

Mallee

Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) 2026

Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS)

Victoria's Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) were released in 2022 and identified strategic directions to further drive growth and prosperity in regional Victoria



Every Regional Partnership region is supported by a tailored Regional Economic Development Strategy

Role of the REDS

- The REDS play a foundational, place-based role in Victoria's economic policy landscape by translating whole-of-government priorities into region-specific economic reform and investment agendas.
- The REDS provide a consistent evidence-based framework for understanding Victoria's regional economies.

How to use the REDS

- The REDS can be used by all levels of government, regional communities, and businesses to work together, innovate, tackle challenges and make targeted investments to achieve stronger outcomes for their region.
- Regional communities and businesses can use the REDS to:
 - communicate innovative capacity in their region, now and in the future
 - collaborate with government to better understand regional strengths, challenges and opportunities
 - attract investment to the region based on clearly identified strategic priorities.

REDS interactive data dashboards

9 interactive data dashboards—one for each Regional Partnership—complement the REDS, providing deeper insights into economic performance and regional trends.

Explore the region's dashboard:

[**View Mallee Dashboard**](#)

[**https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/priorities/reds**](https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/priorities/reds)

Refreshing the REDS in 2026

The 2026 REDS translate Victoria's current strategic policy directions into place-based economic opportunities

Why REDS Refresh in 2026?



- Time has passed since the original 2022 REDS.
- The 2022 REDS established a strong, evidence-based foundation, but underlying data, economic conditions and forecasts have evolved significantly.
- The refresh incorporates major policy developments since 2022—particularly Victoria's Economic Growth Statement and Victorian Industry Policy—ensuring regional priorities remain aligned with whole-of-government direction.
- New economic opportunities, sector shifts and investment priorities have emerged across regions, requiring an updated, place-based lens.
- The 2026 refresh does not replace the 2022 REDS. It selectively updates data, insights and priorities where change has occurred, while retaining the core strategic intent.
- The 2022 REDS remain a valid and standalone product. The refresh builds on this foundation, ensuring continuity while strengthening relevance for current decision-making.

Why REDS Refresh in 2026?



- **Boosting productivity is central** to Victoria's long-term economic growth, workforce capability and prosperity. Achieving this will require coordinated economy-wide, sectoral and place-based initiatives.
- **Priority sectors underpinning growth** include advanced manufacturing and defence, health technologies, circular economy (including renewable energy), digital technologies, agribusiness and critical minerals.
- Many of these **knowledge-intensive, export-oriented sectors are regionally concentrated**, presenting significant opportunities to drive regional growth and prosperity.

Mallee REDS 2026

The Mallee REDS Refresh revisits the strategic directions for the region, reflecting place-based opportunities under Victoria’s Economic Growth Statement and key economic development policies that were released since 2022

2022 REDS Strategic Directions

In 2022, RDV delivered the Mallee REDS which identified place-based strategic directions to drive economic growth.

- 1 Drive sustainable growth in the food industry
- 2 Leverage natural endowments to diversify the economy into emerging industries
- 3 Enhance the visitor economy by developing natural, cultural and built attractions
- 4 Foster better links between education providers, industry, research, employers and students to develop career pathways and a workforce that meets the future needs of the region
- 5 Ensure an accessible and suitably qualified workforce to unlock the growth potential

[Click here to read the 2022 REDS](#)

2026 REDS Refresh Opportunities & Priorities

Since 2022, new opportunities and priorities have emerged that are shaping economic development across the region.

- 6 **Capitalise on the Mallee's critical minerals and clean energy endowment**

The VHM mine at Goschen is one of the most significant economic opportunities in the Mallee. Combined with the potential for the region from the VNI West, the Mallee is well placed to diversify its economic base and attract new investment.
- 7 **Support agribusiness resilience in response to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan (MDBP) implementation**

Agribusiness is critical to regional prosperity, jobs and exports. Investment in new technologies and systems that increase productivity and allow access to higher value markets is key to retaining regional competitive advantage in food and fibre processing.

See pages 5, 6, 21-25 for further detail on these emerging opportunities and priorities, as well as how existing strategic directions have developed in the region since the 2022 REDS.

Enablers and investments supporting REDS strategic directions

2022 REDS Strategic Directions (see appendix for extended analysis)

	Development since the REDS	Alignment with state and local priorities since the REDS
Drive sustainable growth in the food industry	▪ Mallee Agrifood Action Plan and Loddon Mallee International Engagement Strategy ▪ Agribusiness workshops with Global Victoria focused on export and value-add ▪ Growth in protected cropping - medicinal cannabis and table grapes ▪ Increased RDV engagement with food and fibre businesses	▪ Economic Growth Statement ▪ Victorian Industry Policy ▪ Victorian Investment Fund ▪ Victorian Skills Plan
Leverage natural endowments to diversify the economy into emerging industries	▪ Emergence of mining projects across the region, particularly VHM Goschen mine ▪ Vic Gov Critical Minerals Roadmap and Resource Ready strategy are positioning the Mallee to capture opportunities from critical minerals ▪ Growth in solar projects across the Mallee	▪ Victorian REZ Program ▪ Victoria's Climate Change Strategy ▪ Vic Gov Critical Minerals Roadmap ▪ Victorian Industry Policy ▪ Sustainability Victoria Strategy
Enhance the visitor economy by developing natural, cultural and built attractions	▪ Trail of Lights (Mildura) and the Fibre Optic Symphony Orchestra ▪ Mildura Riverfront and Powerhouse redevelopment ▪ Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement activated ▪ PS Australian Star paddlesteamer constructed	▪ Economic Growth Statement ▪ Regional Worker Accommodation Fund ▪ Victorian Tourism Investment ▪ Victorian Innovation Statement ▪ First Peoples Tourism Plan for Victoria 2025–2030
Ensure an accessible and suitably qualified workforce to unlock the growth potential	▪ Loddon Mallee Housing Strategy progressed ▪ Regional Industry Skills Connector enabling mobility across borders and industries ▪ Robinvale Euston Workforce Network ▪ Sustainable Childcare for Rural Kids Project ▪ Housing developments across Kerang	▪ Victorian Skills Plan ▪ Regional Worker Accommodation Fund ▪ Victorian Health Workforce Strategy ▪ Vic Gov Place-Based Reform Agenda ▪ Free TAFE
Harness the economic potential of the region's cross-border zones	▪ Cross Border Industry Taskforce (workforce) and Tri State Economic Alliance progressed ▪ Cross Border Future Industry Forum and Cross Border Commissioner advocacy ▪ Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy ▪ Mildura Airport Master Plan ▪ Establishment of Donald and Balranald Mineral Sands Mines	▪ Economic Growth Statement ▪ Victorian Transport Infrastructure Investment ▪ Vic Gov Place-Based Reform Agenda ▪ Vic Gov Critical Minerals Roadmap

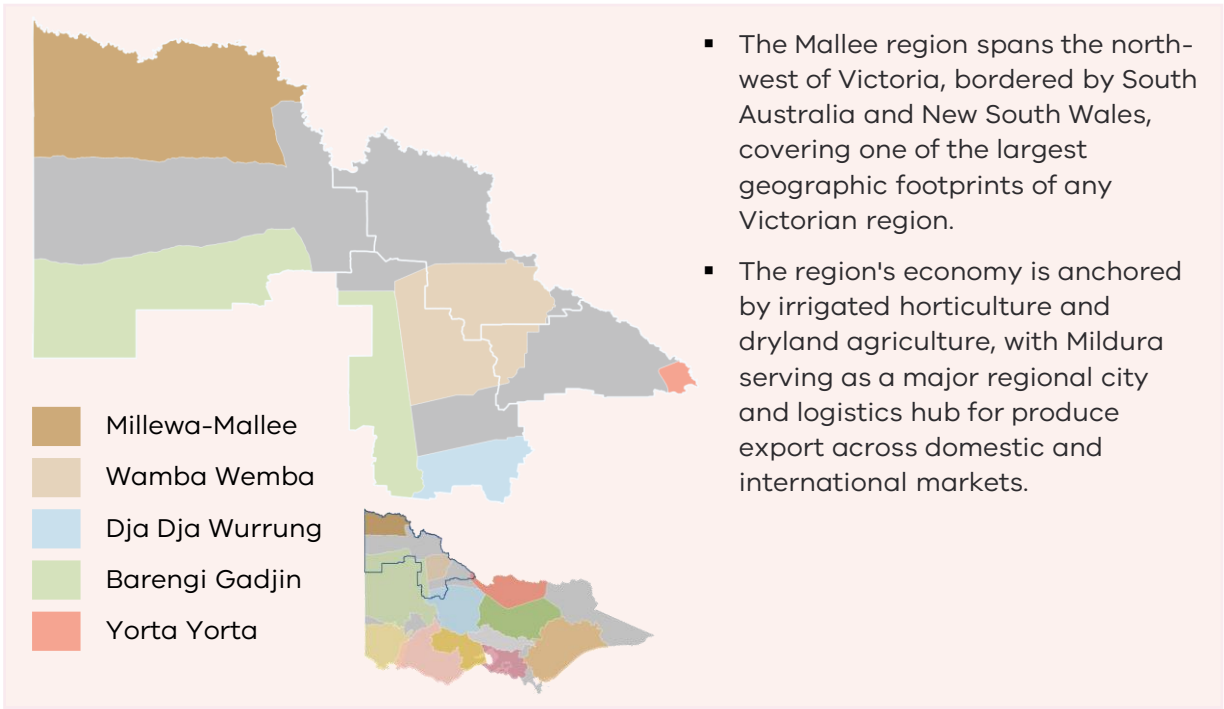
Enablers and investments supporting REDS strategic directions

