



LODDON MALLEE

Business Plan
2023-24



Acknowledgement of Country

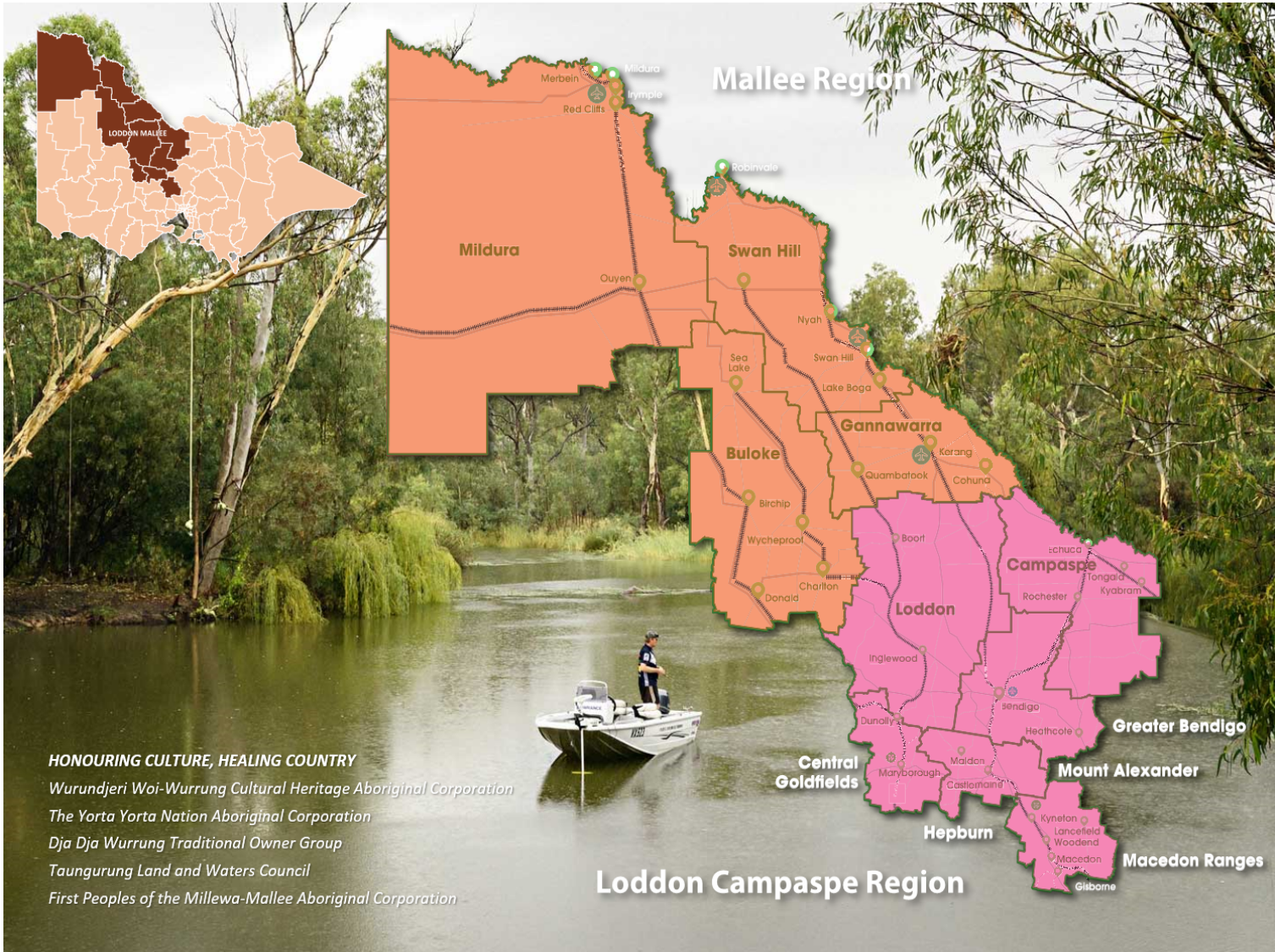
We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge that the Loddon Mallee region is on traditional lands, including those lands of the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee (being Latji Latji, Ngintait and Nyeri Nyeri Traditional Owners), the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk Nations and Dja Dja Wurrung, Wurundjeri, Taungurung and Yorta Yorta People, as well as other Traditional Owner groups in Victoria who are not formally recognised.

We acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal Victorians, their communities and cultures, the intrinsic connection to Country, the contribution and interest of Aboriginal people and organisations in developing a prosperous region. We are committed to advancing the principles of Aboriginal self-determination and supporting communities to realise self-determined economic development objectives.

We support initiatives that encourage greater unity, knowledge, cultural awareness and respect for the first occupants of our land.

LODDON MALLEE



About RDA Loddon Mallee

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a national network of committees across Australia, including the Indian Ocean Territories and Norfolk Island. The committees are made up of local leaders who work across government, business and community groups to support economic and workforce development, local procurement, strategic regional planning and inform government programs and infrastructure investments.

