Victorian 2019-20 Bushfires
Regional Business and Economy
Recovery Plan

HUME
Endorsed 15 JULY 2020
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1 Introduction

The bushfires in Victoria were particularly challenging due to their extent, duration and community impact. Bushfire impacts are significant for business, industry and regional supply chains – particularly those already challenged by ageing populations, net talent loss, drought and structural adjustments away from traditional sources of economic growth. Following a disaster, the economic impact may be greater than the cost of the initial response and will affect the area for months, if not years.

1.1 Impact summary

Fires in Eastern Victoria burned for months with a total of over 1.5 million hectares burnt. The cost is extensive, with profound direct and indirect impacts, including the loss of human life and property, wildlife and livestock, damage to natural environment and resources, livelihoods and consumer confidence, and to air quality and emissions:

- five people lost their lives
- over 1.5 million hectares of land burnt including forests, conservation areas and agricultural land
- approximately 405 residential and 650 non-residential structures damaged
- significant losses of natural habitat and biodiversity
- livestock losses including:
  - 3,781 beef cattle and 211 dairy cattle
  - 2,639 sheep
  - 163 goats and 43 horses
  - losses to beehives and poultry
- many kilometres of fences destroyed
- power supplies disrupted due to impacts on multiple transmission lines
- local and arterial roads closures and damage
- local economies and the tourism industry suffered losses.

Figure 1: 2019-20 Victorian Bushfires fire footprint

1.2 Economic recovery approach

Government has a role in ensuring that recovery services are effective and well-coordinated. Municipal councils take the lead in recovery as they are the closest to an affected community, with strong local knowledge and networks to deliver a range of recovery requirements. The Victorian Government supports councils to fulfil these responsibilities as required.

The most impacted local government areas (LGAs) are supported through targeted council and Community Recovery Committee (CRC) recovery plans in collaboration with Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV). This bushfires business and economy recovery plan supports these structures, particularly for communities impacted beyond the fire footprint.

The objective of economic recovery is to address the impact of an emergency, including impacts on communities, businesses, industries, and the broader economy. The economic effects of an emergency can be devastating and
widespread. While the physical damage is a highly visible economic cost, less visible costs may be just as significant but not always easy to identify.

This plan has been developed amid the COVID-19 pandemic which has impacted the recovery process and outlook of regional economies across Victoria. Recognising the significant impacts of COVID-19, the Regional Business and Economy Recovery Plan (RBERP) must be limited in scope to identify bushfires recovery priorities. As such, it draws information from a pre-fire context and assesses early impact and consequences of the fires until approximately mid-March 2020.

1.2.1 Regional Business and Economy Recovery Plan

The State-wide Recovery Framework acknowledges that regional plans may be developed to address the needs, challenges and recovery activities in regions.

The RBERP articulates economic recovery priorities and makes links to strategic investment opportunities to support the local economies that underpin thriving and resilient communities. The RBERP focuses on supporting longer term recovery through engagement and participation processes, impact and needs assessments, to develop recovery priorities and focus areas. In doing so, it acknowledges pre-existing regional characteristics alongside the economic consequences of the bushfires.

The boundaries for the RBERP is defined by the Victorian Government ‘Departmental Regional Boundaries’ as identified for emergency management planning arrangements. The geographical area for Regional Emergency Management Planning Committees is determined and declared by the Governor in Council according to EM Act 2013: Section 78.

This further recognises that impacts may not be simple to identify or be limited in size.

The RBERP integrates community-led planning through consideration of Victorian Regional Partnerships, Regional Development Australia committees and other relevant business and industry focused planning forums. Existing relief and recovery plans developed through regional emergency management arrangements were also consulted in the preparation of this plan.

**Figure 2:** Regional Business and Economy Recovery Plan process

1.2.2 Economic recovery policy principles

Emergency events and natural disasters have the potential to challenge communities, businesses and industry, as do the consequences of other forms of economic stress or shock.

DJPR has developed a set of economic recovery policy principles and a strategic response framework to guide and effectively target the implementation of recovery activities, through a community and economic development approach. These guiding principles inform the RBERP, underpinned by the belief that resilient communities are more capable at tolerating shocks and stressors and build back better when faced with adversity (Appendix 1).
1.3 Recovery planning context

There are clear differences between the levels of recovery planning. These differences are important, to remove duplication and ensure that community and government understand the required actions to deliver recovery initiatives and programs to impacted regions, communities and individuals. The RBERP includes:

- the governance arrangements for regional economic recovery planning
- a description of early economic impacts on the Hume region, primarily in the Ovens-Murray area
- a directional assessment of the impacts and consequences
- the goals, principles and objectives for economic recovery to inform decision making
- potential economic recovery and strategic investment priority focus areas.

This plan sits within and is influenced by a multi-level recovery planning process including local, state and federal governments:

- Community Recovery Committees
- Municipal emergency management and recovery plans
- Regional plans, including this RBERP
- State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan
- Eastern Victorian Fires 2019-20 State Recovery Plan
- National planning through the National Bushfire Recovery Agency and cooperative agreements, including the Commonwealth’s Local Economic Recovery planning processes.

The RBERP should be read in conjunction with up-to-date recovery publications and other available documentation including:

- *Emergency Management Acts 1986 and 2013*
- *Emergency Management Manual Victoria*
- *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*
- *National Principles for Disaster Recovery*
- Commonwealth Government’s Community Recovery Handbook
- Red Cross’ Communicating in Recovery Guide
- International Association for Public Participation’s community engagement resources
- supporting community, local, regional and state plans.
1.3.1 Recovery governance structure

The RBERP does not sit in isolation. The Victorian Government, BRV, local governments and communities are developing and implementing recovery plans that will feed into economic recovery, with each layer providing more focus to the recovery efforts on the ground. It is intended that the regional and state recovery planning layers will be informed by CRCs and municipal planning.

The RBERP identifies strategic investment in support of more targeted and localised recovery planning efforts and inputs into Commonwealth processes. It is authorised by the state level Business and Economic Working Group (BEWG) under the State Bushfire Recovery Coordination Committee and is informed by emergency management and recovery planning arrangements at the local and community level (Appendix 2).

Figure 4: Recovery planning and governance arrangements

1.3.2 Eastern Victorian Fires 2019-20 State Recovery Plan

Acknowledging the Victorian Government’s emergency management’s reform agenda, BRV has developed a recovery framework to provide guidance on medium to longer term recovery following early recovery activities. It provides community focused bushfire recovery planning and locally led recovery outcomes.

The RBERP has aligned to these disaster recovery principles and supports the following long-term recovery outcomes for the business and economy line of recovery:

- Industries and businesses recover and are stronger.
- Employment opportunities are accessible.
- Local business and communities are resilient.
- Victoria’s regional economic infrastructure is strategically developed.

BRV is coordinating planning over multiple levels. In year one, the focus will be on delivery of immediate priorities and supporting communities to identify investments, while in year two, an updated plan will centre on actioning these investments. Through the State Recovery Plan the Victorian Government will:

- work with businesses in their recovery
- support business resilience
- build networks among business and industry
- minimise the impact on individuals and businesses
- address impacts on key economic assets, employment issues and capacity of businesses to operate
- facilitate financial assistance, access to available funding, loans and employer subsidies
- facilitate links with job providers/ employment agencies to source labour, re-establish supply chains.

This will be achieved by working closely with local communities, industry and all levels of government to ensure that design and delivery of economic recovery is aligned to local strengths and leverages local resources to ensure a community-led approach.
BRV is also working in partnership with communities and councils to support bushfire recovery efforts based on the needs and priorities identified by affected communities through the establishment of CRCs. This will ensure that programs developed with community and funded by government will be the right fit.

1.3.3 Local Economic Recovery processes

The National Bushfire Recovery Agency (NBRA) is working with Victoria and local communities to develop Local Economic Recovery (LER) processes to support a tailored and targeted approach to recovery led by affected communities. The NBRA has identified that focus areas for strategies may include:

- enabling infrastructure
- business retention, expansion and attraction
- business/industry capacity building
- small business development
- entrepreneurship support
- economic diversification
- workforce development.