2026 REDS Refresh Opportunities & Priorities

(see appendix for extended analysis)

	Significance	Supporting projects and catalysts to support future growth	
Capitalise on the Mallee's critical minerals and clean energy endowment	The VHM mine at Goschen is one of the most significant economic opportunities in the Mallee. Combined with the potential for the region from the VNI West, the Mallee is well placed to diversify its economic base and attract new investment.	Supporting projects - VHM Goschen mine - ICN supply chain events - Cross Border Future Industry Forum - Renewable Energy Zones - Skills mapping for critical minerals sector - Swan Hill Bricks and Mortar Housing Summit	Catalysts to support future growth - Supply chain localisation - Regional workforce housing and childcare capacity response - Activation of REZ community benefit
Support agribusiness resilience in response to the MDBP implementation	Agribusiness is critical to regional prosperity, jobs and exports. Investment in new technologies and systems that increase productivity and allow access to higher value markets is key to retaining regional competitive advantage in food and fibre processing.	Supporting projects - Protected cropping and low-water initiatives - MDBP business impact mapping - Forestry Transition Fund and Energy Innovation Fund - Workforce Attraction and Retention	Catalysts to support future growth - Water-efficient horticulture - Targeted agri-food diversification investment prospectus - Proactive business transition support for MDBP-affected enterprises

Mallee regional profile



Mallee's economic growth is underpinned by strong agricultural production

Population 94k Population (2025)¹ -1.1% Since 2020	Population growth in the Mallee is behind both regional and metropolitan averages - The Mallee is home to 94,500 people with population over the past 5 years decreasing (-1.1%), contrary to both regional (6.1%) and metropolitan (7.2%) averages.¹ - Positive population growth was recorded within the most recent year, with Mallee's population growing 0.2%, with both Mildura and Swan Hill recording gains.¹	Population change since 2020 7.6% -4.7%
Gross Regional Product \$6.4b GRP (2025)² +12.6% Since 2020	Growth in the Mallee's economy has outpaced both metropolitan and regional averages - Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing remains a key economic driver, with its share of GVA (28%) exceeding its share of employment (17%), indicating strong productivity.² - Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing has been the dominant driver of the region's economic growth since 2020, growing by 25%.²	GRP change since 2020 46% 3%
Employment 46k Employed (2025)² +6.0% Since 2020	The Mallee's employment growth is underpinned by service-based industries - Services-based sectors are driving employment growth in the region, with Health Care & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Professional, Scientific & Technical Services and Education & Training recording the strongest growth.² - Demand for Health Care & Social Assistance workers is expected to remain strong, with 3,700 new roles by 2035 (31% of new workers), significantly above its current 17% share and higher than statewide benchmarks.³ - It is expected that new mining and energy projects will also attract new workers and economic activity to the region.	Employment change since 2020 13% -4%
Unemployment Rate 2.0% Unemployment Rate (Mar Qtr 2026)⁴ -1.6% pts Since Mar Qtr 2021	The Mallee's unemployment rates vary but remain low across the region - The region's labour market has tightened over the past 5 years, with the unemployment rate falling by 1.6 percentage points to 2.0%, well below both regional Victoria (3.7%) and Melbourne (4.8%).⁴ - Unemployment rates vary across the region, from a low of 0.9% in Irymple to a high of 3.4% in Mildura – North.⁴	Unemployment rate 3.4% 0.9%

Key industry strengths driving the Mallee's economy



Agricultural Production

The Mallee has a strong agricultural sector, with over **15% of Victoria's gross value** of agricultural production occurring in the region.¹ The region leads the state in the production of **grapes (90%), nuts (97%)** and **citrus fruit (90%)**.¹ The Mallee utilizes this strength by generating almost **\$1.5 billion in GVA** and over **7,800 jobs** through the Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing sector.²



Mineral Resource Endowments

The Mallee has several resource extraction operations throughout the region including new **mineral sands projects**. The region's natural endowments will provide future ongoing benefits, helping to stimulate economic activity. **The Goschen Mineral Sands project** will extract critical minerals, including **titanium, zinc** and **rare-earth elements**. This project is estimated to have a net increase in GRP in the Loddon Mallee region of **\$2 billion** between 2022 and 2044 and sustain net employment gains in the project area of **480 FTE per annum** on average.³



Renewable Energy

The Mallee is recognised for having exceptional solar resources, with some of the highest irradiance levels in Victoria spread across the region. The Mallee accounts for **56% of Victoria's commercially produced solar power**.⁴ As well as its vast solar resources, the Mallee is home to major projects including the **Nowingi Solar Power Station (360MW)**, the **Curyo Wind Farm (1000MW)**, the **Meering West Wind Farm (1500MW)**, the **Tragowel BESS (207MW)** and the **Kerang BESS**.⁴



Visitor Economy & Creative Industries

Mallee tourism is driven by the iconic **Murray River**, which provides the region with a hub of recreation, visitation and amenity. The region has **five National Parks**, a **State forest**, **numerous lakes and lakebeds** which also help boost tourism. Tourism in the Mallee had **\$658 million in annual spend** in year ending June 2026.⁵ The region's Creative and Performing Arts Activities have also seen **growth of 88% since 2020**,² driven by events such as the Murray River International Music Festival, Mildura Jazz Food & Wine Festival, and the Mildura Country Music Festival, as well as emerging cross-border drawcards in the Trail of Lights and Fibre Optic Symphony Orchestra, and gateway to Mungo National Park.

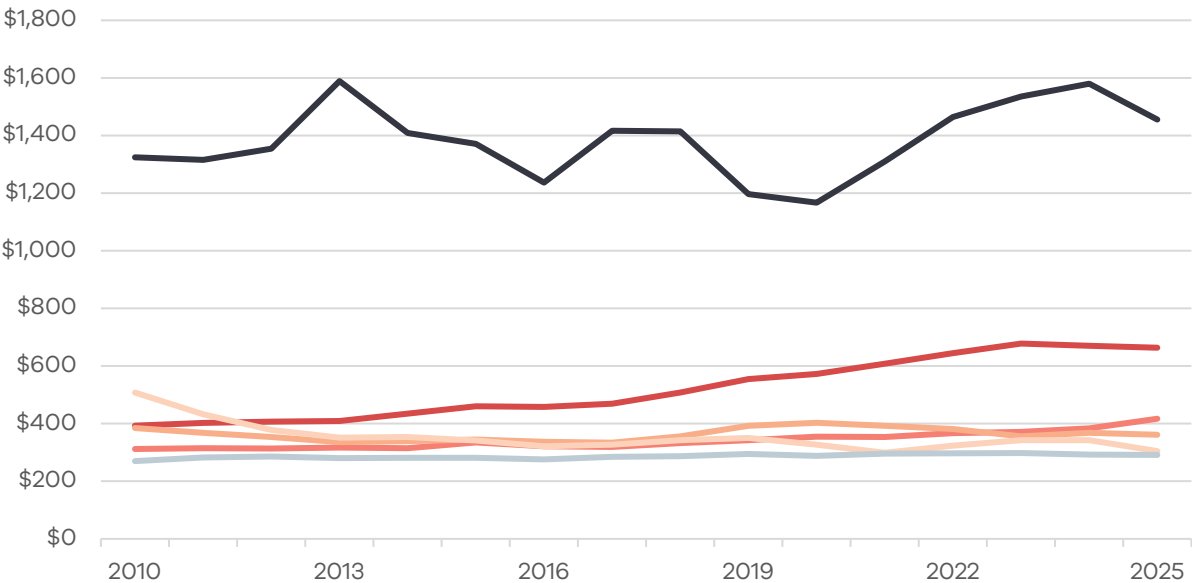
Key industry strengths driving the Mallee’s economy

