-government response to seize opportunities and mitigate issues across Hume.

As always, I recognise the outstanding work and ongoing resilience of our RDV Hume team. It has withstood a great deal of adversity while continuing to deliver what can only be described as first-rate, high standard of 'business as usual' work for all our Hume communities and stakeholders.

Matt Nelson
Regional Director, Hume

Regional highlights

- Supported communities through several significant events including the 2022 spring floods, the Bogong High Plains Road land slip and the early exit date for the Victorian Forestry Transition program. This work included facilitating connections with Victorian and local government and other key stakeholders, assisting with access to program support and grant funding, acting as the trusted information source on the ground, and providing key regional advocacy for challenges and opportunities, as well as a range of ad hoc supporting roles
- Assisted in facilitating the creation of 383 jobs, delivering \$159 million in capital expenditure and \$6.4 million in exports. The Regional Operations team continued to support ongoing strong interest in the Hume region for investment facilitation and business attraction. Over the past 3 years, RDV Hume has facilitated the delivery of 1,358 new jobs and \$603 million in capital expenditure by business

- Delivered 48 community-based projects to enhance liveability in the region. Highlights included completing the Shepparton's Maude St Mall; Mansfield Autism Statewide Service's 'Operation Gamechanger'; Great Victorian Rail Trail Art Installations; Stage 2 of the Great River Road project in the Upper Murray; and supporting a range of localised planning and feasibility projects
- Supported the continued growth of iconic visitor economy projects such as Ride High Country and Prosecco Road. There were 13 active projects from Round 2 of Ride High Country with many completed over the year, further activating the regional visitor economy. The program has attracted and supported in excess of \$5 million in investment to activate private sector development in cycle tourism across northeast Victoria, creating an estimated 70 direct jobs
- Delivered the final portion of \$18.9 million funding for the region's 5 Alpine resorts. The funding, delivered over the past 3 years, supported 9 key projects to continue the resorts' growth and development through improved infrastructure and strengthening both green and white season product offers. Alpine resorts were a significant contributor to regional economies with a combined contribution of over \$1.1 billion, attracting one million visitors and sustaining nearly 10,000 jobs. The investments will help diversify the predominantly winter market to year-round visitation which will increase yield, regional employment, private sector investment, and greater community engagement and cohesion.

Key outcomes

Mt Buller Electricity Upgrade project

Supported the final stages of delivery of the \$3.8 million Mt Buller Electricity Upgrade project. The project received \$3.6 million funding from RDV and delivered vital additional electricity capacity to Mt Buller, enabling consistent and continued operation and expansion of the snowmaking system, accommodation and visitor attractions. Thanks to a new 'snow guarantee' supported by the snow-making system, the 2022 season was the busiest in resort history.

Food and fibre industry

Continued to support the ongoing growth and development of the region's food and fibre industry through key Regional Jobs Fund projects including glasshouse developments with Cannatrek, Flavorite and Katunga Fresh. Nestle's confectionery operations in Broadford and Unilever's mayonnaise operation in Tatura were expanded.

Connecting the eastern seaboard

Supported ongoing work to progress opportunities for the region's key industrial and logistics precincts. Hume region's critical location and connectivity on the eastern seaboard saw renewed opportunities for stakeholders to progress their development and investment priorities, including Logic Wodonga, GV Link Shepparton and Hildene at Seymour.

Working with stakeholders

Continued to work with key proponents to identify barriers to investment, work through planning requirements and regulatory challenges, and advocate for funding support to develop place-based priority initiatives such as the Lake Eildon Activation, Seymour Revitalisation Initiative and Thompson's Beach at Cobram.

Goulburn Murray Woka Yurringa Energy Feasibility Study

Supported funding for the Goulburn Murray Woka Yurringa Energy Feasibility Study which laid out the opportunity for a game-changing Aboriginal-owned renewable energy development in the region. The project will provide a circular economy and clean energy solution to support decarbonisation of industry in the region, while also creating opportunities for the agriculture sector, local employment and engagement with the Indigenous community.

Advocating for communities and stakeholders

Performed the important role of supporting the region's voice into the Australian Government through the Regional Development Australia (RDA) Hume Committee. The RDA, with the guidance and support of the RDV Hume team, provided intelligence to government on key issues impacting the region including workforce challenges, natural disasters and gaps in program design or service delivery. A significant outcome was the successful advocacy by the RDA Committee to have Hume's alpine resorts recognised as eligible for Australian Government infrastructure funding.