In Victoria, there are six RDA Committees covering all areas of the state, including an RDA Melbourne Committee for which provides capital city business connections for the five regional RDA Committees.

The RDA Loddon Mallee region sits on the lands and waters of several First Nations groups including the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee, Dja Dja Wurrung, Wurundjeri, Taungurung and Yorta Yorta. It extends from the edge of metropolitan Melbourne to the northern tip of Victoria and borders both South Australia and New South Wales, which provides unique cross-border challenges and opportunities for our economy and communities.

The RDA Loddon Mallee region incorporates the operating areas of the Mallee and Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnerships, with whom we work closely to maximise outcomes for the Loddon Mallee.

HONOURING CULTURE, HEALING COUNTRY
 Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
 The Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation
 Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owner Group
 Taungurung Land and Waters Council
 First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation

Loddon Campaspe Region

LODDON MALLEE



Message from the Chair

With space to move in a quintessentially Australian environment of riverlands, mountains, deserts, bushland and rich agricultural land, sustainability is at the heart of the Loddon Mallee region's vision of economic development.

Our friendly and thriving communities are leaders in agriculture, agribusiness, value-add manufacturing, renewables and mining, and are supported by world-leading tertiary institutions, university-partnered research organisations, vocational education and training organisations and Indigenous education centres.

Tourists to the Loddon Mallee region enjoy unique cultural and creative attractions as well as activities centred around our wonderful natural locations – from the mysterious Macedon Ranges to the mighty Murray River.

In 2022-23, the RDA Loddon Mallee committee worked closely with the Loddon Campaspe and Mallee Regional Partnerships to deliver projects critical to the future economic prosperity of the region. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their efforts and commitment to delivering these important initiatives, several of which are outlined on the following pages.

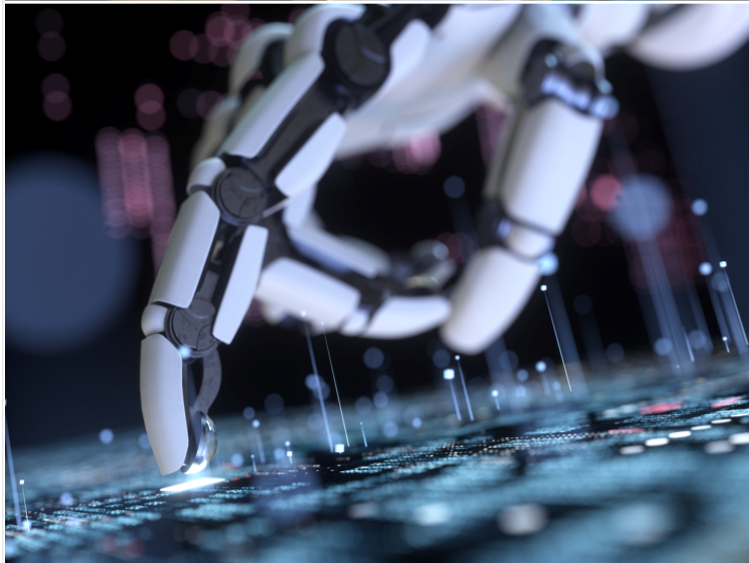
LODDON MALLEE

Message from the Chair (continued)
2022-23 Achievements

Achievement highlights for 2022-23 have established a great foundation for further activities in 2023-24. We developed relationships to explore **cross-border opportunities** in collaboration with RDA Committees in both New South Wales and South Australia, delivered the **Mallee Hydrogen Technology Cluster – Finding Focus** report, developed a **Water Availability Map** targeting business investment (available from the *Invest Loddon Mallee* website), delivered a **Regional Town Planning Workforce Pilot** to fill a critical shortage by attracting skilled town planners from overseas, and we delivered a landmark report investigating the causes, impacts and potential solutions for rural areas that are underserved by early childhood education & childcare (ECEC) services.

Delivered in partnership with the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership and Mallee Regional Partnership, the **Enabling Early Childhood Education & Childcare in Rural Areas** report includes recommendations that will be pursued in 2023-24. If the identified problems can be effectively addressed, benefits will include:

- improved resilience, educational and social development of rural children;
- long-term viability for rural service providers; and
- gender equity, workforce participation and sustainability of Victoria's rural communities.



Message from the Chair (continued) 2022-23 Achievements

Our **Industry 4.0 Business & Investment Prospectus** included a digital maturity assessment, industry benchmarking and recommended next steps. Our regional **Digital Summit and trailing seminars** will highlight our region's capabilities and rally people towards achieving agreed goals.

Based on a model used during Birmingham Commonwealth Games, the **Loddon Campaspe Skills Academy Design and Roadmap for Hospitality and Tourism** will help young people train for and find roles associated with the Games, that convert to longer-term roles, and our **Agri-Food – Value add** project will pursue opportunities identified in 2021 for business case development.

Supported by the region's LGAs, RDA Loddon Mallee will appoint a dedicated part-time officer for the implementation of the **Loddon Mallee Housing Action Plan**. A critical enabler of economic growth, this work will be guided by the Loddon Mallee Housing Leadership Group.