Following an impact assessment of local economies, industries and implications for a region’s growth prospects, initiatives will be worked into LER processes consistent with regional economic development objectives. These initiatives are formulated by councils and community groups with others suggested in this RBERP. LER projects will comprise a mix of short, medium and longer-term measures and aligned to assist with the recovery of existing local industries and identifying new growth opportunities.

Like the National Bushfire Recovery Plan, the RBERP focuses on supporting local efforts through measures such as business and industry support, infrastructure investment, resource activation, capacity building and workforce development. RBERP will provide a snapshot of key economic recovery activities as part of the stabilisation phase and identify future investment opportunities using economic recovery priorities.
2 Regional Profile

2.1 Regional profile

Hume is a fast-growing region with diverse industry and employment. There is a strong concentration of agriculture in the west, wine and gourmet food tourism areas in the east, and alpine areas to the north east. Manufacturing is also an important piece of the economy, especially for the region’s largest cities.

Hume covers 40,290 km² and is populated by approximately 282,300 people across 12 LGAs. Four Alpine Resort Management Boards are, for emergency management purposes, also treated as LGAs in the Hume region. The Hume area includes the traditional lands of the Taungurung and Yorta Yorta.

The region spans two subregions:

- Ovens Murray - supports niche food production such as viticulture, orchards, and olives, as well as key industry sectors including defence industries, a range of manufacturing and processing outlets, beef and dairy production, forestry and timber production, and key transport and logistics operators. It also hosts large national and international companies such as Uncle Toby’s (Nestle), Mars Petcare, Saputo Dairy, Carter Holt Harvey, SCT, Bradken Limited, and the Woolworths Distribution Centre at Logic Wodonga. The Ovens Murray region is also well known for its lifestyle advantages, thriving tourism sector and Alpine Resorts.

- Goulburn - established agricultural area producing food products of an internationally recognised high standard. Traditional broad acre farming combined with dairy and horticulture support its ‘food bowl’ label along with significant processors such as Freedom Foods, SPC Ardmona, Bega Cheese, Tatura Milk, Unilever, and Saputo Dairy Australia.

Opportunities for the region include:

- natural attractions and other tourism assets across the Alpine region, Milawa food and wine region, among others that have the potential to benefit from growing tourist visitations
- a benefit from the expansion in freight activity, via the emergence of new transport and logistics businesses centred around key precincts such as LOGIC in Wodonga and the future potential of Goulburn Valley link
- demand for high quality food product in Asia, including fruit and dairy products, presents an opportunity for agriculture, food manufacturing, and supply chain industries such as freight and logistics.

Figure 5: Hume region, including Goulburn (green) and Ovens Murray (blue) areas

2.1.1 Social environment

The region has a wide diversity of settlements, ranging from Melbourne’s peri-urban fringe to large regional centres, townships, villages and smaller remote communities. The largest population centres are Shepparton, Wodonga, and Wangaratta, together housing 38 per cent of Hume’s population. The decentralised nature of services and infrastructure in the region creates long travel times and a reliance on private vehicles.

Like much of regional Victoria, Hume has an ageing population. The working age population (15-64) makes up 61 per cent of the population while 20 per cent are 65 or over. Across the Hume region, there are pockets of socio-economic disadvantage. Greater Shepparton, Moira and Benalla rank among the most disadvantaged LGAs in the state, ranked 14th, 15th and 16th respectively out of 79 LGAs in SEIFA Index.4.
2.1.1.2 Economic environment

Hume economic activity is distributed relatively evenly across the region. The Hume region has a lower gross regional product (GRP) per capita than the Victorian average, however, GRP per capita has increased over the last five years at a faster rate than the wider Victorian economy.

Hume’s largest industry sectors are agriculture, forestry and fishing, followed by manufacturing as well as public administration and safety. Tourism is a critical part of the economy in the eastern LGAs Alpine and Mansfield, which attract visitors for the wine and food, tracks and trails, heritage, and five of Victoria’s six alpine resorts. Additional baseline socio-economic information and indicators can be found at Appendix 3.

2.1.1.3 Built environment

The Hume and Goulburn Valley highways and rail corridors traverse the region, linking Melbourne to both Sydney and Brisbane. These key infrastructure assets provide local industry with efficient access to national and international markets and provide competitive advantage by linking supply chains.

Hume has diverse educational institutions including TAFE networks, La Trobe University, University of Melbourne, and Charles Sturt University, along with public and private options for primary and secondary education.

The strategic position of Hume on this premium freight corridor contributes to the area’s economic advantage and supports the LOGIC Wodonga industrial logistics and manufacturing hub hosting several freight companies, Woolworths Distribution, XLAM timber, and TAFE’s Logic campus.

2.1.1.4 Natural environment

Critical to the region’s economic, social, and environmental values are the seven river catchments. The Murray, Goulburn, Broken, Ovens, King, Kiewa, and Mitta Mitta rivers feed important water storage including Lake Eildon, Lake Hume, Lake Mulwala, and Dartmouth Dam. Water resources supply towns, irrigate agricultural land, power three hydroelectric stations, and provide lifestyle opportunities for residents and tourists.

Hume has a wide diversity of natural assets including about 3,000 wetlands and many of the tallest peaks in Victoria. Flagship biodiversity assets include the Barmah Forest as a wetland of international significance, the Australian Alps National Park which is the largest National Park in the state, and Mount Buffalo National Park famous for its unique biodiversity and visitor experience.

2.1.2 Economic profile

The largest share of the region’s total gross value added (GVA) is in agriculture, forestry and fishing (10.1 per cent). The manufacturing and public administration and safety sector round out the top three contributors to Hume’s output (9.5 per cent and 9.4 per cent respectively).

Agriculture, forestry and fishing, plus manufacturing are the fourth and second largest employers respectively. While the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector provides 9.2 per cent of jobs for the region (10,615), most of these jobs are in agriculture, with forestry contributing 0.2 per cent of Hume’s jobs and 0.4 per cent of its GVA. Between 2008 and 2018 GVA for the agriculture sector grew by 33 per cent.

Hume’s exports were estimated to be $10.5 billion dollars in 2019, driven by manufacturing ($4.8 billion, including food and beverage product manufacturing which accounts for $3.4 billion) and agriculture, forestry and fishing ($2.0 billion). The abundance of farming land, diversity of agriculture production, and easy access to key markets through efficient transportation supports the region’s comparative advantage in agriculture, forestry and fishing, while also supporting strengths in the utilities sector.

Labour productivity for Hume is slightly lower than the state average, which reflects the industries that are most well-represented in the region. Hume businesses are generally smaller and hire fewer staff on average than the wider Victorian economy. However, the region does have several large employers that remain important contributors to regional jobs, such as Mars Australia and SPC Ardmona.

Over 114,900 people are employed in the Hume region. Healthcare and social assistance and retail trade provide over 24 per cent of the region’s total jobs, reflecting the significant role services play in a region with a strong history of farming. Almost 20 per cent of the region’s workforce work in agriculture and manufacturing.

Tourism plays a growing role in supporting local jobs and economic opportunities, contributing to 4.6 per cent of the region’s output (generating 7.9 per cent of jobs). Tourism is an especially strong comparative advantage in the Alpine and Mansfield LGAs – home to the Victorian Alps.
Highly fertile soils, mild climates, and water resources from the Murray and Goulburn rivers lead agriculture, forestry and fishing to strong comparative advantage across much of Hume. Recent positive growth performance in agriculture has been driven by strong beef export demand, high cattle prices, and strong lamb and wool prices. The area is also a nationally significant production area for dairy, apples, pears, and stone fruits.

Manufacturing also demonstrates comparative advantage in Hume and employs 11,155 people. Supported by Hume’s agricultural sector, food product manufacturing forms a large part of this advantage. Supporting both the manufacturing and agricultural activity, the region’s strategic location on two major national freight routes drives a competitive advantage in supply chain industries such as freight and logistics.

High country areas in the east of the region form the core of Victoria’s alpine and cycling tourism industry. Over 4.1 million people visited Victoria’s High Country in the year ending September 2019, staying 6.5 million nights and spending $1.3 billion dollars. Tourism visitation has been on a strong growth trajectory with average domestic visitation growing 9.5 per cent annually from 2015 to 2019—well above the average annual growth of Victoria. The area’s accommodation and food service industry demonstrate strong recent growth and competitive advantage as a result of its attractive tourism offerings.