Delivering for our local communities

Facilitated the transition of our Economic Development and Investment and Trade teams to form the 'Regional Operations Group' through local leadership on the ground. The change aims to provide a more comprehensive and holistic RDV delivery offering for rural and regional communities and stakeholders. With an emphasis on a place-based approach to our work and taking a whole-of-Victorian-Government lens, the newly formed approach to work allows us to best utilise the knowledge and skills within our team to deliver best value outcomes to our rural and regional partners and networks.

Regional report Loddon Mallee



Regional Director's report

The Loddon Mallee region occupies more than a quarter of Victoria and has one of the most consistently warm climates in the state. It also boasts the beautiful waterways of the Murray River, acclaimed restaurants and wineries, heritage towns and grand forests. For these reasons it's a popular region for tourists, locals and businesses. In the last financial year, the RDV Loddon Mallee team supported 205 projects including \$16.27 million in grants.

The 2022 floods had a significant impact. Towns including Rochester, Echuca, Bridgewater, Kerang, Swan Hill and Mildura experienced inundation spanning many weeks or months. In the case of Rochester, Echuca and Bridgewater, homes and businesses were significantly impacted, with recovery still continuing. RDV staff worked to support local councils, businesses and communities through this challenging period.

An important focus of the year was delivering on Galkangu – Bendigo GovHub. Galkangu created more than 200 jobs during construction and another 1,200 indirect jobs have been supported during construction. The project is expected to inject \$131 million into the local economy each year through flow-on benefits.

The state-of-the-art GovHub also features a 6-Star Green rating and includes energy efficient indoor air-quality systems, solar panels, water and energy monitoring systems and a sustainable timber frame. Galkangu is from the Dja Dja Wurrung language and means 'build together, we make together, make things happen together, more connected to Country.' The name was selected after consultation with Traditional Owners and Geographic Names Victoria.



This is the first GovHub in Victoria to bring Victorian Government departments and local council together in one centre.

The RDV team provided support to the Loddon Campaspe and Mallee Regional Partnerships and Regional Development Australia Committee, and played a critical role in creating opportunities for our rural and regional towns and cities.

All 3 committees have supported strategic projects to help understand some of the most pressing challenges in Loddon Mallee.

Leanne Rosewall

Regional Director, Loddon Mallee

Regional highlights

- Led the Galkangu Bendigo GovHub project in partnership with Development Victoria and builders Icon Fairbrother who worked alongside DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) and Traditional Owners. Up to 1,000 Victorian Government and City of Greater Bendigo Council staff will work together in the heart of the city, giving locals a one-stop-shop for government services.
- Worked with Central Goldfields Shire Council to transform the Maryborough Railway Station. The project received \$1,800,000 from the Regional Infrastructure Fund for a visitor and activity hub alongside the active Vline service. The revitalised heritage-listed railway station has activated a number of uses including a new visitor information centre; a community creative studio and sculpture garden; and an expanded co-working space and cafe. Parking at the station has been updated to include spaces for recreation vehicles and bicycles.

- Supported the City of Greater Bendigo (CoGB) to prepare and plan for the Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct. CoGB has purchased 155 hectares of the 294-hectare site on the outskirts of Marong to develop an employment precinct and provide critical industrial land for the growing city. An RDV grant supported the delivery of technical studies to inform the important planning phase of the project.
- Supported the CoGB to finalise designs and progress planning for the Bendigo Art Gallery Redevelopment. The project will see a comprehensive redevelopment of the iconic art gallery that will deliver a new entrance, additional exhibition and storage space, a Dja Dja Wurrung keeping place and improved dining and retail offerings. RDV support enabled the development of comprehensive designs and planning activities.

Key outcomes

Central Goldfields Art Gallery

Delivered the revitalised Central Goldfields Art Gallery to increase exhibitions, expand community art programs and draw further visitors to the region. The project was funded with \$1.7 million from the Regional Infrastructure Fund and the Regional Tourism Investment Fund to transform the aging building. The gallery boasts world-class architecture by merging the historic elements of a 19th century fire station with a contemporary designed modern public art gallery.

Birchip Cropping Group Nexus Accommodation Design

A place-based solution that will provide residential accommodation and conference facilities to support research, onsite trials, agricultural innovation and growth of our broadacre farmers. RDV funding has enabled a full design brief, construction budget and service proposal to be delivered 'shovel ready' for the next stage. The project is co-funded and supported by the Birchip Cropping Group Inc. – a not-for-profit agricultural research and extension organisation led by farmers from the Wimmera and Mallee regions of Victoria.

Murrayville permanent fuel solution

Supported Mildura Regional Development to provide the Murrayville community with an accessible fuel supply for residents. The project involves the construction of an unmanned fuel station, consisting of an all-weather platform with large tanks, payment terminals and a formal vehicle access road. The fuel station will be open to the public in October 2023.