We look forward to ongoing collaboration with our regional partners and stakeholders to deliver even stronger outcomes for the region in 2023-24.

Leonie Burrows
Chair, RDA Loddon Mallee Committee

OFFICIAL

OTHER RDA COMMITTEES



RDA CHARTER

Facilitate
economic development outcomes, investment, local procurement and jobs

Promote
greater engagement with Australian Government policies, grant programs and research

Evidence
Provide evidence based advice to the Australian Government on regional development issues

Strategy
Work with regional plans that align with the Commonwealth's regional priorities



RDA LODDON MALLEE
Key Regional Stakeholders



Major employers • Peak industry bodies
Bendigo Bank • Bendigo Telco • KerangLink • Birchip Cropping Group
Fosterville Gold Mine • VHM Limited • Be.Bendigo • Galkangu – Bendigo GovHub
Emporium Creative Hub • Food and Fibre Centre of Excellence
Taungurung Land and Waters Council • Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation
Daylesford Macedon Tourism • Bendigo Tourism • Murray Regional Tourism
La Trobe University • Bendigo Kangan Institute TAFE • Monash University School of Rural Health
Mallee Regional Innovation Centre • SuniTAFE • Local Learning and Employment Networks
Lower Murray Water • Goulburn Murray Water • Coliban Water • Health Authorities



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Loddon Mallee Collaboration

The current RDA Loddon Mallee committee are passionate and dedicated local leaders who were appointed by the Commonwealth Government in 2022.

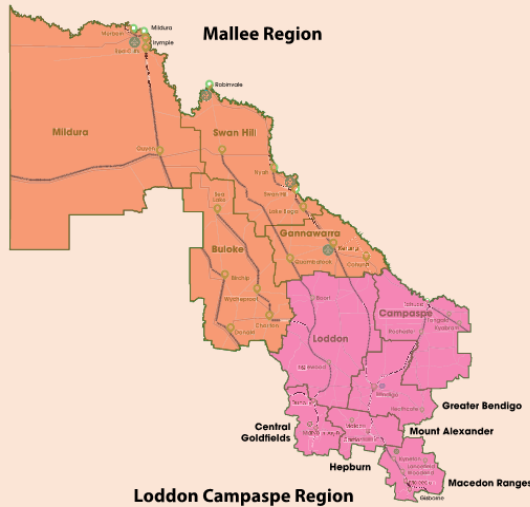
We act as an effective conduit across government, industry and the community to support the development of the Loddon Mallee region. As real-time advisers to the Commonwealth Government on critical regional development issues, opportunities and challenges, we provide advice that informs government policy, regional programs, information campaigns and grant funding opportunities.

By working closely with the Loddon Campaspe and Mallee Regional Partnerships, which are a Victorian Government initiative, we can collectively identify Commonwealth and Victorian programs and strategies that allow us to address Loddon Mallee region priorities in a more informed, efficient and effective way.

Our direct connections with the ten local government councils and other key regional stakeholder groups (including those listed in the diagram opposite) enable us to more effectively raise **awareness** of the issues, share **knowledge** to identify opportunities for growth, **influence** required policy and regulatory change, **enable** local action through Commonwealth and State funding, and attract more business investment to the Loddon Mallee region.

LODDON MALLEE

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES (REDS)



The Victorian Government has developed Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) with the regions, identifying strategic directions for the future economic development of the Loddon Campaspe and Mallee regions, based on a strong evidence base.

REGIONAL PROFILE	POLICY INSIGHTS	COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE	STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS
Demographic, social and economic indicators	Review of policies and local plans, informed by stakeholder engagement	Analysis of strengths and areas of emerging specialisation	Medium to long-term priorities for future economic development

The REDS also identified four key enablers of economic growth: housing, workforce, digital connectivity and transport connectivity. As illustrated on the following page, the Mallee and Loddon Mallee REDS have informed the strategic directions and key business activities of the RDA Loddon Mallee Business Plan 2023-24.

Strategic Alignments

Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) developed and maintained by the Victorian Government inform the strategic directions and business activities of RDA Loddon Mallee Committee. The REDS provide a consistent evidence base and the strategic framing of economic opportunities to coordinate investment and activity. Loddon Mallee competitive advantages identified in the REDS include:

Natural endowments – Large fertile agricultural acreage and water access, Mediterranean climate, mineral resources, environmental tourism assets including National, State and Regional Parks, Hanging Rock and the Murray River.

Cultural endowments – Aboriginal sites and heritage, Silo Art Trail, major events, local heritage attractions, cultural attractions, Bendigo’s UNESCO Creative Cities designation as a “City and Region of Gastronomy”.

Built endowments – Unique direct tri-state access, with road, rail and air connections that connect the region to Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney. University campuses, TAFEs and Innovation Centres, Energy assets with interconnectors to New South Wales and South Australia, and Regional cross-border hubs.