Hume has a strong defence sector presence, with barracks at Bandiana and Puckapunyal, as well as significant defence sector manufacturing facilities in Benalla, and large service contracts between defence and Wodonga TAFE. The sector currently generates $924 million of GVA product for the region and supports 2,858 direct defence personnel jobs, in addition to private sector jobs.

2.2 Regional challenges

The bushfires have taken place in the context of economies challenged by ageing populations, net talent loss, drought and structural adjustments away from traditional sources of economic growth. This is 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.

This demographic challenge has been augmented by challenges facing traditional areas of economic strength and employment for regional Victorians, including drought impacts on agriculture, closures in the energy sector and a transition away from traditional manufacturing.

2.2.1 Environmental conditions

Mapping shows that bushfire impacted areas were also affected by severe drought, affecting farms, reducing cashflow and weakening farmers’ ability to deal with subsequent shocks. These drought impacts include:

- reduced crop yields, which lead to lower cash flow for farmers
- decreased soil moisture; subsequent crop yields are lower and limited ability for sowing and/or pasture restoration in autumn
- reduced pasture productivity; demand from drought-affected properties for supplemental livestock feed has driven prices higher
- lower crop yields increase prices for purchased feed, as do shipping costs when unavailable locally
- higher costs may force farmers to decrease herds, leading to a period of livestock rebuilding and higher prices for replacement animals
- drought-driven destocking has reduced herds to a point where bushfire damage may appear minimal but are a sign of compounding impacts.

Hume has a particularly high exposure to the impacts of variable climatic conditions, with around 20 per cent of income in the Goulburn region coming from agricultural sectors. Increased severity and frequency of floods, drought, and bushfires are a threat to economy and biodiversity. Large parts of the region are highly vulnerable to increased fire risk, including national parks and forestry plantations.

*Figure 7: Drought map – 2018-2020 rainfall deficiencies*

2.2.2 Industries in transition

Over the last ten years, the availability of native timber for logging has decreased by around half, due to bushfires and wildlife protections. Simultaneously, consumer and retailer demand has grown for plantation timber. The bushfires pose an additional impact on timber harvesting in the north east of Victoria.

In November 2019, the Victorian Government announced a transition plan to shift to zero native timber logging on public land by 2030 to ensure a long-term and sustainable future for the forest industry. Under the plan, and to ensure security of supply, VicForests will meet existing contractual obligations and negotiate new sawlog supply contracts for all mills to mid-2024. From mid-2024 to 2030 a competitive process will be used for timber allocation, with commercial native timber logging in state forests phased out by 2030.

The Victorian Government has developed a Victorian Forestry Plan to assist the industry as it manages its gradual transition away from native logging, while providing support to businesses, communities and workers impacted by these changes.
2.2.3 Economic characteristics

With a decentralised population, public transport is currently not an effective enabler for regional communities and industry, especially for east-west travel. There is also a clear divide in the digital access enjoyed by metropolitan and regional populations. Mobile network blackspots and variable NBN service is an ongoing issue for many parts of the region, particularly with an agriculture or tourism-driven economy. The 2016 census identified almost 20 per cent of the population as not having an internet connection in the home.

Agriculture needs strategies to remain competitive or to adapt and transform in the face of climate change, irrigation modernisation, the cost and availability of energy, lack of succession planning, fluctuating commodity prices, and shortages in labour supply.

The region needs to continue to advance manufacturing opportunities in relation to circular economy, especially renewable energy and food production, which could offset decline in the textile industry. There is a need to continue to consolidate, adapt and support transformation for meat and dairy industries.

Hume has some education attainment challenges. Enhancing opportunity and retaining expertise is critical in the face of a shifting wider economy. Retention and attraction of skills and workforce will be important in securing key businesses in the Hume region into the future, particularly with an economy moving toward services such health care and social assistance.

2.2.4 Regional vulnerabilities

All LGAs in the Hume region are at, or below, the state average adaptive capacity level. While it is recognised that adaptive capacity index measures should be treated with a degree of caution, the mapping below highlights the vulnerabilities of these areas to absorb economic shock. However, it does not identify whether regions will be successful in transitioning following a disruption. The capacity index incorporates four ‘capitals’ including physical (infrastructure and access to services), economic (employment), human (education) and social (networks).

Figure 9: Adaptive capacity index
2.3 Pre-fire strategic priorities

The State Government engages with Victorian communities to address a range of issues including the environments outlined in the Regional profile, across social, economic, built and natural domains. Regional Partnerships and Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees are committed to understanding local challenges and opportunities to help regional communities thrive.

The pre-fire outlook for these engagement groups is a clear touchpoint for recovery planning and opportunity to connect recovery priorities to established, medium and long-term strategic issues of importance to communities in these areas, to progress improvement in policy, investment and service delivery.

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Hume works with industry, economic groups and all levels of government to set priorities for the Hume region. The RDA committee is currently focused on supporting a refresh of the Hume Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2010-2020, providing advice and recommendations for investment and a unified voice to strengthen competitive advantages, harness opportunities and outcomes. The strategic themes of the current plan, together with the RDA Charter, shape the committee’s priorities.

Table 1: Strategic themes and directions in RDA’s Hume Strategy for Sustainable Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic themes</th>
<th>Key directions</th>
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| Environment      | • Anticipating and adapting to the effects of climate change  
                   | • managing water resources sustainably  
                   | • protecting native habitat and biodiversity  
                   | • harnessing renewable energy sources, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pursuing innovative waste management approaches. |
| Communities      | • Embracing learning for life  
                   | • providing appropriate and accessible social services and infrastructure  
                   | • developing innovative and flexible service delivery models  
                   | • strengthening communities, increasing resilience and enhancing liveability. |
| Economic         | • Strengthening a capable workforce  
                   | • adapting and diversifying agriculture in an environment of change  
                   | • facilitating research and innovation in tourism, manufacturing and industry to encourage new and evolving business  
                   | • developing ICT and energy infrastructure that builds on existing competitive advantages. |
| Transport        | • Enhancing integrated planning for mobility  
                   | • developing a proficient land transportation network  
                   | • linking communities through improved public transport and transport linkages  
                   | • strengthening the sustainability of the transport system. |
| Land use         | • Directing future population growth to settlements with the greatest capability to accommodate it  
                   | • maximising the use of existing infrastructure and services and facilitating strategic investment in future infrastructure and services  
                   | • retaining productive rural land for agriculture and other compatible rural uses  
                   | • ensuring efficient use of land use planning resources in the region. |

Victorian Regional Partnerships identify and prioritise challenges and opportunities faced by regional communities. Hume is supported by two partnerships covering Goulburn and Ovens Murray. High level themes across both these partnerships can be found in Appendix 4, while key areas of overlap in priorities developed by both the Regional Partnerships and RDA committee to inform the RBERP are as follows:

**Nurturing healthy and resilient communities**: enhancing wellbeing and liveability through improved delivery and access to health services and sporting, community and cultural facilities. Supporting vibrant cities through development and revitalisation of activity centres, amenity, community and education facilities.

**Developing the visitor economy**: to meet and grow projected demand for visitors to the region, increasing capacity in product and infrastructure is needed to maintain and enhance visitor experience. Example investment opportunities include, developing new offerings in agritourism, future-proofing the Alpine resorts, activation of new tourist precincts, and revitalisation and investment into existing high demand areas.
Digital inclusion and opportunity: areas of Hume have the lowest digital inclusion in regional Victoria. Closing this gap requires ongoing investment in infrastructure, as well as strategic support for regional leadership in digital collaboration and innovation. Developing digital inclusion builds resilience across sectors and strengthens workforce capability (for example smart farm technology, e-commerce, and visitor engagement).

Building renewable energy security: the Hume region has the capability to support greater levels of renewable energy, providing new jobs and investment as well as reducing carbon emissions in the region. Enhancing opportunity for local generation and participation in a renewable energy economy provides benefits for community and business resilience.

Securing futures in agriculture: agriculture requires continued strategic investment to address climate, irrigation, and market challenges. Opportunities exist in diversifying via agritourism, transitions into emerging or niche markets, development and innovation in smart-farm technologies to meet management and competition challenges and strengthening the global focus for produce with an already outstanding international reputation.