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing was the largest and one of the fastest growing industries in the Mallee in 2025, accounting for over a quarter (28%) of total GVA in the region.²

- The concentration of Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing GVA relative to employment remains the highest in the Mallee region, highlighting the productive capacity of the industry.
- Services-based industries have also seen strong growth, with Health Care & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Professional, Scientific & Technical Services and Information Media & Telecommunications growing by \$219 million since 2020.²

Mallee gross value added for key industries

National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR)



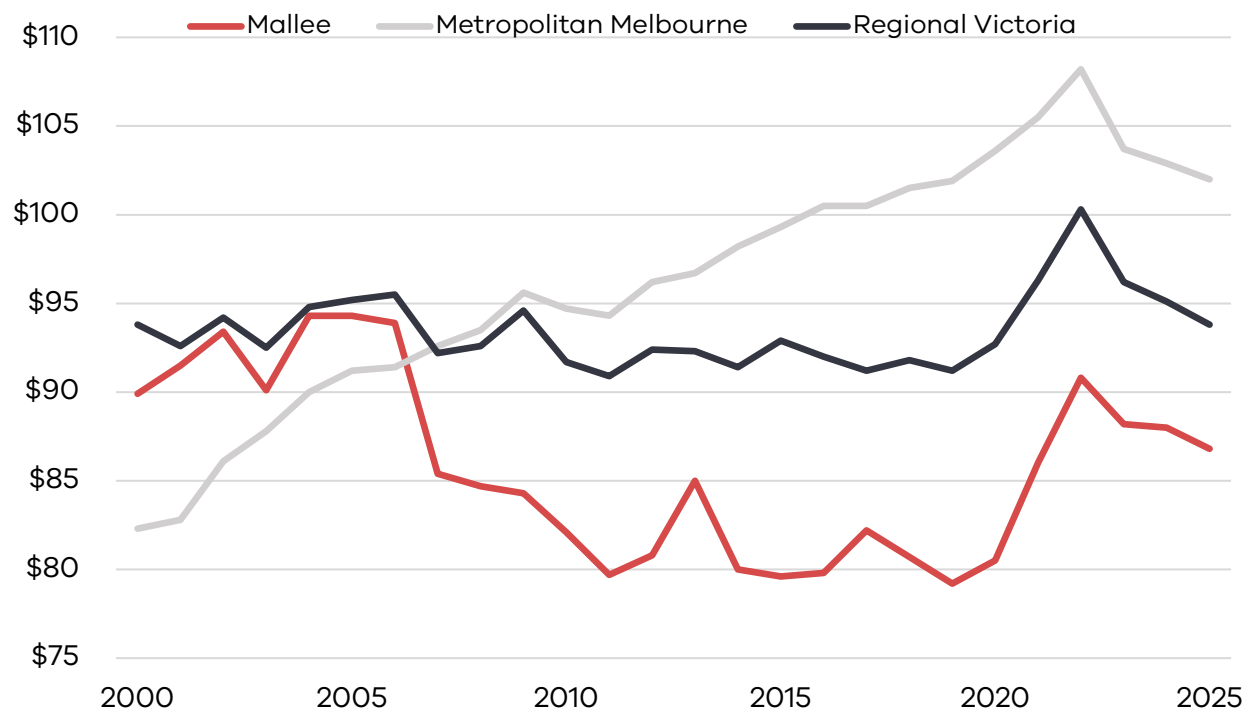
Top sectors by GVA¹

	Industry 1-digit ANZSIC	GVA (\$M)	5-Year Change
—	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	\$1,456	24.8%
—	Health Care and Social Assistance	\$664	16.1%
—	Retail Trade	\$417	17.3%
—	Construction	\$361	-10.5%
—	Manufacturing	\$305	-6.6%
—	Education and Training	\$292	1.5%

Boosting productivity and growing high-value industries is critical to the region's economic future

Labour Productivity (GRP per hour Worked)

Dollars, NIEIR, 2000-2025



Productivity remains below benchmark levels despite strong economic growth

- Labour productivity has remained relatively steady since 2021, reflecting growth in lower-productivity service industries.
- Closing the productivity gap with metropolitan areas remains a key opportunity to lift incomes, competitiveness and long-term economic growth.

High-value industries provide the strongest pathway to productivity growth

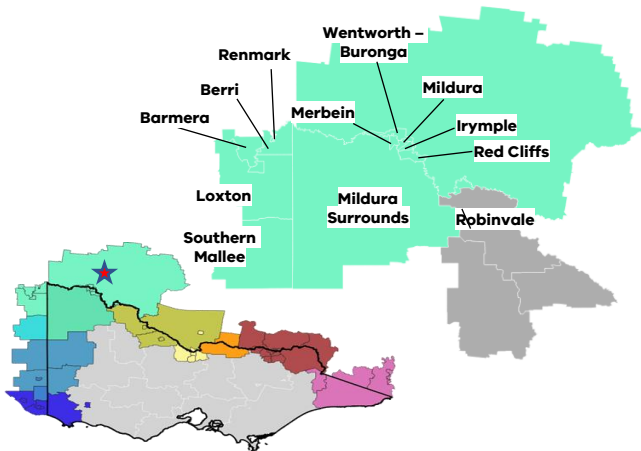
- Several priority sectors identified through the Mallee REDS, including Agri-Food, are among the region's most productive industries.
- Over the past 5 years the Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing sector has driven the region's economic growth, accounting for an additional \$290 million in GVA over that period.¹
- AgTech plays a critical role in driving productivity and economic growth in the Mallee, while also helping to alleviate workforce constraints.
- Continued growth in these sectors will increase the share of economic activity occurring in higher-value, higher-productivity industries.

Skills and innovation are critical enablers of future productivity

- The region's research and education assets such as La Trobe University, Monash University, SuniTAFE and the Mallee Regional Innovation Centre provide a strong foundation for workforce capability and innovation.
- VET, TAFE & University pathways are critical to the region and will continue to drive both youth retention and employment growth in sectors that are crucial to both productivity and economic growth within the Mallee.
- Investment in innovation precincts, research partnerships and advanced skills development will support higher-value industries and future productivity growth.

Key assets in the Riverland-Sunraysia and Western Mallee Cross Border Economic Region are fundamental to realising economic growth in the region

Riverland-Sunraysia & Western Mallee Cross Border Economic Region (CBER)



Riverland-Sunraysia & Western Mallee

* Note: each colour in the map above denotes a CBER. The Riverland-Sunraysia and Western Mallee CBER is defined by the SA2 boundaries of Irymple, Merbein, Red Cliffs, Mildura - North, Mildura - South, Wentworth - Buronga, Wentworth - Buronga Region, Robinvale, Mildura Surrounds, Loxton, Loxton Surrounds, Renmark, Renmark Surrounds, Barmera, Berri, and Mildura Surrounds and the LGA boundary of Southern Mallee

Opportunities for Economic Growth

- Freight and export growth:** The region is a key cross border freight hub supporting agricultural supply chains. Mildura Airport stands as a vital transportation hub serving both passengers and cargo, that connects the CBER with various export and tourism markets. When combined with the Murray Basin Freight Rail Project, this will increase freight efficiency, reduce road reliance and support two-way trade flows.
- Agriculture-led industry expansion:** The CBER is underpinned by a strong agriculture sector, particularly in fruits, nuts and grains, driving a large share of output and employment. The industry contributes 24% of GVA and accounts for 17% of jobs in the CBER.² This provides an opportunity to further develop value add processing in the region, while also supporting growth in complementary industries such as agricultural construction, logistics, and mine supplies linked to regional development.
- Incentives to attract workers:** The year-round need for seasonal workers remains a key limiting factor to economic growth, particularly during peak harvest periods. Addressing this through the proposed targeted Regional Seasonal Industry Connector (RSIC) program will improve access to education and skills in remote areas. Incentives to attract local and cross border workers into agriculture and processing will be critical to sustaining industry expansion.
- Enabling infrastructure and diversification:** Improved housing supply (annual building approvals in Riverland-Sunraysia have increased by 55%)⁵ is supporting workforce attraction and retention, which is essential for economic growth. At the same time, major renewable energy investments, such as transmission and generation projects, are creating new jobs, supporting regional construction activity, and diversifying the economic base alongside the established agriculture sector.