Human endowments – Community innovation, agricultural knowledge and skill base, and a creative culture.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS & ALIGNMENTS

Strategic Directions 2023-24

<p><i>REDS Strategic Directions</i> LODDON CAMPASPE REGION</p>	<p>Support growth in agriculture and food product manufacturing to enhance value-adding throughout the supply chain</p>	<p>Leverage local opportunities to strengthen value chains and diversify into new industries, including in mining, renewable energy and waste processing</p>	<p>Pursue diversification of the tourism sector by leveraging natural, cultural, and built endowments</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Maximise gains in the 'employment and innovation corridor' to attract professional services workers and entrepreneurial activity</p>
<p><i>REDS Strategic Directions</i> MALLEE REGION</p>	<p>Drive sustainable growth in the food industry</p>	<p>Leverage natural endowments to diversify the economy into emerging industries (Solar energy, Renewable hydrogen, Mineral extraction, Strengthening local supply chains)</p>	<p>Enhance the visitor economy by developing natural, cultural and built attractions</p>	<p>Ensure an accessible and suitably qualified workforce to unlock the growth potential</p>	<p>Harness the economic potential of the cross-border zones</p>
<p><i>Strategic Directions</i> RDA LODDON MALLEE Business Plan 2023-24</p>	<p>Support sustainable growth in agriculture and food product manufacturing</p>	<p>Embrace new technologies and emerging opportunities in mining, renewable energy and waste processing</p>	<p>Enhance the visitor economy, utilising our natural, cultural and built attractions</p>	<p>Ensure a suitably qualified workforce to unlock our growth potential</p>	<p>Develop our Industry Clusters – particularly the Murray River Corridor and the Calder Employment and Innovation Corridor</p>
<p><i>REDS Enablers</i> VICTORIA</p>	<p>Housing Digital Connectivity Transport Connectivity</p>				

The Mallee and Loddon Campaspe REDS inform the strategic directions and key business activities of *the RDA Loddon Mallee Business Plan 2023-24*.

Based on the opportunities emerging from the endowments, industry specialisations and socioeconomic context of the Loddon Campaspe and Mallee Regions, the REDS have identified five strategic directions for each region.

As illustrated in the table opposite, we identified themes common to both the Loddon Campaspe and Mallee regions to determine the strategic directions for the *RDA Loddon Mallee Business Plan 2023-24*.

Our region's capacity to activate these opportunities and grow is partly determined by cross-cutting enabling factors that support economic activity in all regions of Victoria. These "enablers" are **Housing, Workforce, Digital Connectivity** and **Transport Connectivity**.

For this reason, the RDA Loddon Mallee Committee will include consideration of these enabling factors – and targeted investments and initiatives to strengthen them – to help support the achievement of our strategic directions.

The REDS also identified potential opportunities for Aboriginal economic development based on analysis of relevant policies and commitments including Traditional Owner strategic plans. We will continue to work with our local Aboriginal Corporations to realise self-determined priorities for Aboriginal economic development in the Loddon Mallee region.

KEY BUSINESS ACTIVITY FRAMEWORK

OUR FIVE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The Victorian Government's Regional Economic Development Strategies provide comprehensive evidence to support these strategic objectives for driving socioeconomic growth and development across the Loddon Mallee region

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4:	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5:
Support sustainable growth in agriculture and food product manufacturing	Embrace new technologies and emerging opportunities in mining, renewable energy and waste processing	Enhance the visitor economy , utilising our natural, cultural and built attractions	Ensure a suitably qualified workforce to unlock our growth potential	Develop our Industry Clusters – particularly the Murray River Corridor and the Calder Employment and Innovation Corridor
<i>Read more on page 11</i>	<i>Read more on page 12</i>	<i>Read more on page 13</i>	<i>Read more on page 14</i>	<i>Read more on page 15</i>

OUR FIVE KEY BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

This is what RDA Loddon Mallee will do to achieve our strategic objectives

- 1: Support projects that **progress RDA Loddon Mallee Strategic Directions**
- 2: Monitor and support activities that consider **Regional Economic Development Strategy growth enablers**
- 3: **Develop partnerships** and **harness leadership** to coordinate efforts and identify project champions
- 4: **Facilitate and coordinate advocacy** for the Loddon Mallee region
- 5: Facilitate the alignment of regional priorities to the new Australian Government **Regional Investment Framework**

Key Business Activities 2023-24

In 2023-24, the RDA Loddon Mallee Committee will focus on five key business activities to grow the economic opportunities included in our strategic directions and address the growth enablers identified in the REDS (see table opposite). We aim to deliver measurable outcomes for each of our key business activities. To deliver our business activities we will:

MONITOR

Keep an eye on local, state and national issues, initiatives and opportunities that may affect the delivery of our strategic directions.

ENABLE

Identify and acknowledge future owners of current and planned regional initiatives to ensure their continuity.

Advise regional stakeholders of Commonwealth funding opportunities.

Work closely with Regional Partnerships and Councils to coordinate, communicate and promote activities.

SUPPORT

Provide evidence and advocacy support for strategically important regional projects.

Engage regional stakeholder networks to share knowledge, evidence and ideas.