Building capability and capacity in transport: linking communities and building on the competitive advantage of having two nationally significant transport corridors within the region.

Securing environmental assets, catchments and water resources: protecting catchments and building a strong future with less water for consumptive use. Aligning protection of the region’s ecosystem services and iconic, high value environmental assets with regional growth and sustainable land use.

*Figure 10: Regional strategic priorities - Hume*
3 Bushfires: impact, consequence and priorities

The bushfires had an impact on local economies across Victoria. While businesses and resources were damaged or destroyed most directly in eastern Victoria, businesses and local economies more widely were negatively affected by State of Disaster protection measures, supply chain disruption and strong media coverage. All the above factors and COVID-19 have magnified the impact of the bushfires on affected communities.

Across January-March 2020, the estimated impact on the three most affected local government areas was a 13-22 per cent reduction in economic output (GVA), with additional impacts affecting five adjacent LGAs estimated at 3-8 per cent reduction in GVA. The economic impacts were found to be particularly concentrated in the industry sectors of tourism, retail, agriculture and forestry.

Many businesses continue to be indirectly impacted, facing a loss of income and reduced visitation expenditure. Impacted regions experienced a decline of 34 to 83 per cent in GVA in tourism industries over the January to March period. The impact on businesses has been particularly acute because the Christmas period (November to January) is the high season for tourism businesses in the impacted regions.

Lost income has continued to have downstream impacts for individual business, staff, supply chains and community, resulting in instability, uncertainty and acute stress. These impacts amplify the ongoing challenges on drought, economic transition and other contributing factors. For the region’s Aboriginal communities, this comes in the context of other challenges including intergenerational inequality.

The RBERP has reviewed data with a focus on three LGAs in the fire footprint and five adjacent LGAs with significant direct and indirect bushfire impacts. An assumption is made that economic consequences may be far reaching and take some months, if not years, to be fully known, particularly in the context of pre-existing characteristics and concurrent events that may exacerbate or mask economic challenges.

While local recovery services will focus on these local areas, it is recognised that flow on impacts can be expected beyond these boundaries and necessitate a regional recovery approach.

Figure 11: Direct and indirect impact map

3.1 Bushfire impact

The information to follow is preliminary and can be used as a starting point to provide direction for priority setting and focus areas. Impact assessment has been considered using the following sources of information and then analysed from a consequence management approach:

- Top-down economic impact assessments for Victoria, key regions and industries.
- Bottom-up impact assessment including:
  - Initial Impact Assessment
  - Secondary Impact Assessment.

Figure 11: Direct and indirect impact map
Table 2: Bushfire economic impact summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>IMPACT SUMMARY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>• Damage to premises, stock, equipment and resources</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• cash flow impact caused by ongoing costs such as insurance, salaries, utilities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• disruption to access, essential services including power, transport and water</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• protracted smoke, pollutants and environmental damage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• continuity issues and reduction in trade caused by evacuation, community dislocation and worker availability</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• damaged infrastructure, townships, attraction loss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local economies</td>
<td>• Interruption and loss of market share for key businesses and primary producers that underpin an area/region</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• disproportionate impacts to primary industries and tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• impact on production, processing and supply chain across food and fibre and manufacturing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• significant impacts to the visitor economy including:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>› loss of current and future revenue and bookings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>› reduced hospitality spending due to displacement</td>
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<td>› cancellation of events, closure of parks and attractions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>› negative media coverage and misinformation</td>
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<td>› loss of accommodation and infrastructure.</td>
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Direct bushfire impact was concentrated in the east of the Hume region, with substantial areas of land burnt in LGAs Alpine and Towong. Four LGAs (Wodonga, Wangaratta, Indigo, Mansfield) were indirectly affected by small fires, smoke hazard, road closures, and the loss of the Summer tourist season.

A total of 3,940 km² were burnt across LGAs Towong and Alpine. This represents 30 per cent of the total LGA area in Alpine –1,448 km² burnt, and 39 per cent of the total area in Towong – 2,627 km² burnt. Smaller areas were also burnt in Indigo (1 km²), Mansfield (36 km²), Wodonga (3 km²), and Wangaratta (123 km²). Together, burnt land represents over 10 per cent of Hume’s land area.

Key direct impacts include, but are not limited to:

• agricultural land - livestock production and grazing land (49,833 hectares or 83 per cent of the total agricultural land burnt), mixed farming (8,654 hectares, 14 per cent), and dairy (5,500 hectares, 3 per cent)
- forest - 87,500 hectares (35 per cent) of state forest burnt in Towong. 76,300 hectares (72 per cent) of state forest burnt in Alpine and 6,393 hectares of plantation forest damaged
- agricultural assets lost or damaged, including:
  - 5,862 livestock
  - 19,839 tonnes of hay and silages
  - 35,164 hectares of pasture
  - 9 hectares of horticulture
  - 262 non-residential structures destroyed, 3,472 km of fencing damaged
- ash contaminated crops and compromised wine grapes due to smoke taint.

Indirect impacts were spread throughout Hume as a result of road closures affecting access to business, smoke hazards and low light, loss of workforce and other resources, including but not limited to:
- increased transport costs, limited access to road-based supplies and service providers
- increased costs to salvage fire-affected material and additional costs for processing fire-damaged timber
- increased pressure to process salvaged wood before becoming unviable for processing
- reduced ongoing dairy cow performance due to milking interruptions, substantial change in diets, reproductive and health issues
- very little fruit picked in the Alpine, Beechworth and Rutherglen areas and high rejection rates from buyers across the catchment
- inability to service debts during off-seasons, loss of collateral to back financial and reduced cashflow
- no capacity to increase debt to bridge to next Summer.

### 3.2 Economic consequences

Consequence management encourages a shift from the initial impacts to considering the wider effects of emergency events. It aids the understanding of cascading and compounding consequences that potentially have larger negative effects than the initial impact of bushfires – creating a common focus on community needs and expanding actions and engagement to support recovery, including broader sector considerations.

**Table 3: Bushfire economic consequence summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCE SUMMARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Reduction in trade for individual businesses and primary producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impact on cashflow and business viability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unavailability of workers and/or loss of skilled workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>financial performance declined for businesses and primary producers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local economies</td>
<td>Reputational damage to an industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reputational damage to an area or region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reduction in investor and consumer confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>trade ramifications such as export and growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>job losses and unpaid salaries result in downstream economic impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flow on impact to state and national economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>loss of current and future visitor revenue and bookings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>loss of attraction, natural environment inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reputational impacts as desirable place to visit (international and domestic booking patterns).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The industries most affected by the bushfires were tourism, small business and primary industries (agriculture and forestry).

#### 3.2.1 Tourism

The greatest economic impact comes from the reduction in tourism, with visitor expenditure falling by up to 95 per cent in January 2020. The impact on tourism in directly affected areas is expected to be $67-85 million in decreased revenue in quarter 1 of 2020, and the indirect impacts across all LGAs will be even larger. The estimated impact of lost tourism revenue on the bushfire affected regions is expected to be in the range of $330-$350 million for the December 2019 to March 2020 period.

The Hume visitor economy has been severely impacted with reductions in peak-season visitation, with a 70-80 per cent reduction for the whole region. The worst fire-impacted areas were closed to visitors, but negative impacts propagated through the region as saturated media coverage, smoke haze and accessibility restrictions led many people to choose not to travel. Visitation loss translates into a reduced spend of $183-208 million.

Although the physical impact on tourist attractions and accommodation was less than expected, parks and associated trail/ accommodation infrastructure was damaged. There is likely to be some medium to long term
reputational damage to Victoria and Australia as a visitor destination as a result of the bushfires across the country. Heightened community and international perception of risk are likely to have impacted travel, including areas not directly impacted\textsuperscript{8}.

Significant investment in demand creation in high country tourism, largely through Ride High Country, was generating private sector investment to create new products and experiences or fill gaps in existing supply. Bushfires will have a significant impact on the private sector’s short to medium term investment appetite.

3.2.2 Small business

While there were limits to the number of businesses to have suffered direct fire damage, many were unable to operate due to road closures, power disruption, evacuations or smoke impacts. Small businesses make up 98 per cent of all businesses in the three most impacted LGAs, and indirect impacts extend beyond the LGA boundaries in industries such as tourism, wine and agricultural supply.