Mountain Distilling Company expansion

Supported Mountain Distilling Company in their \$12 million gin and whiskey distillery expansion in New Gisborne. A new brewhouse system will produce more products more efficiently. Bottling, labelling and packaging equipment will also bring all stages of the production inhouse for the first time. The project will create 17 new jobs.

Revitalising Mildura's CBD

Provided \$300,000 towards the Mildura CBD Urban Regener8 project to revitalise the city's streetscape with more shade, accessibility and spaces for outdoor dining. Footpaths and walkways will be created to link the CBD's tree-lined streets to the riverfront, connecting the 2 landmarks for locals and visitors while enhancing the visual appeal of the iconic town. The improved streetscapes will support additional outdoor dining in Mildura and help stimulate spending and investment opportunities to support local restaurants and cafes to attract more patrons.

A new planetarium for Bendigo

Completed the new Bendigo Planetarium at the Discovery Science and Technology Centre in May 2023. Double the size of the original site, the project was backed by \$250,000 from the Regional Tourism Investment Fund to attract even more visitors to the region. The redesigned planetarium is centred around a state-of-the-art dome theatre that displays high-resolution images of planets and the cosmos to teach audiences about space. The new planetarium is expected to attract more than 14,000 new visitors to the region annually.

Lost Watering Hole Brewery

Supported Lancefield's Lost Watering Hole Brewery with \$200,000 from the Regional Jobs Fund. Since opening in December 2022, the independent brewery has produced 2,000 litres of beer per week and has served a total of 14,000 meals at its restaurant, proving a key tourist destination for the region.

Promoting health and wellbeing in Romsey

Supported the community-led Romsey Ecotherapy Park. The community-driven project created up to 12 jobs during construction and is expected to create flow-on opportunities for local businesses through increased visitation to the area. The project's construction was supported by a \$615,000 grant from the Regional Infrastructure Fund. The free public park opened in October 2022 and was developed in a former schoolyard with artworks and other elements designed to engage all the senses to promote health and wellbeing.



Financials 2022–23



2022–23 output targets and performance against Budget Paper 3 measures

Performance measures	Unit of measure	2022–23 actual	2022–23 target	Performance variation (%)
Quantity				
Actual export sales generated for regional businesses as a result of participation in government programs	\$ million	57.7	45	+28.2
Economic development and service delivery projects supported	number	225	90	+150
Jobs in regional Victoria resulting from government investment facilitation services and assistance	number	1017	1000	+1.7
New investment in regional Victoria resulting from government facilitation services and assistance	\$ million	682.4	500	+36.5
Participant satisfaction with implementation of Regional Development Victoria programs	per cent	97	90	+7.8

Income and expenditure report

Controlled income and expenses for the period ended 30 June 2023

Regional Development Victoria		
	2023 (FY) (\$000's)	2022 (FY) (\$000's)
Income from transactions		
Output appropriations	179,314	250,131
Grants	3,562	34,080
Interest income	7,089	726
Other income	1	1,129
Total income from transactions	189,966	286,066
Expenses from transactions		
Grants and other transfers	(111,256)	(218,574)
Employee expenses	(24,543)	(28,935)
Depreciation and amortisation	(370)	(458)
Interest expense	(30)	(23)
Other operating expenses	(34,479)	(41,627)
Total expenses from transactions	(170,678)	(289,617)
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)	19,288	(3,552)

Contact information

Regional Development Victoria offices

Ballarat

Ballarat GovHub
300-304 Mair Street
Ballarat VIC 3350
Phone: 1800 878 981

Bendigo

Galkangu – Bendigo GovHub
195-229 Lyttleton Terrace
Bendigo VIC 3550
Phone: 1800 950 146

Geelong

Level 2, Harrison Place
237 Ryrie Street
Geelong VIC 3220
Phone: 1800 950 145

Gippsland

Latrobe Valley GovHub
65 Church Street
Morwell VIC 3840
Phone: 1800 325 217

Melbourne

Level 31, 121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: 13 22 15

Mildura

Cnr. Koorlong Ave and 11th Street
308-390 Koorlong Ave
Irymple VIC 3498
Phone: 1800 950 146

Portland

13A Richmond Street
Portland VIC 3305
Phone: 03 9623 1300

Tatura

255 Ferguson Road
Tatura VIC 3616

Wangaratta

Wangaratta Government Centre
1st Floor, 62 Ovens Street
Wangaratta VIC 3677

Warrnambool

703-709 Raglan Parade
(PO Box 105)
Warrnambool VIC 3280
Phone: 1800 950 145

Wodonga

111-113 Hume Street
Wodonga VIC 3690

Web: rdv.vic.gov.au

Email: rdv@rdv.vic.gov.au