

PILLAR:

WORKERS AND BUSINESSES THRIVE IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

PROJECT: ACTIVATING FOR WANT OF A WORKER.

A region-based project, For Want of a Worker, has been led by Regional Development Australia Grampians to uncover systemic barriers to workforce attraction and retention. The Central Highlands Regional Partnership has supported this vital work from its commencement and is now seeking funding from the Victorian Government to trial the innovative approaches to tackling systemic workforce issues it identified.

Why should Government invest in this project?

Workforce shortages are impacting business performance and economic growth across the Central Highlands, especially in critical industries including manufacturing, agriculture, food processing and health services. The pandemic has further exacerbated this issue.

Government investment needed

\$500,000 to fund regional trials of solutions to long-term, systemic workforce issues identified in the For Want of a Worker project.

What we need next

Ministerial support for the Victorian Government to fund these regional trials.



Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.

Regional Priority

This aligns with the Central Highlands Regional Partnership Priority - *Employers in the Central Highlands have the workers and skill sets they need to thrive.*

Regional Coordinator | Regional Development Victoria |

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WORKERS AND BUSINESSES THRIVE IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

PROJECT: GRAMPIANS AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT ATTRACTION TASKFORCE

Agriculture is one of the largest employers in the Grampians region, producing outputs worth \$2.3 billion. However, data shows that the vast majority of raw product (99%) is exported internationally, interstate or to metropolitan Melbourne before being processed to higher value products. A region-based project, Grampians Value-Add in Agriculture, led by Regional Development Australia Grampians has identified key opportunities to drive more processing of raw product within the region, retaining more of the profit for regional communities.

Why should Government invest in this project?

The Central Highlands Regional Partnership has partnered in this important work and is now seeking funding from the Victorian Government to set up an Agriculture Investment Attraction Taskforce. The creation of the taskforce is intended to bring investment opportunities to life and is modelled on the successful delivery of the Grampians New Energy Taskforce, which was a joint Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnership and Central Highlands Regional Partnership initiative that was supported by the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Government investment needed

\$500,000 to activate an 'Agriculture Investment Attraction Taskforce' within the Grampians region to deliver the top five priorities from the Grampians Value Add in Agriculture Project. This will comprise funding for one VPS6 staff member for two years to service the taskforce, and an operating budget.

What we need next

Ministerial support for the Victorian Government to fund the establishment of the Grampians Agriculture Investment Attraction Taskforce.



Regional Priority

This aligns with the Central Highlands Regional Partnership Priority - *Agriculture and food manufacturing sectors capitalise on the Region's competitive advantage and a focus on value-adding.*

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PILLAR:

THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS HAS THE HOUSING IT NEEDS

PROJECT: CENTRAL HIGHLANDS HOUSING ACTIVATION

Small and medium sized towns in Ararat, Pyrenees and parts of Moorabool Shires are experiencing market failure in the residential housing market, as a combination of low land values and the high cost of developing land is impacting on the viability of commercial housing development. This urgent lack of housing is creating a real barrier to the attraction and retention of staff in critical regional industries including agriculture, food and other manufacturing and renewable energy production.

Why should Government invest in this project?

The Central Highlands Regional Partnership is seeking funding to provide up-front housing enabling infrastructure (water, sewer, gas, road, telecommunications) so that housing developments that were not previously commercially viable are able to be activated, ensuring a ready supply of residential housing to meet community need.

Government investment needed

\$2 million funding contribution from the Victorian Government to support the delivery of up-front housing enabling infrastructure in Ararat, Pyrenees and Moorabool Shires and to assist in leveraging a contribution from the National Housing Infrastructure Facility.

\$3 million in funding from the National Housing Infrastructure Facility for up-front housing enabling infrastructure.

What we need next

Ministerial support of a budget bid to fund this work through the 2022/23 Victorian Budget.



Regional Priority

This aligns with the Central Highlands Regional Partnership Priority - *Market failures are resolved in communities where private housing development is not currently commercially viable.*

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PILLAR:

THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS HAS THE HOUSING IT NEEDS

PROJECT: REGIONAL COORDINATION OF SOCIAL & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

An inappropriate mix of social and affordable housing in the Central Highlands has led to a chronic shortage of housing.

Why should Government invest in this project?

The Central Highlands Regional Partnership is seeking a region-wide approach to the provision of critical social and affordable housing stock. A coordinated approach must be based in region and with a deep knowledge of the specific needs of Central Highlands communities. It will work across social housing providers and with all Local Councils to quickly activate available Local Government land, maximizing the opportunities presented by the Victorian Government's Big Housing Build program.

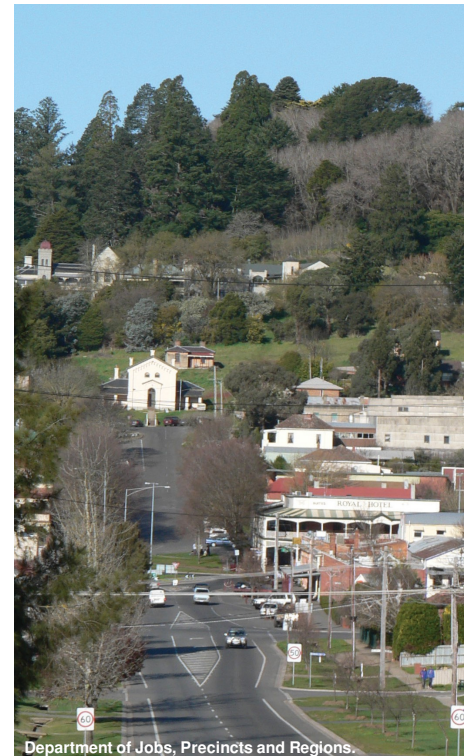
Government investment needed

\$100,000 to develop a business case identifying the most effective way to provide a coordinated, place-based response to social and affordable housing in the Central Highlands.