Regional retail trade also suffered due to the loss of the traditionally busy summer tourist trade. Modelled losses to first quarter GVA are $1-3.5 million (down 10-30 per cent) for Towong and Alpine. With the reliance on tourism and retail businesses in these affected communities, early recovery measures were expected to drive economic recovery by increasing visitation but cannot occur during COVID-19 protection measures.

Many Aboriginal businesses and business owners are especially vulnerable due to a lack of intergenerational wealth, cash reserves and market diversification. Decline for these businesses may further impact Aboriginal communities through the loss of job opportunities for both employees and contractors, with Aboriginal businesses 100 times more likely to employ Aboriginal people than non-Aboriginal businesses\textsuperscript{9}.

3.2.3 Primary production

Over 1,300 farm businesses have been directly affected by the 2019-20 Victorian bushfires, predominantly beef cattle and sheep production, and to a lesser extent dairy. The estimated economic impact of the East Gippsland and North East Victoria bushfires on Victorian farms within the fire footprint is $325 million in 2020. This includes the loss and damage of farm business assets valued at $197 million and lost production in 2020 valued at $128 million.

Recovery of burnt pastures is expected to continue in 2021 and 2022, impacting livestock production in fire-affected areas. Including production losses in 2021 ($48 million) and 2022 ($18 million) increases the cumulative economic impact to at least $373 million and $391 million, by the end of 2021 and 2022, respectively. \textsuperscript{10} State-wide, agriculture is expected to lose $400 million through 2020 to 2022, through lost assets and lost agricultural production.\textsuperscript{11}

Extensive smoke taint in the North East wine-producing region reduced grapes harvested by 31 per cent of pre-fire on vine tonnage. Along with cellar door closures due to restrictions on movement, all branches of the wine industry are under economic strain. The farm-gate value of the grape crop was reduced by $21.8 million - a 74 per cent drop relative to pre-fire projections. This translates to estimated loss of national retail sales of $140.7 million\textsuperscript{12}.

Forestry has been substantially impacted with 6,393 hectares of plantation burnt in Hume, along with significant areas of native forest earmarked for logging. While the asset loss is large, the economic impact on the forestry industry was comparatively small from a short-term perspective, with all mills back up and running in February 2020.

3.3 Business and economy recovery priorities

The RBERP uses impacts and consequences of the bushfires to inform recovery priorities and identification of subsequent activities, projects and investment opportunities. It should be noted that business and industry is inclusive of primary production such as farming or forestry activities. The key priorities are summarised below.

Table 4: Bushfire economic recovery priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>RECOVERY PRIORITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>- Business relief services to support business continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- provision of information, advice and assistance to businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- use of local businesses in recovery activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- support for business and industry development, including worker attraction and retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- support business confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- support business planning for resilience to shocks and stressors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.3.1 Regional economic recovery priorities – medium to long-term

While COVID-19 has disrupted the recovery cycle, substantial work is underway to support early recovery in bushfire impacted areas. With regards to recovery priorities with a medium and long-term outlook through the regional recovery planning process of the RBERP, they have been identified as follows:

- **Business and industry development, sustainability and resilience**
  - **Business and industry confidence and competitiveness**
  - **Stimulating local economies, trade and investment**
  - **Supporting industry sectors, regional reputation and growth**

These priorities are aligned with the Eastern Victorian Fires 2019-20 State Recovery Plan, economic recovery policy principles and have been reviewed alongside early municipal and community planning priorities. They can be aligned with existing regional priorities (pre-fire) to ensure that strategic investment opportunities are consistent, are underpinned by consultation and engagement, and align with areas targeted by the Commonwealth’s LER planning processes.

The priorities are founded in regional economic development principles and form the policy setting for funding opportunities to support recovery of thriving and resilient local economies and communities.
4 Recovery program response

4.1 Government bushfire response

Stabilisation (short term) actions focus on ensuring businesses and local economies can continue operating. It may include the provision of grants to address immediate cash-flow issues and access to advice to help guide recovery. A range of relief and early recovery measures are underway detailed in Appendix 5 and are aligned to the recovery priorities identified above.

For the growth and resilience stages (medium to long term), activities focus on building the foundations for sustainable and more resilient economies in bushfire-affected regions. In line with the economic recovery policy principles in Appendix 1, this involves an evidence-driven approach to understanding local trends, including sectoral strengths and challenges.

4.1.1 Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements

Under the joint Commonwealth Government-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018, assistance is provided to alleviate the financial burden on states and territories. It also supports the provision of urgent financial assistance to disaster affected communities. An initial $86 million Community Recovery Package was announced on 15 January 2020 by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments under joint disaster recovery funding arrangements, including:

- Community and Emergency Services Health Program - $10 million
- Community Recovery Hubs - $15 million
- Community Recovery Committees - $6 million
- Community Recovery and Resilience Grants - $35 million
- Immediate Reconstruction and Rebuilding Programs - $20 million.

The Victorian government will continue to work with the Commonwealth Government on other eligible initiatives.

4.1.2 Victorian Government Recovery Package

An additional $64 million Victorian Government Recovery Package was announced on 27 January 2020. This package provides for tax, fees and charges relief to fire-affected communities including fast-tracking of payroll tax relief, reduction of stamp duty, waiving of water rates and extra support to eligible local councils to waive a series of fees and charges for families and businesses.

4.1.3 Commonwealth Government Recovery Package

On 11 May 2020, the Australian Government announced a $650 million bushfire recovery package comprising:

- Local Economic Recovery (LER) and Complementary Project (CP) funding - $448.5 million
- forestry industry support - $15 million
- native wildlife and habitats support - $149.7 million
- community wellbeing - $13.5 million
- telecommunications resilience - $27.1 million.

This funding comprises LER funding of $350 million to support local and regional recovery needs, and CP funding of an additional $98.5 million to support recovery needs that fall beyond local or regional scope. It is designed to support local needs across all aspects of recovery including economic, social, environmental, infrastructure and resilience where applicable.

LER funding is focused on priority projects in priority regions, identified through established local and regional recovery planning processes. The total allocation for Victoria is expected to be $68.6 million including joint funding from federal and state government.

CP Funding will ensure funding is available for projects or regions that fall outside of LER funding. These projects will be identified through national level gap analysis and additional projects that may be nominated directly by states. Eligible projects may include initiatives of national significance, cross-regional projects, high-impact projects in non-priority regions, or aggregation project packages that bundle smaller initiatives for greater overall impact. Victoria’s share of the $98.5 million CP component has not yet been determined, but cost-sharing arrangements will also apply.

4.2 COVID-19 intersections

The RBERP is not intended as a static operational or action plan and can be reviewed as required alongside other plans as they are developed. In late 2020, there may still be several major national, local government, regional development conferences where community resilience is likely to feature against the backdrop of bushfire recovery, a new bushfire season, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Pandemic protection measures announced for COVID-19 have compounded the effects that bushfire-affected communities are facing. Community events programs were designed to encourage visitation and provide a boost for businesses, however mass gatherings have not been permitted.

The extent of job losses at a local level will reflect the region’s reliance on industries most adversely affected by the pandemic, creating additional recovery challenges for these areas and compounding existing challenges such as longer-term structural change in industries.

The Kinaway Victorian Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce reports that 22 per cent of their Aboriginal business membership immediately ceased to operate or went into hibernation in March 2020 as a result of the impacts of COVID-19, with a further 67 per cent of businesses forecasting they will cease operations by September 2020 without further support.

4.3 Strategic recovery opportunities

The RBERP taps into a range of existing regional planning and consultation arrangements, including Regional Partnerships, to identify and build economic strength. This is in line with the State Recovery Plan to co-design, jointly deliver solutions and share governance for economic recovery, growth and resilience.

Regional roundtable sessions have been held to provide an opportunity for government to hear directly from regional leaders, to better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on rural and regional communities and identify the challenges and opportunities to reboot the local economy and communities. The roundtables inform government responses and support stabilisation and growth.