Key Population Centres/ Service Hubs

Mildura (Vic); Robinvale (Vic); Ouyen (Vic); Euston (NSW); Balranald (NSW); Wentworth (NSW); Renmark (SA); Loxton (SA)



Key Tertiary Education Providers

LaTrobe University, Mildura Campus; Sunraysia Institute of TAFE, Mildura Campus, Monash Mildura General Practice Academy, Mallee Regional Innovation Centre



Transport Corridors & Strategic Assets

Sturt Highway; Calder Highway; Silver City Highway; Mildura Airport; Mildura Railway Line; Pinnaroo Railway Line



Largest Industries and Related Assets

Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing:

Agriculture peak bodies (Almond Board of Australia, Citrus Australia, Australian Table Grapes Association, Dried Fruits Australia); Murray Valley Winegrowers; Ouyen saleyards; Horticulture and manufacturing operations.

Tourism

Nature and culturally based tourism (world heritage listed Mungo National Park), water-based activities (Murray River and lakes); wineries, food and agri-tourism

Health Care & Social Assistance

Mildura Base Public Hospital; Mildura Health Private Hospital; Lameroo District Hospital; Ouyen and District Hospital



Journey to work flows

More than 3,100 workers cross the border between Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. 52% were inflows into Victoria, predominantly from New South Wales.⁴



Other Activity Flows

Agricultural; Healthcare; Retail; Education; (secondary education in particular) and through freight flows

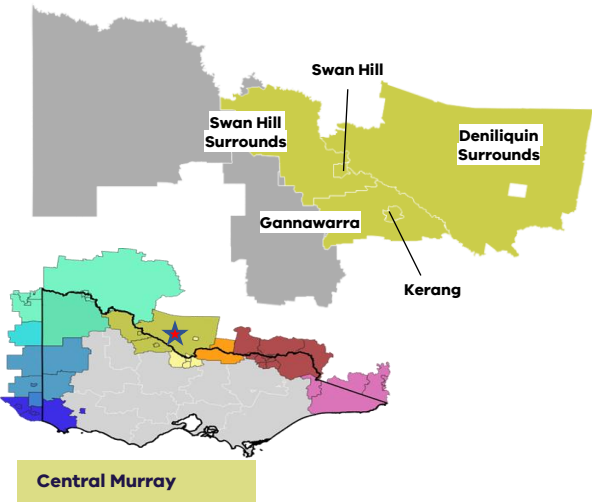
Key economic indicators show improvement in socio-economic outcomes.

Metric	Riverland-Sunraysia & Western Mallee
Population ¹ (2025)	102.3k
Population Growth ¹ (2020 – 2025)	0.8%
GRP ² (2025)	\$6.5b
GRP Growth ² (2020 – 2025)	8.6%
Unemployment Rate ³ (Mar 2026)	3.1%
Unemployment Rate Change ³ (Mar 2021 – Mar 2026)	-2.0% pts
Employment Growth ² (2020 – 2025)	6.6%

Key assets in the Central Murray Cross Border Economic Region are fundamental to realising economic growth in the region

The Central Murray CBER is critical to regional cross-border flows, with tertiary education and health services encouraging these flows. Key transport infrastructure will support the delivery of Victoria’s energy transition as well as economically significant mineral sands projects such as Goschen.

Central Murray Cross Border Economic Region (CBER)



* Note: each colour in the map above denotes a CBER. The Central Murray CBER is defined by the SA2 boundaries of Swan Hill, Swan Hill Surrounds, Gannawarra, Kerang and Deniliquin Surrounds.

Opportunities for Economic Growth

- Regulatory alignment and enabling growth:** Frequent cross border movement of people and goods reinforces the need for better alignment of state regulations (e.g. farm accreditations and compliance), reducing duplication and supporting industries spanning agriculture, transport logistics, meat processing (including export abattoirs for cattle, sheep and goats), and emerging sectors such as renewable energy and critical minerals.
- Incentives to attract workers:** Addressing seasonal and structural labour shortages remains critical to sustaining growth across agriculture and related industries (e.g. processing, logistics and abattoirs). This includes promoting agricultural and processing careers, increasing local workforce participation, and expanding access to training, particularly in remote areas, to better meet industry demand.
- With 58% of agricultural workers aged 45 and over,⁴ attracting younger workers is essential to increasing productivity and workforce needs across agriculture, renewable energy (solar construction and operations), and associated industries such as transport and processing.
- Agriculture-led industry expansion:** Agriculture remains the backbone of the Central Murray economy (39% of GVA; 19% of jobs), with strengths in fruit, nuts and grains.² There potential to further develop value add (agri-food and almonds) processing in the region, alongside growth in supporting industries such as freight transport and logistics, meat processing, renewable energy development (particularly solar), and emerging critical minerals activity.
- Mineral Sands:** VHM’s flagship Goschen Project is one of Australia’s most significant critical minerals projects. Located in Victoria’s north-west approximately 35km of Swan Hill, the project will mine and process 5 million tonnes per annum of heavy mineral sands to produce a variety of critical minerals, generating \$206.5 million per annum to the area.⁵



Key Population Centres/ Service Hubs

Swan Hill (Vic); Kerang (Vic) and Cohuna (Victoria); Moulamein and Barham (New South Wales)



Key Tertiary Education Providers

Sunraysia Institute of TAFE, Swan Hill Campus; Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE, Kerang Campus; Country Universities Centre Mallee, Swan Hill



Transport Corridors & Strategic Assets

Murray Valley Highway



Largest Industries and Related Assets

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing:

Horticulture flows along the Murray Valley Highway; Swan Hill saleyards; Swan Hill Abattoirs

Health Care & Social Assistance

Swan Hill District Health; Swan Hill Primary Health Medical Centre

Tourism

Nature and culturally based tourism (Gunbower Island): Lake Boga



Journey to work flows

More than 900 workers cross the border between Victoria and New South Wales. 57% were outflows from Victoria into new South Wales.⁴



Other Activity Flows

Horticulture; Meat Processing, Livestock and other commodities

Key economic indicators show improvement in socio-economic outcomes.

Metric	Central Murray
Population ¹ (2025)	34.5k
Population Growth ¹ (2020 – 2025)	-1.7%
GRP ² (2025)	\$2.4b
GRP Growth ² (2020 – 2025)	12.3%
Unemployment Rate ³ (Mar 2026)	2.1%
Unemployment Rate Change ³ (Mar 2021 – Mar 2026)	-1.2% pts
Employment Growth ² (2020 – 2025)	1.8%

First Peoples-led economic development in the Mallee

The 2022 Mallee REDS identified 5 priority opportunities for First Peoples Economic Development



Training, Employment & Skills

Focus on training, employment pathways and general life skills to ensure the First Peoples population are equipped to enter the workforce.



First Peoples Land Ownership & Resource Management

Pursue greater First Peoples ownership of land to sustainably manage resources.



Cultural Significance, Recognition & Healing

Promote recognition of the land, its waters and its cultural significance to ensure economic activities generate benefits where degradation can be avoided and existing damage healed.



Cultural Places, Practices & Traditions

Encourage the use of cultural places and practices as a mechanism for telling stories, maintaining traditions and creating economic opportunities.



First Peoples Economic Participation

Enhance First Peoples participation across economic activities, with a particular focus on occupations which serve the local indigenous population.

First Peoples-led economic development in action

First Peoples-led strategies and investments are building economic capability and creating pathways across the region

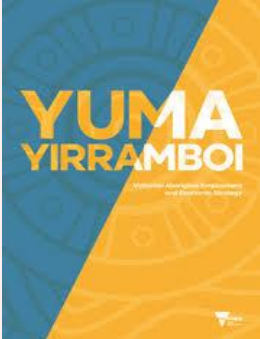


First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee Native Title Determination



Ned's Corner Biocultural Precinct - First People of the Millewa-Mallee

Evidence of momentum



Key economic indicators show improvement in socio-economic outcomes between 2016 and 2021



First Peoples participation rate increased by 1.4% points¹



First Peoples unemployment rate decreased by 6.0% points¹



First Peoples 15-24 year olds not in work or study decreased by 1.5% points¹



First Peoples households earning below \$650 per week decreased by 16.8% points¹

Opportunities to strengthen inclusive growth in the Mallee

Build on First Peoples Strengths

As an example, First Peoples are underrepresented in the agricultural sector. 6.3% of First Peoples workers in the Mallee are employed in the Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing industry, below the region average of 17%.¹ Agriculture is one of the main drivers of economic output in the Mallee, increasing First People's participation in productive sectors such as agriculture can further drive economic growth in the region.