\$500,000 to activate outcomes of the business case.

What we need next

Ministerial support for the Victorian Government to fund regional coordination of social and affordable housing in the Central Highlands.



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Regional Priority

This aligns with the Central Highlands Regional Partnership Priority - *The Region maximises its opportunity for more community and affordable housing through the Victorian Government's Big Housing Build.*

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PILLAR:

THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS HAS THE HOUSING IT NEEDS

PROJECT: TAKE ZONING FROM FIVE TO ONE

The current Victorian Planning Scheme is outdated, requiring lengthy and expensive processes to zone land that commonly take up to five years. This is a major barrier to Local Government's ability to proactively manage land use for the residential and industrial needs of their communities.

Why should Government invest in this project?

The Victorian Government has the potential to speed up the planning process to, in effect, **take zoning from a five year to one year activity**. This could be delivered through an update to the Victorian Planning Scheme for the acceleration of zoning changes and land release and the better utilization of government land. This will benefit all of Regional Victoria, as the current system is broken.

Government investment needed

The Central Highlands Regional Partnership is asking the Victorian Government to commitment to the creation of a State-wide Taskforce or Working Group to undertake the reform of the Victorian Planning Scheme.

As this work proceeds, the Partnership is also asking the Victorian Government to coordinate of a region-wide Central Highlands Planning Scheme Amendment to re-zone multiple precincts (approximately 20) at the same time. This will address existing critical planning pressure on the supply of residential and industrial land across the Region.

The cost implications of the resources within the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to deliver this work are yet to be determined.

What we need next

Ministerial support for the Victorian Government to create a State-wide Taskforce or Working Group to undertake planning scheme reform in Victoria.
Ministerial support for DELWP to conduct a Central Highlands Planning Scheme Amendment



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PILLAR:

DIGITAL AND TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY ENHANCE OUR ECONOMIC VIBRANCY AND SOCIAL COHESION

PROJECT: A BROADBAND & MOBILE SERVICE STANDARD FOR THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Inadequate mobile coverage and a lack of adequate, affordable business-grade broadband is driving a digital divide between Central Highlands' communities and Metropolitan counterparts. The importance of mobile and broadband connection has been further highlighted by the pandemic.

Why should Government invest in this project?

Without an adequate and reliable broadband and mobile service, regional business cannot grow into broader markets or innovate through applications such as the Internet of Things. Communities cannot benefit from the growth in employment, education and health options being offered online. People are more isolated and face greater danger through times of emergency.

Government investment needed

The Central Highlands Regional Partnership is asking the Victorian Government to commit to delivering necessary infrastructure to ensure a minimum service standard for mobile and broadband services to all communities across the Region of 25MB down/ 5MB up/ 4G Mobile. This essential service will empower businesses and communities to connect, innovate and grow.

What we need next

Ministerial support for the Connecting Victoria program to deliver the infrastructure required to provide the whole of the Central Highlands with a reliable service standard of 25MB down/ 5MB up and 4G mobile.



Regional Priority

This aligns with the Central Highlands Regional Partnership Priority - *Central Highlands' businesses and service providers recognise the full benefits of digital innovation and inclusion.*

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PILLAR:

DIGITAL AND TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY ENHANCE OUR ECONOMIC VIBRANCY AND SOCIAL COHESION

PROJECT: CENTRAL HIGHLANDS MOBILE & BROADBAND MONITORING SYSTEM

A persistent and significant divide in the quality of mobile and broadband services available to regional users compared to metropolitan users is having important implications for public safety, economic development and general liveability.

Currently available data mapping the quality and accessibility of services is too high-level and low resolution to be a reliable illustration of lived experience of residents in the Region. The lack of a robust evidence base disadvantages the Region in its bid for State and Commonwealth funding to improve digital services.

Why should Government invest in this project?

The Central Highlands Regional Partnership is seeking funding from the Victorian Government to monitor mobile & broadband signals over time to develop a detailed evidence base of current access across the Central Highlands.

Government investment needed

\$200,000 to deliver a mobile and broadband monitoring system across the Central Highlands region.

What we need next

Ministerial support for the Victorian Government to fund a mobile and broadband monitoring system in the Central Highlands.



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PILLAR:

DIGITAL AND TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY ENHANCE OUR ECONOMIC VIBRANCY AND SOCIAL COHESION

PROJECT: DOMESTIC MOBILE ROAMING

Mobile roaming makes it possible for anyone on a mobile device to automatically connect to an available network when their home network drops out or service is unavailable. An overseas visitor can currently roam across our mobile networks, yet those living in Australia are unable to because of Federal legislation. This impacts the ability to do business, keep our communities safe in an emergency and impacts on social isolation in our rural and regional communities.

Why should Government invest in this project?

Fixing the issue of mobile roaming is critical to ensuring that rural and regional Australia doesn't continue to fall further behind.

The Central Highlands Regional Partnership is advocating for the Federal Government to require carriers to provide for mobile roaming for domestic customers.

Government investment needed

No cost has been determined in the delivery of this action.

What we need next

Ministerial support for the Victorian Government to announce its stance on mobile roaming and for senior Victorian Ministers campaign for the Federal Government to require mobile roaming for domestic customers.



Regional Priority

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