Where possible, the roundtables have further informed the strategic investment opportunities in the RBERP. Regional roundtables have included Regional Partnerships, the Regional Development Advisory Committee and RDA Committees and a selection of leaders who bring insights and add value to the conversation. Key emerging themes include:

- The importance of digital literacy and digital infrastructure as a key enabler of businesses pivoting operations and staff working remotely.
- The opportunity presented by domestic tourism as a driver for regional economic recovery. Roundtables highlighted the opportunities presented by the domestic tourism market, and the need for a coordinated, strategic approach to infrastructure investment, development of regional tourism plans, and marketing.

In particular, the following priorities were highlighted by Ovens-Murray and Goulburn roundtables:

- Improve population health and wellbeing with a focus on youth mental health.
- Economic development through accelerating renewable energy uptake and generation and initiatives.
- Education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal people through increased workforce participation in the Natural Resource Management sector.
- Capitalise on Growth Corridor opportunities
- Reduce disadvantage through support for existing and emerging community led, place-based programs.
- Improve passenger rail services and connections.
- Increase digital inclusion, innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Support for a renewable energy future.
- Growing the visitor economy.
- Early years development and education.

4.3.1 Investment opportunities

The following list comprises a stream of recovery program areas to support economic development and recovery efforts through measures such as business and industry support, infrastructure investment, resource activation, capacity building and workforce development. These are indicative and can be used to inform local, state and federal funding priorities.
Figure 13: Strategic investment opportunities

01. IMPROVING REGIONAL DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY
Digital and mobile connectivity in our regions underpins future preparedness and enables innovation and growth.

02. REGIONAL TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE
Tourism is a major economic contributor for both Gippsland and Hurun. There are shovel-ready projects that can be activated to deliver jobs and growth.

03. BRINGING BUSINESS BACK
Working with communities to help stimulate the local economy and support the community recovery effort.

04. RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY
Investing in resilient and adaptive infrastructure has the potential to lessen the impact of future events, while facilitating greater regional connectivity.

05. SUPPORTING REGIONAL TOWNS TO THRIVE
Supporting towns to develop networks and empower communities to respond to challenges and opportunities.

06. INNOVATIVE AGRICULTURE
Innovative solutions to support agriculture-related business has the capacity to support greater resilience, in turn helping to build more sustainable economies.

07. CREATIVE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES
Creativity and art can support recovery by fostering community connection in the face of collective trauma. Creative spaces support visitation and creative industries.

08. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
Providing employment and training support will help support individuals, businesses and communities re-skill and up-skill to meet labour market demands.
Appendix 1

Emergency events and natural disasters have the potential to challenge communities, businesses and industry, as do the consequences of other forms of economic stress or shock. These principles are underpinned by the belief that resilient communities are more capable at tolerating shocks and stressors and build back better when faced with adversity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Recovery Theme</th>
<th>Economic Recovery Policy Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market principles</td>
<td>Government intervention to support recovery will be considered where the economic impacts extend beyond the capacity of market mechanisms or where market failures exist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention where market failures exist or market capacity is exceeded</td>
<td>Where trauma exists, the economic recovery response will extend beyond the provision of information to provision of mechanisms that help to understand information and ensure informed decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic vitality</td>
<td>Local business, industry and community are critical to understanding the economic impacts of an emergency event and ensuring the effective targeting of economic recovery actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic recovery necessarily underpins community recovery</td>
<td>Government interventions will recognise the interrelationship between economic and overall recovery in communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>The economic recovery response looks beyond the objective of restoration (replacing) and focuses on a forward-looking economic development strategy and resilience based on the affected regions’ strengths and opportunities (build back better)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community development and resilience models apply to economic shocks, including emergency events</td>
<td>Economic recovery responses are place-based and tailored to the economic and social characteristics of the affected region as well as the nature and scale of the event experienced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DJPR will adopt a place lens in planning, updating and implementing the economic recovery pillar:
- Understanding the existing context of (directly and indirectly) affected areas, including their strengths, challenges and opportunities.
- Being responsive to the complexity of economic impacts, consequences and interactions with local social and economic characteristics.
- Support a community-driven approach to empower communities in economic recovery.
- Support community engagement with recovery processes.
- Identify and elerate community priorities through program delivery and strategic investment.
- Recognise and build on community capacity and resilience.
Appendix 3

REGIONAL PROFILE: Hume

Hume business spatial distribution

Population: 282,300
Child population (<19): 16.7%
Working age population (15-64): 61.4%
Elderly Population (65+): 10.4%

36% of the population live in the three largest cities (Significant Urban Areas)
Shepparton: 46.6% (18%)
Woodonga: 39.347 (14%)
Wangaratta: 18.715 (7%)

Number of businesses: 21,117
Dominant business type: Agriculture Forestry and Fishing 22%, Construction 20%
Registered ABNs as at 9 July 2019, registered for GST and excluding super funds, trusts and deceased estates.

Size of Business by employees*
(% of total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Business</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-15 Employees</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-199 Employees</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200+ Employees</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.05%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Size of businesses from the ABS counts is indicative of the make up of businesses, it is not an exact match to the ABN data displayed in business counts and spatial layout of the Hume region

Source: ABS Counts of Australian Businesses, Including Entries and Exits, June 2015 to June 2019

Source: REMPLAN, Australian Business Register, Census 2019
ECONOMIC PROFILE: Hume

Economic snapshot

Labour market

Hume

GRP ($ billion) $16.6

GRP per capita $68,080

Labour Force 151,713

Employment 145,957

Number of Unemployed 6,016

Unemployment Rate 4.0%

Employment growth 5 years Dec 14-Dec 19 + 13415 (10.1%)

Source: REMPLAN estimates of GRP figures, Employment levels and growth based on CSIR calculations from the small area labour market (SALM) for the December qtr 2019.

Top Regional Exports by industry, 2018-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Value of Goods &amp; Services ($million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacuring</td>
<td>4,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Fishing</td>
<td>1,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration &amp; Safety</td>
<td>1,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, Gas, Water &amp; Waste Services</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: REMPLAN

Top Regional Imports by industry, 2018-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Value of Goods &amp; Services ($million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacuring</td>
<td>3,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing</td>
<td>772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental, hiring and real estate services</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food services</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: REMPLAN

Demographic snapshot

Like much of regional Victoria, Hume has an aging population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Median age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>282,825</td>
<td>5,926,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gippsland has a lower median weekly income, however less of the population is renting than the Victorian average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Median weekly income</th>
<th>Hume</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$595</td>
<td>$644</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Household Tenure type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owned with a mortgage</th>
<th>42.2%</th>
<th>43.0%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owned outright</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census 2016

Disadvantaged characteristics snapshot

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hume</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,700 (2.2%)</td>
<td>47,800 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Has need for assistance with core activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hume</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16,300 (6.3%)</td>
<td>304,940 (5.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Speak language other than English at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hume</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

English proficiency (% who speak English very well)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hume</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Single parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hume</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excludes persons who speak English only at home.

Education and access to internet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hume</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree &amp; above</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cert III &amp; above</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10 &amp; above</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below year 10 (including cert I and II)</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Households with no internet access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hume</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index

Rank of index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Rank in Victoria of 79</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpine</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benalla</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Shepparton</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigo</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrindindi</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathbogie</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towong</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wangaratta</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wodonga</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census 2016
KEY STRENGTHS: Hume

Goulburn Comparative Advantage

Comparative Advantage

Top 10 Revealed Comparative Advantage by Industry (CAI)

- Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing, 10,151
- Health Care & Social Assistance, 16,178
- Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services, 1,612
- Retail Trade, 10,378
- Construction, 11,260
- Accommodation & Food Services, 3,400
- Manufacturing, 11,135
- Public Administration & Safety, 8,644
- Other Services, 2,240
- Education & Training, 9,820

Industries with a CAI above 1 have a higher proportion of GVA in that region compared to the state or national economy and can indicate a potential strength of a region.

Economic Direction

Projected change in Hume SA4, 2019-2024

- Education and Training
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Construction
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Retail Trade
- Manufacturing
- Financial and Insurance Services
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services
- Other Services
- Information Media and Telecommunications
- Wholesale Trade
- Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing
- Administration and Support Services
- Mining
- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- Public Administration and Safety
- Arts and Recreation Services

80% of projected employment growth is expected to come from top 4 industries.