Focus Investment Across Communities

Most of the region's communities have a relatively lower Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) ranking: Robinvale, Mildura – North, Kerang, Red Cliffs, Mildura – South, Merbein and Swan Hill all rank within the bottom 20% statewide.³ Irymple is the region's most relatively higher IRSD ranked SA2, ranking within the top 45% statewide.³ Building on Initiatives such as *Hands Up Mallee*, *Our Place Robinvale* and the *Robinvale Euston Workforce Network* are examples of efforts that have contributed to, and continue to support, positive progress in addressing socio-economic disadvantage in the region. Ensuring that the Mallee's economic growth reaches all communities is essential to realising economic prosperity.

Boosting Female Participation

The female participation rate in the North West is 58%, an increase of 2.3% pts over the last 5 years, a growth greater than regional Victoria (1.9% pts) and slightly below metropolitan Melbourne (2.5% pts).⁴ The female participation rate remains below male participation in the region (66%) and below that of the female participation in metropolitan Melbourne (65%) and regional Victoria (59%).⁴ Female employment in the North West experienced growth over the past 5 years (3.4%).⁴ However, this growth is below both metropolitan (18%) and regional Victorian (9.2%) averages.⁴ Expanding access to enabling factors such as childcare and workforce development can increase female workforce participation and, in turn, support stronger economic growth across the region.

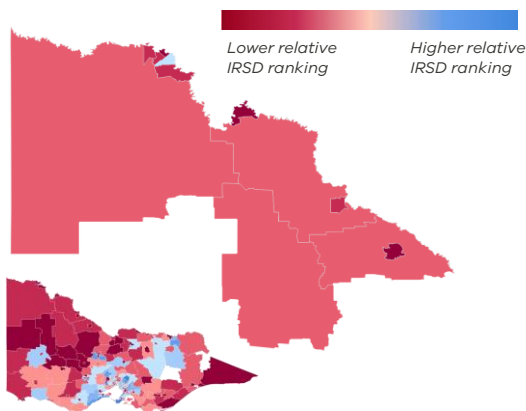
Expand Pathways for Young People in the Workforce

The youth (15-24) unemployment rate in Victoria's North West is currently 9.2%, more than twice the unemployment rate of all age cohorts within the region (3.6%). The North West youth unemployment rate has also increased by 1.5% pts over the past five years, faster than the growth rate observed for all cohorts in the region (0.4% pts).⁴ Supporting the youth workforce can increase labour supply capacity and help to further stimulate economic growth in the region.

Socio-economic conditions vary across the Mallee, highlighting opportunities for targeted investment

Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD)

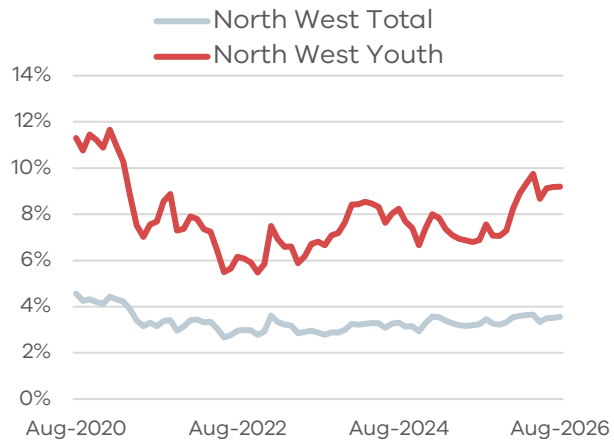
SEIFA, ABS Census (2021), SA2



There is an opportunity to close the gap between the youth unemployment rate in the Mallee with the overall rate

Unemployment Rate (%), Youth (15-24) & Total

ABS (Aug-26), North West SA4



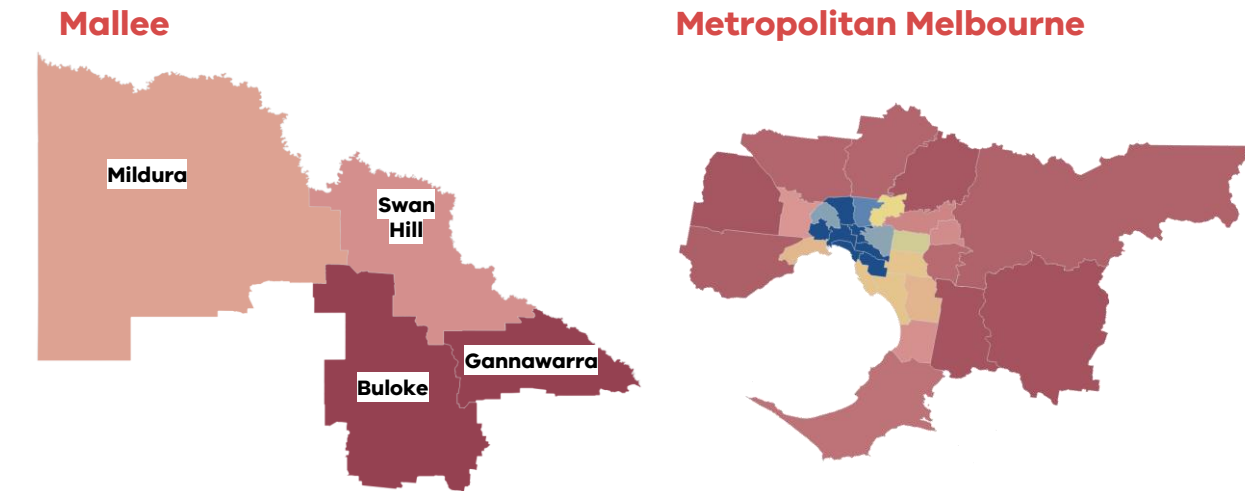
Unlocking affordable housing supply to enable economic growth in the Mallee

On a per capita basis, the Mallee’s availability of 1-2 bedroom rentals is less than half that of metropolitan Melbourne⁶

Limited rental supply has driven significant price growth in Loddon Mallee, with rents increasing by 45% between 2020 and 2025 – more than double the rise recorded in wage growth (17%), and higher than both regional (38%) and metropolitan (44%) averages.⁷

1-2 Bedroom Dwellings to Rent per Capita
DDFH Rental Report, ABS Regional Population

Below Vic Av. Above Vic Av.



Supply shortages of smaller dwellings are limiting the ability for the Mallee to attract key workers that are critical to economic growth

- Particularly in tourism hotspots, the prevalence of short-term rentals further constrains long-term housing supply, forcing many workers to travel long distances to their jobs and limiting their ability to contribute to the local economy.
- Access to adequate worker housing is critical to enabling the delivery of major economic opportunities within the Mallee, including renewable energy and mineral sands projects.
- A growing disparity between housing costs and wage growth impacts workforce attraction and retention, particularly for essential and lower-waged jobs.

There are signs that housing supply is improving

- Over the past year, building approvals in the Mallee have increased by 63%, a rate greater than both metropolitan Melbourne (-8.5%) and regional Victoria (26%).¹
- Mildura ranks within the top 14 LGAs with the largest building approvals per capita in regional Victoria and saw a 65% increase in annual building approvals over the past year, ranking tenth in the state.²

The Victorian Government has a range of initiatives that are aimed at further improving housing supply in regional Victoria

- The Victorian Government's Regional Worker Accommodation Fund is investing \$150 million to deliver housing for key workers in regional communities.³
- The \$1 billion Regional Housing Fund will deliver over 1,300 homes across regional and rural Victoria through new builds and redevelopment, projects.⁴ This includes a social housing target of 68 homes in the region to 2036.⁵
- The Victorian Government’s housing targets for the Mallee region aim to deliver over 11,600 homes by 2051, close to jobs, services and transport.⁶
- The VicSmart reforms are streamlining planning approvals to accelerate eligible residential developments.