DELIVERY

Identify, fund and deliver projects that are unlikely or unable to be addressed by other regional stakeholders.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY DETAILS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE:

Support sustainable growth in **agriculture** and **food product manufacturing**

INITIATIVES	ANTICIPATED SHORT-TERM OUTCOME	DESIRED LONG-TERM OUTCOME	SUCCESS MEASURES
<p>Support the State-wide RDA regional Investment Attraction Project.</p> <p>Fund more business cases through the Food Industry Supply Chain work.</p>	<p>Business cases developed for new Agri-Food – Value-Add initiatives.</p>	<p>The size and resilience of the agri-food sector continues to improve</p>	<p>The number of business cases developed for Agri-food Value-add initiatives.</p>
<p>Work closely with the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership in delivering their Agri-Food precinct project.</p>	<p>Increase in collaboration between RDAs to establish agricultural precincts.</p>		<p>Establishment of agricultural precincts.</p>

These initiatives and outcomes will be supported through our five Key Business Activities

Strategic Priority One

Support sustainable growth in agriculture and food product manufacturing

Agriculture and food product manufacturing is identified as a comparative advantage and key economic opportunity for both the Loddon Campaspe and the Mallee regions in the Victorian Regional Economic Development Strategies. To unlock this opportunity and drive growth, we need to support value-add initiatives, improve supply chains, increase diversity, encourage innovation and mitigate climate change impacts.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY DETAILS

Strategic Priority Two

STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO:

Embrace new technologies and emerging opportunities in mining, renewable energy and waste processing

INITIATIVES	ANTICIPATED SHORT-TERM OUTCOME	DESIRED LONG-TERM OUTCOME	SUCCESS MEASURES
Explore opportunities to develop the 10 circular economy projects and 10 renewable energy opportunities identified by the Loddon Campaspe Partnership.	Handful of projects brought to investment readiness.	Encourage growth in emerging industries to help grow and diversify the regions economies.	Number of project owners identified to develop circular economy and renewable energy projects.
Two Hydrogen projects identified by the Mallee Partnership and supported by consortia – AREAN (or other) funding applications.	Funding secured for renewable energy projects.		Amount of funding secured for renewable energy projects.
Support community engagement to determine the final alignment of the NVI-West transmission line.	NVI-West transmission line is supported and outcomes achieves greatest community benefit.		How well the community feels supported by RDA in regard to the NVI-West transmission line.
Support the growth of the new opportunities in mineral sands, rare earth and gold mining identifying livability issues. Explore growth opportunities in the METS sector.	Constraints to growth in mining are reduced.		The number and impact of constraints to growth in mining that we influence.

These initiatives and outcomes will be supported through our five Key Business Activities

Embrace new technologies and emerging opportunities in mining, renewable energy and waste processing

We have the opportunity to build on a growing strength in renewable energy generation, and opportunities in the emerging climate change and circular economy sectors. Underpinning growth across all sectors will be the adoption of new technologies and vastly improved digital connectivity.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY DETAILS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY THREE:

Enhance the **visitor economy**, utilising our **natural, cultural and built attractions**

INITIATIVES	ANTICIPATED SHORT-TERM OUTCOME	DESIRED LONG-TERM OUTCOME	SUCCESS MEASURES
Help advocate for the Australian Government to nominate Central Victorian Goldfields as a candidate for UNESCO world heritage listing.	Central Victorian Goldfields is nominated for UNESCO world heritage listing.	Our visitor economy is thriving, built upon the protection of our natural assets, celebration of our indigenous and diverse cultures, and the development and promotion of our built attractions.	Central Victorian Goldfields is nominated for UNESCO world heritage listing.
Find ways to support the development of Indigenous cultural tourism initiatives.	Increase in the development of Indigenous cultural tourism products.		The number of Indigenous cultural tourism products.

These initiatives and outcomes will be supported through our five Key Business Activities

Strategic Priority Three

Enhance the visitor economy, utilising our natural, cultural and built attractions

Prior to COVID-19, tourist visitation numbers and expenditure were growing throughout the entire region. With consecutive years of traveler restrictions and the impacts of recent floods we need to rebuild the industry and improve on the natural, cultural and built attractions that draw people to our region.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY DETAILS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOUR:

Ensure a suitably qualified workforce to unlock our growth potential

INITIATIVES	ANTICIPATED SHORT-TERM OUTCOME	DESIRED LONG-TERM OUTCOME	SUCCESS MEASURES
Pursue recommendations identified in <i>Enabling Early Childhood Education & Childcare in Rural Areas</i> report.	Regulatory barriers are removed, subsidies are increased and rural services models for Childcare are established.	A suitably qualified workforce is available to attract business investment and unlock growth potential.	Number of regulatory barriers removed, subsidies increased and rural services models for Childcare established.
Support completion of the Loddon Campaspe Skills Academy Design and Roadmap for Hospitality and Tourism.	Project owner identified for implementation of Loddon Campaspe Skills Academy.		Project owner identified for implementation of Loddon Campaspe Skills Academy.
Leverage greater allocation of skilled migration levels for the region.	Workers attracted the region.		The number of skilled migrants attracted to the region.