KEY STRENGTHS: Hume

Ovens Murray Comparative Advantage

Comparative Advantage

Top 10 Revealed Comparative Advantage by Industry (CAI)

- Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing, 10,815
- Public Administration & Safety, 11,155
- Health Care & Social Assistance, 16,178
- Retail Trade, 10,878
- Construction, 10,205
- Accommodation & Food Services, 9,409
- Administrative & Support Services, 9,280
- Education & Training, 9,412
- Arts & Recreation Services, 1,612
- Manufacturing, 1,612

Industries with a CAI above 1 have a higher proportion of GVA in that region compared to the state or national economy and can indicate a potential strength of a region.

Economic Direction

Projected change in Hume SA4, 2019-2024

- Education and Training
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Construction
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Retail Trade
- Manufacturing
- Financial and Insurance Services
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services
- Other Services
- Information Media and Telecommunications
- Wholesale Trade
- Retail, Hiring and Real Estate Services
- Transport, Post and Warehousing
- Administrative and Support Services
- Mining
- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- Public Administration and Safety
- Arts and Recreation Services

80% of projected employment growth is expected to come from top 4 industries.

Source: calculation based on RIM/PLAU modelled data, Commonwealth Government/Labour Market Information Retail & Act Allen Infrastructure Victoria.
**KEY SECTORS AND INDUSTRIES: Hume**

Hume's economy is highly exposed to industries impacted by bushfires, especially Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing. The severely impacted Tourism sector is the seventh largest employer.

---

### Key Sectors

**Gross Value Added** (SM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Value (SM)</th>
<th>% of Total VGM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ownership of Dwellings</td>
<td>$1,958</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Fishing</td>
<td>$1,743</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>$1,629</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration &amp; Safety</td>
<td>$1,625</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>$1,505</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</td>
<td>$1,456</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Training</td>
<td>$964</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>$788</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>$707</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, Gas, Water &amp; Waste Services</td>
<td>$725</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**No. of employees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>No. of Employees</th>
<th>% of Total Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</td>
<td>16,778</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>11,155</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>10,678</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Fishing</td>
<td>10,615</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>10,260</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Training</td>
<td>9,028</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>8,778</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration &amp; Safety</td>
<td>8,614</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, Postal &amp; Watercasing</td>
<td>4,844</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>4,280</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### Impacted Focus Industries

1. **Agriculture** is the region's fourth largest employer, the region's second largest contributor to GVA and the areas second largest exporter.

2. **Manufacturing** is the region's largest exporting industry, second largest employer and third largest contributor to GVA. Food product manufacturing accounts for 53% of the region's manufacturing value add.

3. **Health Care** is the largest employer in Hume, and makes up 8.5% of total GVA to the region.

4. **Forestry and Logging** accounts for ~206 jobs (0.2%) and $71.4M GVA (0.4%).

5. **Tourism** accounts for ~9,037 jobs (7.9%) and $758M GVA (4.6%). This industry is particularly prevalent in the Alpine part of the region as it offers a range of outdoor activities during both summer and winter periods. Tourism assets are expected to drive an increase in population and the economy in surrounding rural areas and towns.

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Sources: Calculation based on RISVPLAU modelled data.

*Ownership of Dwellings measures the value added associated with the provision of housing services by the owner of a dwelling to its occupants, irrespective of whether the owner is also an occupant. While generally a significant component of GVA, it is generally excluded when talking about industries' contribution to the economy.*
# Appendix 4

## Victorian Regional Partnerships

### Ovens Murray development focal areas summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism</strong></td>
<td>progressing action on regional tourism projects such as Ride High Country and Alpine Resort initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation</strong></td>
<td>communities and industries connected to each other and major service centres, advocating for passenger rail improvements on the North East line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Digital economy</strong></td>
<td>the Ovens Murray Digital Plan has been identified as a priority in leading the way in digital inclusion, innovation and entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Climate change and renewable energy</strong></td>
<td>development a regional roadmap supporting the uptake of renewable energy opportunities, securing maximum benefit for communities and protecting the natural environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and wellbeing</strong></td>
<td>healthy and engaged communities as a great place to grow up and grow old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic development</strong></td>
<td>prosperous and innovative regional economy growing key and emerging sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education and skills</strong></td>
<td>21st century education for future generations and lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Goulburn development focal areas summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population wellbeing</strong></td>
<td>supporting people of the Goulburn region to be fit, healthy and engaged across all ages and abilities, regardless of location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education and employment</strong></td>
<td>supporting communities to have the skills to be lifelong learners and to engage in the local workforce at a level that suits them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reducing disadvantage</strong></td>
<td>supporting equal opportunity to lead healthy and prosperous lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Growth corridor</strong></td>
<td>support urban environments that are viable and thriving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic development</strong></td>
<td>seeking a diversified and thriving economy that provides opportunities for workers including identifying tourism opportunities in places such as Lake Eildon and Barmah Forest and creating more pathways for local Aboriginal employment in the natural resource management industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protecting high value environmental assets</strong></td>
<td>aligning action to protect the region’s iconic, high value environmental assets and ecosystem services with regional growth and sustainable land use. This includes building awareness of the benefits of renewable energy and exploring opportunities to increase its generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning for growth</strong></td>
<td>aligning support for population growth with the region’s aspirations for economic development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Regional Development Australia Hume Committee

The following focus areas have been identified as key strategic themes for the Hume Region. These build on the Hume Strategy 2010-2020 and are directly aligned to the five themes of the Hume Strategy, however they have been refined with further identification of contemporary issues and opportunities facing the region:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional city revitalisation</strong></td>
<td>recognising the critical role played by the network of high functioning regional cities and strengthening their collective capability. There is a continued need to ensure these cities improve activity centres, amenity, community and education facilities, development capacity, cultural capital, and liveability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strong regional centres and towns</strong></td>
<td>building strength as a multi centred region with its network of vibrant regional centres, towns and villages that support and are supported by regional cities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resilient communities</strong></td>
<td>enhancing community wellbeing by developing and maintaining healthy, vibrant and resilient communities, reducing disadvantage and strengthening educational outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building transport capability and capacity</strong></td>
<td>linking communities and building on the competitive advantage of having two nationally significant transport corridors within the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing the visitor economy</td>
<td>in order to meet demand for visitors to the region, the continued delivery of product and infrastructure is needed to grow capacity and ensure ongoing visitor satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going global in the food economy</td>
<td>the food industry is an underlying economic driver of the Hume Region. Dairy, horticulture and cattle remain the strengths of the region and there is opportunity to leverage further from downstream manufacturing and transport links to strengthen the global focus of the food economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening workforce capability</td>
<td>the unemployment rate in many areas is exceptionally low, meaning access to labour remains an issue for business. In addition, as jobs become more specialised, there is a need to strengthen workforce capability through access and delivery of education and training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change action and secure energy future</td>
<td>the region has the capability to support greater levels of renewable energy, providing investment, new jobs and a role in reducing carbon emissions in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Hume</td>
<td>the importance of digital technology and telecommunications is critical for prosperity. There is a need to take collective action in building infrastructure and digital readiness across the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving access to high quality community infrastructure</td>
<td>improving liveability through the delivery and access to quality sporting, community and cultural facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainably managed catchments and water resources</td>
<td>protecting catchments and building a strong future with less water for consumptive use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Regional Partnerships Ovens Murray**

Bordairing the Murray River to the north and having unique access to Victoria's high country, the Ovens Murray region is a key location for lifestyle achievements and thriving tourism sector based on cycling, snow, nature-based tourism, food, wine, craft beer and cultural heritage. The region is also strategically located on national freight and transport corridors servicing Australia’s east coast and has a number of strong manufacturing and service centres.