A skilled and productive workforce is key to further drive economic activity in the region

An ageing population is reducing workforce availability, despite a growing and more skilled population

- 23% of residents in the Mallee are aged 65 and over, exceeding the Victorian average of 17%.¹ With this gap forecasted to widen, growing pressure on healthcare and aged care services are anticipated as well as tightening workforce capacity over the coming decades.
- The North West region's female participation (58%) trails both male participation in the region (66%) and metropolitan female participation rates (65%).⁴

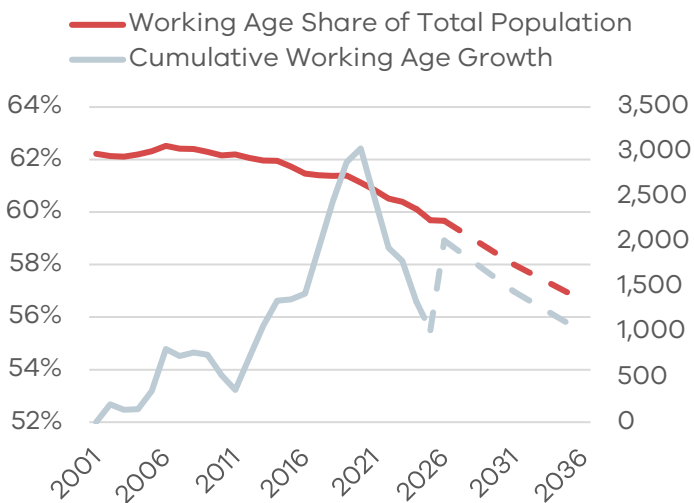
Boosting female participation is one of the greatest workforce opportunities to increase labour supply in the region

- The opportunity is particularly compelling given the region's industry outlook: employment within Health Care & Social Assistance is projected to increase by more than 1,500 jobs over the next 10 years,³ an industry, typically female dominated. This is the largest increase in jobs of any industry within the region.
- The region's education and research ecosystem is a major strength that can support future workforce and skills development. Education precincts with a local presence such as La Trobe University, Mallee Regional Innovation Centre, Monash University and SuniTAFE provide higher education and vocational pathways aligned to growing and economically significant sectors within the region.

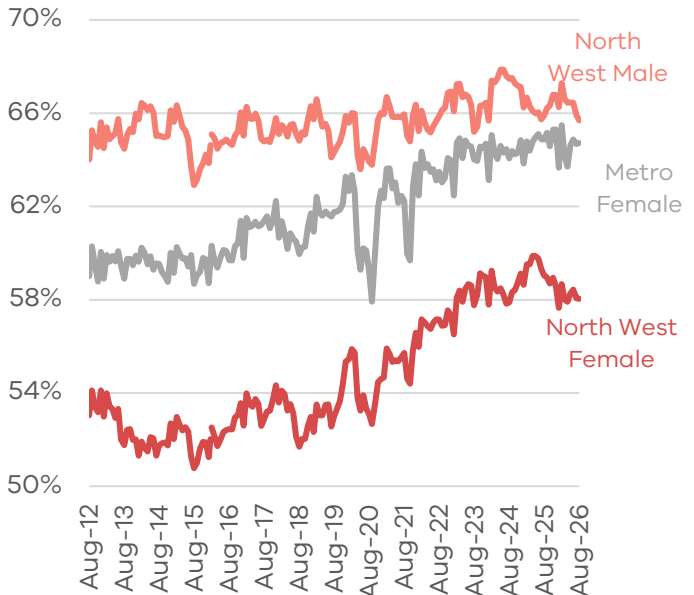
Government initiatives are supporting workforce growth and skills development

- Free TAFE and the Victorian Skills Plan are helping build the skilled workforce required by regional industries.
- Efforts are focused on aligning training with industry demand, strengthening vocational and higher education pathways, and accelerating skills recognition.
- Increasing workforce participation, particularly among women and underrepresented groups, remains a key opportunity to support long-term economic growth.

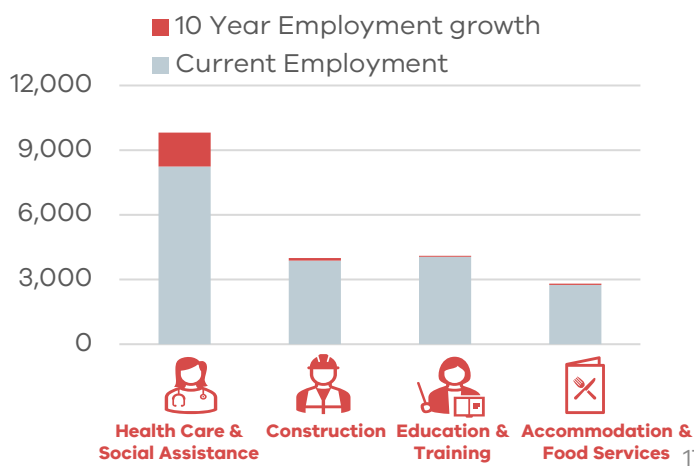
Working Age Population (15-64): Share and Cumulative Growth, Actual and Projected
ABS Regional Population by Age and Sex 2024-25, VIF, Mallee



Labour Force Participation Rate
ABS Aug-26, North West SA4



Largest projected employment growth
VSA 2025-2035, Industry, Mallee



'A 10-year plan for industrial land' positions state-significant regional industrial land as a key growth enabler



Trunk Infrastructure Fund



Enabling infrastructure is a growing constraint but also a major lever for the Mallee's future economic growth

Targeted infrastructure upgrades in industrial precincts can unlock private investment in high productivity industries, supporting growth and job creation.

Industrial land in the Mallee region is a key economic asset, enabling regional specialisation in agriculture and logistics while supporting diversification into renewable energy and advanced processing industries

- A network of established and emerging industrial precincts presents significant opportunities for public and private investment. Key sites include the Mildura South and Thurla industrial precincts, which support agribusiness, cold storage and freight and logistics; the Carwarp and Koorlong industrial areas, which facilitate bulk and agricultural freight and co-located renewable energy infrastructure; smaller precincts at Red Cliffs and Robinvale; and strategically located industrial land in Ouyen and Mallee Track Industrial Land, connected to the Mallee Highway corridor.¹

Expansion of the Mildura Airport Precinct will support regional connectivity and economic growth

- Mildura Airport is a regionally significant transport asset in north-west Victoria, supporting economic and social connectivity through regular commercial services to Melbourne and Sydney.
- The airport precinct has capacity for growth, with land available to expand aviation facilities, as well as industrial and commercial activities. The airport is a key economic enabler, servicing industries across 3 states and supporting workforce mobility for essential services and the visitor economy.¹

The region's key freight corridors, including the Calder and Sunraysia Highways², link the Mallee's agricultural hubs and industrial precincts directly to major domestic and international export markets

- Strategic development of the airport precinct, alongside these freight networks, will be critical to enhancing supply chain efficiency, attracting investment, and strengthening the region's economic resilience.

The Mallee is leveraging policy and investment to accelerate growth in key industries

- The **Economic Growth Statement (2024)** set out an ambition to achieve higher productivity, improve living standards, wages and competitiveness in a more contested global environment.
- The **Victorian Industry Policy (2025)** provides the framework to deliver on Victoria's economic growth and productivity ambitions.
- The \$150m **Victorian Investment Fund** provides a \$50 million regional stream, and access to the broader fund.¹

Strategic industry development opportunities exist in the region's Agriculture and agribusiness supply chains.

- The Mallee's nation-leading horticultural output provides a significant platform for growth in high-value food manufacturing, strengthening local processing capabilities, enhancing agribusiness, and capturing more value within the region, transforming raw exports into "paddock-to-plate" products.

The region can play a key role in Victoria's energy transition commitments, with emerging strengths in solar and wind generation, and transmission infrastructure.

- The Mallee region hosts most of North West Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) within its Swan Hill, Gannawarra, and Buloke municipalities, while the Western REZ sits adjacent to its southwest border.
- Renewable energy precincts present significant opportunities to support advanced manufacturing and circular economy activities. These include infrastructure and utilities supply chains and professional and technical services, including engineering and environmental consulting.
- The 328 MW Mallee Sun Solar Farm near Mildura, scheduled for completion in 2029, is set to power 65,700 homes annually and create more than 800 jobs during construction and operation.² This builds on existing regional capabilities at the Kerang solar and battery project.

The Mallee has strong potential to grow its visitor economy by leveraging its distinctive river, outback, cultural and agricultural tourism assets, and creative sector.

- The Murray River, Mildura riverfront and food and wine experiences provide a strong base for river-based tourism, hospitality and events.
- Murray-Sunset, Hattah-Kulkyne and Wyperfeld national parks support nature-based tourism, camping, birdwatching, four-wheel driving and dark-sky experiences.
- Lake Tyrrell, the Mallee Silo Art Trail and access to Mungo National Park offer nationally distinctive cultural, landscape and heritage experiences.
- The Mildura Arts Centre showcases nationally significant Australian art and touring exhibitions, supporting cultural tourism and local creative industries.

Critical Minerals represent a significant industry opportunity for the region, with 75% of Victoria's mineral sand deposits located in north west Victoria.³

- Mineral sands reserves in Northwest Victoria could contribute up to \$11.4 billion to the Victorian economy and support an average of 2,400 jobs annually through to 2050.³
- The Goschen Rare Earths and Mineral Sands Project near Swan Hill is expected to create up to 260 construction jobs and 400 ongoing full-time roles.⁴ The project will generate supply-chain opportunities in transport, logistics, maintenance, and advanced manufacturing.