These initiatives and outcomes will be supported through our five Key Business Activities

Strategic Priority Four

Ensure a suitably qualified workforce to unlock our growth potential

To address worker shortages in our region we need to expand training opportunities and ensure they're aligned with industry needs.

We also need to encourage our youth to pursue careers in our future industries, address worker housing shortages, and attract new workers to the region.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY DETAILS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY FIVE:

Develop our **Industry Clusters** – particularly the **Murray River Corridor** and the **Calder Employment and Innovation Corridor**

INITIATIVES	ANTICIPATED SHORT-TERM OUTCOME	DESIRED LONG-TERM OUTCOME	SUCCESS MEASURES
Build upon the framework developed by the Mallee Regional Partnership to confirm specific investments that are desirable for a potential cross-border Regional Deal (or similar).	Agreement reached on specific cross-border investment priorities.	Our two identified industry clusters are positioned for continued sustainable growth	Agreement reached on cross-border investment priorities.
Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership is conducting work to understand areas to be prioritized for future business growth	Governance established for cross border economic planning		

These initiatives and outcomes will be supported through our five Key Business Activities

Strategic Priority Five

Develop our Industry Clusters – particularly the Murray River Corridor and the Calder Employment and Innovation Corridor

Industry clusters create competitive advantage by providing proximity to competitors, a skilled workforce and specialised suppliers.

The Loddon Mallee region supports two key industry clusters: the Calder Employment and Innovation Corridor, and the Murray River Corridor.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY DETAILS

CONSIDER GROWTH ENABLER

Monitor and support activities that improve housing availability and affordability

INITIATIVES	ANTICIPATED SHORT-TERM OUTCOME	DESIRED LONG-TERM OUTCOME	SUCCESS MEASURES
Implementation of the <i>Loddon Mallee Housing Action Plan</i> and other activities that improve housing availability.	Establishment of oversight group Appointment of Regional Housing Officer Successful engagement with regional LGA's	Affordable housing is available for workers and residents of the Loddon Mallee region, reducing barriers to growth in key economic sectors.	Officer appointed and implementation of the <i>Loddon Mallee Housing Action Plan</i> is commenced.
Pursue recommendations identified through the <i>Regional Town Planning Workforce Pilot</i> .	Recommendations are adopted from the <i>Regional Town Planning Workforce Pilot</i> .		Number of recommendations adopted from the <i>Regional Town Planning Workforce Pilot</i> .
<i>These initiatives and outcomes will be supported through our five Key Business Activities</i>			

Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) Enablers

To support the achievement of our strategic priorities, we will monitor and support activities that address these REDS enablers:

- **improve housing availability and affordability,**
- **encourage innovation and improve digital capability,** and
- **improve transport connections, infrastructure, access and safety**

Regional Economic Development Strategies for the Loddon Campaspe and Mallee regions identify opportunities in key areas that can help drive regional economic growth. However, our capacity to activate these opportunities and grow is partly determined by cross-cutting enabling factors that support economic activity. Consideration of these enabling factors – and targeted investments and initiatives to strengthen them – will help support the achievement of the strategic directions in the REDS.

HOUSING

The availability and affordability of housing determine a region's ability to attract and retain local staff and supports community cohesion and better life outcomes for individuals and families.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY DETAILS

CONSIDER GROWTH ENABLER

Monitor and support activities that encourage innovation and improve digital capability

INITIATIVES	ANTICIPATED SHORT-TERM OUTCOME	DESIRED LONG-TERM OUTCOME	SUCCESS MEASURES
Develop, promote and run <i>Regional Digital Summit</i> and trailing seminars.	Attraction of Industry 4.0 businesses to the region. Regions capability recognised. Plan for future growth in Industry 4.0 sector.	The Loddon Mallee is internationally recognised as a digitally mature and innovative region attracting Industry 4.0 businesses and workers from around the world.	The number and impact of Industry 4.0 businesses attracted to the region.
Seek improvements to digital infrastructure by leveraging grant opportunities and directing NBN investment.	Grant funding is secured for digital infrastructure requirements.		Events are successfully delivered and digital awareness and capability in the region is improved.
Investigate opportunities to support the development of <i>Bendigo Digital Innovation Hub</i> and satellite sites.	Funding found for the establishment of the <i>Bendigo Digital Innovation Hub</i> .		The number and value of successful grant funding submissions.
			The number and value of opportunities identified to support the establishment of the <i>Bendigo Digital Innovation Hub</i> .

These initiatives and outcomes will be supported through our five Key Business Activities

Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) Enablers

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

The availability and affordability of housing determine a region's ability to attract and retain local staff and supports community cohesion and better life outcomes for individuals and families.