We proudly acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land and pay respects to their Elders past, present and future. For they hold the memories, the tradition and the culture of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our region has:
- Seven municipalities – Alpine Shire, Benalla Rural City, Indigo Shire, Mansfield Shire, Towong Shire, Wangaratta Rural City and Wodonga City
- Four Alpine Resorts – Mount Buffalo, Mount Stirling, Falls Creek and Mount Hotham
- A Gross Regional Product of $5.7 billion
- A population of 121,940
- More than 3 million High Country visitors a year

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**The outcomes we are striving to achieve**

- **Transport**
  - Communities and industries connected to each other and major service centres
- **Health and wellbeing**
  - Healthy and engaged communities – a great place to grow up and grow old
- **Economic development**
  - Prosperous and innovative economy growing our key and emerging sectors
- **Education and skills**
  - 21st Century education for future generations and lifelong learning for all
- **Digital economy**
  - Leading the way in digital inclusion, innovation and entrepreneurship
- **Climate change and renewable energy**
  - Renewable energy future protecting our natural environment and delivering community benefit

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This roadmap reflects the views of the Ovens Murray Regional Partnership. The roadmap is a living document that will be updated regularly by the Regional Partnership.
The outcomes we are striving to achieve

While early economic, agricultural and infrastructure priorities still remain, or are being progressed, the most recent community feedback has placed an emphasis on the wellbeing and social health of the Goulburn region. In response, our Partnership is striving to achieve the following long-term outcomes. The roadmap outlines the challenges we face in achieving those outcomes, the actions we are taking and what success looks for our region.

Population Wellbeing
People of the Goulburn region are fit, healthy and engaged across all ages and abilities, regardless of location.

Education and Employment
People of the Goulburn region have the skills to be lifelong learners and to engage in the local workforce at a level that suits them.

Reducing Disadvantage
People of the Goulburn region enjoy equal opportunity to lead healthy and prosperous lives.

Growth Corridors
Goulburn’s urban environments are viable and thriving.

Economy
Goulburn is home to a diversified and thriving economy that provides opportunities for workers of all ages.

From Melbourne’s northern growth corridor to the Murrumbidgee River, the Goulburn Region is renowned for its fertile soils, mild climate, good water resources and growth opportunities for population and business.

The Goulburn Regional Partnership knows that despite its advantages, the region also faces challenges such as poor health and educational outcomes, critical workforce skills gaps, social isolation, intergenerational disadvantage and sub-regional community connectivity.

The outcomes that the Partnership has identified for 2018-19 will:
- Keep our people healthy
- Better understand and then develop a leading regional mental health response
- Address critical workforce skills gaps in the rapidly growing health sector
- Support vulnerable young people
- Continue work on the economic projects already underway
- Address gaps in social infrastructure in the growth corridor

We proudly acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land and pay respects to their Elders past, present and future, for they hold the memories, the tradition and the culture of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
## Appendix 5

### Current state led recovery programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recovery activity</th>
<th>Activity description</th>
<th>State recovery priority</th>
<th>RBERP priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial support to impacted small businesses</td>
<td>• Small Business Bushfire Recovery Grants ($50,000) for businesses that suffered direct bushfire damage</td>
<td>Industries and businesses recover and are stronger</td>
<td>Business and industry development, sustainability and resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and primary producers including:</td>
<td>• Small Business Bushfire Support Grants ($10,000) for businesses impacted by the bushfires in seven heavily fire impacted LGAs</td>
<td>Regional businesses and primary producers have resumed operations, where feasible</td>
<td>Business and industry confidence and competitiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early business and industry support</td>
<td>• Victorian Bushfire Concessional Loans ($500,000) per loan to assist small businesses, primary producers, and non-profit organisations impacted by the bushfires</td>
<td>Regional businesses and primary producers are recovering without ongoing financial support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster recovery grants</td>
<td>• Emergency Bushfire Primary Industries Grants (up to $75,000) per grant for primary producers that suffered direct bushfire damage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Victorian Bushfire Emergency Transport Support Program (up to $15,000 per grant) to support impacted primary producers struggling to transport goods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Agriculture Victoria’s Wine Grape Testing Rebate ($1.2 million) to support growers accessing smoke exposure tests.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Initiatives to support businesses and primary producers, including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early business and industry advice</th>
<th>Business Recovery Advisors to provide expert advice and support to small business owners in impacted areas</th>
<th>Local business and communities are resilient</th>
<th>Business and industry development, sustainability and resilience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural Financial Counselling Service and financial counsellors providing financial and business advice</td>
<td>Regional businesses, including Aboriginal businesses, and primary producers are gaining confidence to invest and grow</td>
<td>Business and industry confidence and competitiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of support services to farmers, including activities such as consultations, farm visits, workshops, information sessions, field days and impact assessments</td>
<td>Regional businesses, including Aboriginal businesses, and primary producers are better prepared for challenges and economic shocks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of agricultural and technical advice to primary producers, including farm management and recovery, animal welfare and biosecurity management, smoke taint technical advice for growers and other industry specific support as required</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Targeted support for Aboriginal businesses and workers, to provide support for Aboriginal businesses to recover and associated creation of employment pathways.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery activity</td>
<td>Activity description</td>
<td>State Recovery priority</td>
<td>RBERP priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initiatives and funding support for the visitor economy including:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Destination marketing</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Destination marketing | *Industries and businesses recover and are stronger* | Stimulating local economies, trade and investment |
| *Regional events* | 
- Business & Sport for Bushfire Recovery program encouraging businesses to hold events in impacted areas | Regional visitor numbers and tourism expenditure have, where feasible, returned to pre-bushfire levels or better | Supporting industry sectors, regional reputation and growth |
| 
- Regional events funding grants – funding for events in affected towns | | | |
| 
- Grants to bushfire-affected Regional Tourism Boards including $350,000 for Tourism North East and $500,000 for Destination Gippsland to support marketing and networking. | | | |
| **Initiatives to boost jobs by linking businesses, job seekers and providers, including:** | | | |
| *Jobs creation and employment participation* | 
- $10 million Bushfire Tourism and Business Fund for projects that attract visitors and support local jobs, including, Rural Skills Connect to provide employment and training advice for bushfires affected farmers, family members, employees and farm service providers. | *Employment opportunities are accessible* | Stimulating local economies, trade and investment |
| *Infrastructure investment* | | | |
| *Visitor attraction* | | | |
| **Develop plans, strategies and programs to make local economies resilient to shocks, such as droughts, bushfires and pandemics, including:** | | | |
| *Economic recovery planning* | 
- Regional plans including the RBERP | *Local business and communities are resilient* | Stimulating local economies, trade and investment |
| *Economic development planning* | 
- Support to develop a Gippsland Aboriginal Economic Strategy undertaken by the GunaiKurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation. | Regional economies are becoming stronger and more resilient | Supporting industry sectors, regional reputation and growth |
| **Initiatives and funding support for sectors in transition, including:** | | | |
| *Local trade* | 
- Harvesting and recovery of timber salvage in affected areas | *Industries and businesses recover and are stronger* | Stimulating local economies, trade and investment |
| *Structural adjustment and transition support* | | Declining sectors are being identified and transition is being supported | Supporting industry sectors, regional reputation and growth |
| **Initiatives and funding support to strengthen business networks including:** | | | |
| *Community and business networking and development* | 
- Networking events, tourism opportunities and pro-bono business partnerships are facilitated including the $500,000 Regional Industry Groups and Chambers of Commerce Grants Program | *Local business and communities are resilient* | Stimulating local economies, trade and investment |
| 
- Community Recovery and Resilience Grants - $35 million to support locally led programs for community connection, engagement and resilience including; $3 million has been released for the provision of community events, arts initiatives and leadership programs. | Local community and business networks are connected, organised and collaborative | Supporting industry sectors, regional reputation and growth |
Endnotes

1 Emergency Management Victoria, 2020

2 The four Alpine Resort Management Boards are established by the Alpine Reports (Management) Act 1997. For emergency management planning, it is proposed by Emergency Management Victoria that all Alpine Resort Management Boards will be declared to be within the Hume region. However, noting the complexities associated with the Southern Alpine Resort Management Board (its resorts are in two geographical and risk regions - Hume and Gippsland), further work is planned to ensure that arrangements facilitate effective emergency management planning regarding Regional Emergency Management Planning Arrangements.

3 To be replaced by the State Emergency Management Plan in late 2020.

4 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2016

5 Boston Consulting Group for the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, 2020

6 Inspector General for Emergency Management, 2019

7 Tourism North East, 2020

8 Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy, 2020

9 Aboriginal Economic Development, 2020

10 Agriculture Victoria, 2020

11 Agriculture Victoria, 2020

12 Rural City of Wangaratta Council, 2020