The region is home to three Cross Border Economic Zones (CBEZ—Riverland–Sunraysia, Central Murray, and Western Mallee.

- As Victoria's only tri-state region, the Mallee is uniquely positioned within a key economic corridor, where shared infrastructure and workforce capabilities can unlock high-value opportunities in critical minerals, as well as horticulture and circular economy.

The Mallee REDS 2026 sets out strategic economic development priorities to be delivered across government

REDS 2026 priorities continue to be implemented through RDV's regional network, and facilitated through Victoria's investment and trade agencies, business program delivery, and policy advocacy across all levels of government.



Mallee regional businesses and investors can pursue economic development opportunities through a several Victorian Government agencies and initiatives

- RDV's Loddon Mallee team (Mildura Office) are the main point of contact in the region for facilitating and coordinating regional development outcomes: **Contacts and Assistance - Regional Development Victoria**
- A range of **grants and program support** is available to enable economic opportunities across regional Victoria.
- Victoria's **Investment Front Door** provides a single access to point to the Victorian government for investors.
- Support for Victorian Businesses is also available through the **Business Victoria** website including guidance, services and skills you need to successfully start, run and transform your business.
- **REDS data dashboards are available online** providing deeper economic and community analysis and insights into each region.

RDV works across all levels of government to promote place-based policy considerations that strengthen government investments in regions

- The REDS 2026 guides RDV's ongoing work with the Regional Partnerships, Regional Development Australia committees, and in policy making across the Victorian Government.
- Place-based regional opportunities and challenges identified in the REDS Refresh continue to inform the delivery of major energy projects and housing supply initiatives across Victorian Government.
- RDV works closely with Victoria's economic development agencies, including Invest Victoria, Global Victoria and Business Victoria, to advocate for regional economic development opportunities, and ensure that they are informed by place-based regional insights.
- Ongoing work across government towards the delivery of regionally located major projects will maximise opportunities for regional jobs, investment and supply chain businesses.

Appendix

Mallee’s strategic directions, progress since the inception of the REDS and alignment with refreshed policy settings

Strategic Direction	Significance	Development since the REDS	Alignment with government initiatives since the REDS
Drive sustainable growth in the food industry	The Mallee is a major contributor to Victoria’s agriculture sector, generating 12% of the state’s GVA in this industry. The Mallee’s Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing and Manufacturing sectors, produced \$1.8 billion in GVA in 2025, making up over 33% of the total GVA in the region. ¹	▪ The Mallee Agrifood Action Plan is providing a strategic framework to drive food industry investment, value-add processing and export growth across the region. ▪ Agribusiness workshops with Global Victoria focused on export and value-add processing are strengthening the region’s international engagement and connecting Mallee food businesses to new markets. ▪ Growth in protected cropping including medicinal cannabis and table grapes is expanding the region’s high-value horticultural production base. ▪ Increased RDV engagement with food and fibre businesses is supporting investment, jobs growth, export development and capacity building across the region’s food supply chain.	▪ Economic Growth Statement: Identifies agribusiness as a priority sector and supports investment facilitation, productivity growth and export development across regional food supply chains. ▪ Victorian Industry Policy: Supports sector development and capability uplift in food manufacturing and agribusiness, directly enabling the Mallee’s transition to higher-value processing. ▪ Victorian Investment Fund: Supports business expansion in priority sectors including agri-food and advanced manufacturing, helping Mallee producers scale operations. ▪ Victorian Skills Plan: Directs training investment toward food processing and agriculture workforce needs in regional Victoria.
Leverage natural endowments to diversify the economy into emerging industries	The Mallee’s abundant sunlight hours, large land parcels, mineral sands reserves and transmission connections into the National Electricity Market position the region to capture significant value from the renewable energy transition and resources sectors.	▪ The emergence of mining projects across the region specifically the VHM Goschen mine is creating significant new economic opportunity in critical minerals extraction and processing. ▪ Growth in solar projects across the Mallee is expanding the region’s clean energy generation base and attracting new investment in the renewable energy supply chain. ▪ The Vic Gov Critical Minerals Roadmap and Resource Ready strategy are providing the strategic framework to position the Mallee to capture supply chain and processing opportunities from the critical minerals boom.	▪ Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy: Drives economy-wide decarbonisation and supports renewable energy investment, directly enabling the Mallee’s emerging hydrogen and solar industries. ▪ Victorian Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) Program: Accelerates renewable energy deployment and grid investment, unlocking the Mallee’s significant generation capacity and attracting clean energy investment. ▪ Victorian Industry Policy: Supports diversification into advanced and emerging industries through sector development programs and industry capability uplift. ▪ Sustainability Victoria Strategy: Supports circular economy and resource recovery opportunities, complementing the region’s emerging clean energy and critical minerals sectors. ▪ Victorian Critical Minerals Roadmap: supports exploration, extraction, and downstream processing of critical minerals to capture the benefits from the mining supply chain.

The Mallee’s strategic directions, progress since the inception of the REDS and alignment with refreshed policy settings

Strategic Direction	Significance	Development since the REDS	Alignment with government initiatives since the REDS
Enhance the visitor economy by developing natural, cultural and built attractions	The Mallee holds an exceptional concentration of tourism assets: five national parks, the iconic Murray River, significant Aboriginal cultural heritage sites including Lake Tyrrell, the Silo Art Trail, and a major festival calendar.	▪ The Trail of Lights Mildura is elevating Mildura as a major events and cultural tourism destination, building on the city's role as the primary gateway to Mungo National Park. ▪ FOSO (Fibre Optic Symphony Orchestra), a new immersive light and sound installation at Wentworth's Perry Sandhills, opened April 2026 as a cross-border collaboration with Mildura, strengthening the region's events and arts tourism offer. ▪ Mildura Riverfront redevelopment projects, including the Mildura Powerhouse redevelopment, are transforming the city's premier public space into a world-class visitor destination. ▪ The Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement activation and the Swan Hill successful rPPP project - Transforming the Heart of Swan Hill Precinct are reinvigorating Swan Hill's cultural offer and CBD visitor experience. ▪ The PS Australian Star paddlesteamer will add to the region's iconic Murray River tourism product, strengthening the Mallee's position as a premier nature-based and heritage destination.	▪ Regional Worker Accommodation Fund: Supports worker housing in tourism destinations, helping visitor economy businesses attract and retain staff in high-demand regional locations. ▪ Economic Growth Statement: Improves the environment for regional tourism investment and business growth, enabling Mallee operators to expand and develop new visitor experiences. ▪ Victorian Tourism Investment: Supports destination development, major events and visitor infrastructure investment aligned with the Mallee's natural, cultural and riverfront assets. ▪ Victorian Innovation Statement: Supports digital and creative innovation to strengthen visitor experiences, destination marketing and creative economy development. ▪ First Peoples Tourism Plan for Victoria 2025–2030: Supports development of culturally authentic tourism experiences led by Traditional Owners.
Ensure an accessible and suitably qualified workforce to unlock the growth potential	The Mallee has untapped workforce potential that, if unlocked, can directly fuel the region's economic growth ambitions. With female participation rates below both male and metropolitan benchmarks, there is a clear opportunity to grow labour supply and lift workforce capability simultaneously.	▪ The Loddon Mallee Housing Strategy and associated housing projects: including RWAf, Buloke housing development and Swan Hill worker housing are addressing critical workforce accommodation constraints across the region. ▪ The Robinvale Euston Workforce Network, Census project and English Language Café strengthened place-based approaches to workforce participation in one of the region's most diverse communities. ▪ The Industry Skills Connector project with the Victorian Skills Authority is developing a regional skills passport to better match worker qualifications with employer needs. ▪ Innovative place-based approaches to address entrenched disadvantage and the Sustainable Childcare for Rural Kids project are removing participation barriers and growing the region's accessible labour supply. ▪ New housing developments in and around Kerang are supporting workforce accommodation needs in healthcare, with RDV facilitating engagement across LGAs on housing supply.	▪ Victorian Skills Plan: Directs training investment toward the Mallee's priority workforce needs in agriculture, mining, health care and construction. ▪ Victorian Health Workforce Strategy: Supports rural and regional health workforce supply through new training pathways and retention incentives, addressing critical workforce shortages. ▪ Victorian Government Place-Based Reform Agenda: Enables locally-led, integrated approaches to entrenched disadvantage and workforce participation across Mallee communities. ▪ Free TAFE: Removes financial barriers to qualification attainment, supporting workers in the Mallee to upskill into higher-value roles in growth sectors. ▪ Regional Worker Accommodation Fund: Supports worker housing to address critical workforce accommodation constraints across the region.