Advocate for State ongoing contribution towards the Mobile Blackspot Program

BUSINESS ACTIVITY DETAILS

CONSIDER GROWTH ENABLER

Monitor and support activities that address REDS enabler to improve transport connections, infrastructure, access and safety

INITIATIVES	ANTICIPATED SHORT-TERM OUTCOME	DESIRED LONG-TERM OUTCOME	SUCCESS MEASURES
<p>Freight Study being conducted by the Mallee Regional Partnership.</p> <p>Mildura Airport is considering establishment of new passenger route between Mildura, Bendigo and Adelaide.</p>	<p>Clarity on Freight priorities for the Mallee.</p> <p>Improved connectivity with region.</p>	<p>Transport connections in the Loddon Mallee region enable business growth, workforce mobility, local amenity and better safety outcomes.</p>	<p>Number and impact of emerging transport issues and opportunities identified and/or addressed.</p>

These initiatives and outcomes will be supported through our five Key Business Activities

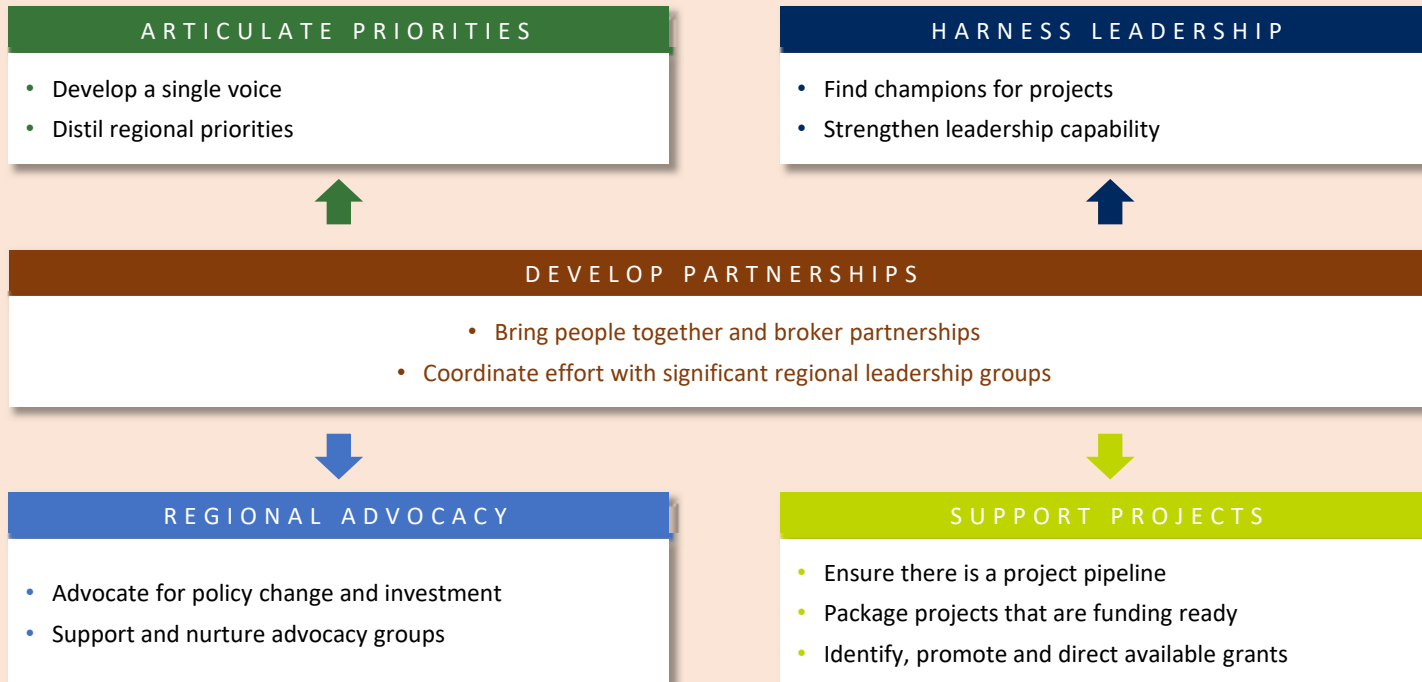
Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) Enablers

TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY

Road and rail infrastructure, ports and airports provide critical linkages between production locations and markets; efficient transport connections and public transport services are a key factor in workforce mobility and local amenity.

ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES 2023-24

These engagement objectives are reflected in our Key Business Activities Framework and summarise the role of the RDA Committee in the Loddon Mallee region



Engagement Plan

Committee Meetings

- Deliver a series of briefings with key stakeholders to share information and collaborate where appropriate.
- Clarify roles, share evidence and provide intelligence.
- Social media strategy and action plan.

Investor attraction, engagement and support

- *Invest Loddon Mallee* website promotion.
- Coordinate key messaging and advocacy efforts.
- Leverage RDA Committee member networks.

Regional Partnerships

- Support activities that progress RDA Loddon Mallee strategic directions and business activities.
- Communicate and coordinate messaging and advocacy.

Cross-border collaboration

- Explore opportunities with RDAs in NSW & SA.

Local Government Engagement

- Monitor and communicate activities targeting key stakeholders including senior officers and councillors.

MP Engagement

- Communicate objectives and advocate for priorities.

Capital City Connections

- Leverage promotion, investment and research network opportunities enabled by RDA Melbourne.

State-wide priorities

Work with all Victorian RDAs to address gaps in housing, skills and workforce, digital, and renewable energy.

