Barwon Regional Economic Development Strategy – Summary

The Barwon REDS uses data and evidence to profile the region’s economy and identify key strategic directions to drive economic growth.

Regional profile

- Population (2020): 324,300
- Population growth (2011-20): 21.8%
- Gross regional product (2020): $17.6B

Strategic directions

Barwon’s five strategic directions have been identified using an evidence base that considers the region’s unique attributes, existing and emerging industries, and socioeconomic context.

1. Accelerate the transition to new and high-value manufacturing opportunities

Developing future-focused products and advanced manufacturing capabilities will, along with existing supply chains and transport infrastructure, drive new and high-value manufacturing opportunities.

2. Further the innovation and skills ecosystem

Existing innovation hubs and significant local research expertise will contribute to business incubation, productivity growth and a future-focused education and training sector.

3. Realise the potential of the visitor economy

The diverse range of tourism offerings, including natural landscapes, creative industries, Aboriginal heritage and emerging agritourism, strongly positions the region to take advantage of changing domestic visitor trends.

4. Maximise the economic benefit from expanding service-based sectors

Strong population growth and changing demographics have driven service-based sectors with a skilled workforce – cultivating these sectors is an opportunity for long-term growth and wider economic benefits.

5. Build a sustainable and climate-resilient economy

Renewable energy generation, including rooftop and large-scale solar, wind and renewable hydrogen, complement strong community interest in resource recovery and recycling to drive sustainability in the region.

Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Barwon</th>
<th>Regional average</th>
<th>Metro Melbourne</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(September 2021)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employment growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2011-20)</td>
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</table>

Top employing sectors (2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>22,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>18,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>14,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>11,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration and safety</td>
<td>10,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top sectors by gross value add (2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>$1.9B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>$1.8B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>$1.5B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration and safety</td>
<td>$1.2B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>$1.2B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>$1.1B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please refer to the Barwon REDS and Supporting Analysis for further detail and sources. Prepared by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, May 2022. For more information see: rdv.vic.gov.au