The Mallee’s strategic directions, progress since the inception of the REDS and alignment with refreshed policy settings

Strategic Direction	Significance	Development since the REDS	Alignment with government initiatives since the REDS
Harness the economic potential of the region's cross border zones	The Mallee is Victoria's only region with direct tri-state access, and its two regional hubs Mildura and Swan Hill, function as economic and services centres for populations that extend well into New South Wales and South Australia. This cross-border reach amplifies the market and workforce catchment available to Mallee businesses, and positions the region's road, rail, air and freight infrastructure as a critical node on the Adelaide–Sydney corridor, creating logistics, trade and investment opportunities that are unique within Victoria.	▪ The Cross Border Industry Taskforce is providing a formal mechanism to identify and act on economic opportunities created by the Mallee's position across the Victoria-NSW border. ▪ The Tri State Economic Alliance and associated economic analysis are strengthening cross-border collaboration across Victoria, NSW and South Australia, identifying shared priorities and investment opportunities. ▪ The Cross Border Commissioner is providing dedicated advocacy and coordination for cross-border communities, removing regulatory barriers to economic activity. ▪ The Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy seeks to address critical freight and logistics infrastructure needs to improve connectivity and unlock cross-border trade. ▪ Mildura Airport Master Plan: Supports resurfacing and runway extension to improve regional aviation connectivity, strengthening the Mallee's links to national markets and supply chains. ▪ Donald and Balranald Mineral Sands Mines established: The mines are deposit rich in valuable minerals, driving long-lasting local jobs, economic growth and investment to the cross-border region.	▪ Economic Growth Statement: Supports regional investment facilitation and business growth, creating a more enabling environment for cross-border enterprises to expand. ▪ Victorian Transport Infrastructure Investment: Supports freight and logistics infrastructure improvements that strengthen the Mallee's cross-border connectivity and supply chain efficiency. ▪ Victorian Government Place-Based Reform Agenda: Enables coordinated, cross-jurisdictional approaches to service delivery and economic development in cross-border communities. ▪ Victorian Critical Minerals Roadmap: supports exploration, extraction, and downstream processing of critical minerals that strengthen mining value chains.

Emerging opportunities and priorities in the Mallee Region

Opportunity	Significance	Supporting projects and catalysts to support future growth
Capitalise on the Mallee's critical minerals and clean energy endowment to drive investment, jobs and supply chain development	The VHM mineral sands mine at Goschen is one of the most significant new economic opportunities in the Mallee in a generation, with potential to generate substantial local employment, supply chain activity and community investment. Combined with the region's designation within a Renewable Energy Zone, the Mallee is well positioned to capitalise on Victoria's clean energy transition and diversify its economic base.	Supporting projects (current and since the inception of the REDS) • The announcement of the VHM mine at Goschen (Gannawarra Shire) has catalysed significant regional coordination work, with RDV working closely with Councils, VHM, Invest Victoria and DEECA to support LGAs and local supply chain on capability, skills, roads, workforce, childcare and housing. • ICN events for supply chain and mining proponents are connecting local businesses to procurement opportunities in the emerging critical minerals sector and building regional supply chain capability. • The Cross Border Future Industry Forum (December 2023) brought together three tiers of government from three states with cross-border commissioners and industry from energy, horticulture and mining to jointly address workforce needs in the cross-border region. • The Renewable Energy Zones catalyst and VicGrid community benefit consultations are supporting businesses, industry and communities to engage with and benefit from the region's renewable energy transition, including through community benefits sharing schemes. • Skills mapping for the critical minerals sector with the Victorian Skills Authority is identifying current workforce gaps and building the training pipeline for emerging jobs in mining and processing. • The Swan Hill Bricks and Mortar Housing Summit is coordinating cross-sector responses to workforce housing and have established a working group and fund. Catalysts to support future growth • Supply chain localisation for the VHM Goschen mine is expected to generate significant procurement and employment opportunities for Mallee businesses across construction, operations and processing as the mine progresses toward full production. • A coordinated regional workforce and housing response across Gannawarra and surrounding LGAs is needed to ensure the Mallee has the accommodation, childcare and training capacity to attract and retain workers as the mining and clean energy sectors scale up concurrently. • Conversion of REZ community benefit commitments into local economic outcomes through structured agreements with clean energy proponents is expected to direct investment into regional infrastructure, business capability and community facilities that build long-term economic resilience.
Support agribusiness resilience in response to the MDBP implementation	Agribusiness is critical to regional prosperity, jobs and exports. Investment in new technologies and systems that increase productivity and allow access to higher value markets is key to retaining regional competitive advantage in food and fibre processing.	Supporting projects (current and since the inception of the REDS) • Establishment of new protected cropping and lower-water-use projects, including medicinal cannabis operations in Mildura and Gannawarra is demonstrating the commercial potential of water-efficient agricultural production in the region. • Mapping key businesses in areas likely to be affected by the MDBP and direct engagement with those businesses is helping identify opportunities for growth and diversification as the plan is implemented. • Supporting businesses to understand and access grant opportunities through the Forestry Transition Fund, Energy Innovation Fund and related programs is helping Mallee enterprises invest in new capabilities and adapt to changing economic conditions. • Working with LGAs to address workforce attraction and retention challenges including housing, childcare, transport, connectivity and skilled migration is building the foundation of a capable, stable workforce to support economic diversification in MDBP-affected communities. Catalysts to support future growth • Growth in protected cropping and water-efficient horticulture investment is positioned to expand as water availability tightens, with the Mallee's existing capability in glasshouse production, hydroponics and precision irrigation attracting new domestic and export-facing agricultural enterprises. • Development of a targeted agri-food diversification investment prospectus for the Mallee is expected to strengthen the region's ability to attract new enterprises in water-efficient agriculture, food processing and agri-tech as MDBP reform reshapes the regional economic landscape. • Proactive business transition support for MDBP-affected enterprises through diversification grants, business planning assistance and market connection is expected to convert structural adjustment pressure into new economic opportunity across irrigated agriculture communities.

Glossary

Gross Regional Product (GRP)	An estimate of the total market value of all final goods and services produced in a specific region within a given period. The major components of GRP are consumption, government spending, net exports and investment. GRP often measures the economic output of a region and is the regional equivalent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
Gross Value Added (GVA)	The value of gross output minus intermediate consumption within a given period. GVA estimates enable analysis of industry contributions to the economy. GVA is an important measure to determine GRP. It is calculated by taking GDP, adding subsidies on products and taking away taxes products.
Visitor Economy	The visitor economy comprises the wide range of industries that provide goods and services to visitors who travel to a destination for a variety of purposes, including leisure, education, business and employment.
Productivity	The productivity measure used in this report is labour productivity, which is output on a per hour worked basis. It is calculated by dividing total GRP in a region by the number of hours worked in said region. For an industry analysis, GVA per hour worked was used, which is calculated by dividing the GVA by the number of hours worked in an industry. Hours worked used were for those in Journey-to-Work employment (see below).
Labour Force Participation Rate	The labour force participation rate shows the proportion of people in the labour force, relative to those who are deemed outside of it. The participation rate is calculated by summing the number of employed and unemployed persons and dividing that by the population aged 15 and above.
Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD)	A general socio-economic index that summarises a range of information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area. The IRSD only includes relative disadvantage. A low score indicates relatively greater disadvantage, and a high score indicates a lack of disadvantage.
Employment	Residents of working age who were engaged in any activity to produce goods and services for pay or profit. Employment can be divided up into part-time (less than 35 hours worked per week) and full-time employment (35 or more hours worked per week), as well as Journey-to-Work (where employed persons work) and Usual Residence (where employed persons live).
Occupational Skill Level	Describes the skill level of a person's occupation, where level one is the highest level of skill and level five is the lowest. The skill level is determined from the characteristics of a person's occupation as defined under the Australian and New Zealand Classification of Occupations. Skilled occupations are defined as level one (bachelor degree or higher qualification) to three (Certificate III with at least two years of on-the-job training and Certificate IV), whilst low-skilled occupations are defined as levels four (Certificate II and III) and five (no formal qualification up to Certificate I).
Working Age Population	The working age population is generally defined as between the ages of 15 and 64 years old. This does not mean people outside this age bracket cannot be employed but rather reflects the age profile of the majority of workers.
Agri-Food Sector	The Agri-Food Sector is defined as the ANZSIC Level 2 Industries Agriculture and Food Product Manufacturing.
Horticulture	The Horticulture Sector is defined as the ANZSIC Level 2 Industries of Nursery and Floriculture Production, Mushroom and Vegetable Growing, Fruit and Tree Nut Growing and Other Crop Growing.

Sources

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Appendix: REDS Strategic Directions (1/3)

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