INVEST

Loddon Mallee

Where ambition finds opportunity

We're growing an economy defined by innovation, committed to sustainable development, and primed to meet the challenges of tomorrow.



Calculator



LODDON MALLEE

Communications Plan

RDA Loddon Mallee will leverage several regional stakeholder group communications channels and assets to improve awareness, engagement and influence in regard to Loddon Mallee's economic priorities.

Our primary online asset is the *Invest Loddon Mallee* website, which is a collaborative initiative to increase investment in our region, funded and developed in partnership our region's ten local councils, the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership, the Mallee Regional Partnership and the Victorian Government.

Other key communication channels and opportunities that we will leverage in 2023-24 include:

- Direct email
- Social media (LinkedIn)*
- Invest Loddon Mallee website
- RDA website
- Reports & Submissions
- Promotional videos
- Workshops & forums
- Meetings & delegations

Social media opportunities

In 2023-24 we will develop and implement a social media strategy to leverage the extensive business, political and community networks of RDA Committee members in Loddon Mallee and beyond.



OFFICIAL

RDA LODDON MALLEE COMMITTEE 2023-24



Leonie Burrows
Chair



Craig Niemann
Deputy Chair



Andrea Tomkinson



Anne Mansell



Deanne Armstrong
(resigned)



Dr Julie Rudner



Mandy Hutchinson



Steve Tinker



Windsor Maine
(resigned)



Leanne Rosewall
Regional Director



Peter Forbes
*Manager Planning
& Coordination*



Margarita Budimir
RDA Coordinator

EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

Our Team

RDA Loddon Mallee committee members are selected for their industry expertise and deep understanding of how our communities function. The team has global, national and local experience in horticulture, agricultural research, food and fibre, health, education, digital and telecommunications, manufacturing, housing and town planning and policy.

Committee Chair, Leonie Burrows, is also Chair of the Mallee Research and Innovation Centre (MRIC), a former CEO of Mildura Rural City Council and Deputy Chair of the Murray Primary Health Network. Committee Deputy Chair, Craig Niemann, is CEO of the City of Greater Bendigo.

Read more about our Committee members at <https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/regional-development-australia/loddon-mallee/about-us>

Executive support

The executive support team promotes the region's activities to all levels of government, industry, business and community, highlighting competitive advantages and encouraging decentralisation and relocation opportunities. They oversee RDA projects and report on activities, including the management and monitoring of the Commonwealth and State grants programs. RDA Loddon Mallee has offices in Bendigo and Mildura and holds meetings and events in locations across the region.

OFFICIAL

APPENDIX

Outcomes templates referenced in the Better Practice Guide

OFFICIAL

OBJECTIVE ONE

Facilitate regional economic development outcomes, investment, jobs and local procurement

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- a. Provide details and/or a copy of a suitable existing strategic Regional Plan that your RDA is contributing to or that your RDA is developing in accordance with the Charter and the RDA Better Practice Guide.
- b. Provide details of the investment (in dollar terms), jobs (number), local procurement opportunities (in dollar terms) and other regional development outcomes that your RDA will facilitate (for planning purposes) or has facilitated (for reporting purposes) for your region during this financial year. Please separate these in terms of outcomes that your RDA has: Led/championed – heavily involved with the outcome, or Contributed to – moderately involved with the outcome, or Otherwise assisted – marginally involved with the outcome. Examples of these levels of involvement are at item A.3.3 of your 2021-25 funding agreement.

What will we do?

1. **Monitor, enable and support initiatives that progress RDA Loddon Mallee Strategic Directions (L)**
Refer to details on pages 12 -16.
The RDA LM will progress the following projects:
 - Agri Food value add work
 - Developing the Cross Border Economic Zone
 - Hydrogen Renewable Energy
 - Appointment of Regional Housing Officer
2. **Monitor and support initiatives that consider Regional Economic Development Strategy growth enablers (L,C)**
Refer to details on pages 17 -19.
3. **Develop partnerships and harness leadership to coordinate efforts and identify project champions (L,C)**
Refer to details on pages 12 – 19.
4. **Facilitate and coordinate advocacy for the Loddon Mallee region (L)**
Refer to details on pages 12 – 19.
5. **Facilitate the alignment of regional priorities to the new Australian Government Regional Investment Framework (L)**
To be developed as more details become available.

Anticipated Outcomes

Level of involvement

(L) = RDA Loddon Mallee lead or champion this initiative

(C) = RDA Loddon Mallee contribute to this activity

(O) = RDA Loddon Mallee otherwise assist this activity.

Time frames

- Subject to Commonwealth funding allocations, the activities are scheduled for completion by 2024.

Anticipated outcomes

- Increased economic opportunities and investment in the Loddon Mallee region.
- Emerging opportunities for economic growth progressed.

OBJECTIVE TWO

Promote greater regional awareness of and engagement with Australian Government policies, grant programs and research

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Provide details of where you have supported awareness raising and/or engagement
- Number of submissions supported.

What will we do?

- Active dissemination of Australian Government policies and grant program information**
 - Promote Australian Government programs within the Loddon Mallee region (L)
 - Support the Federal Priority of decentralisation:
 - Implement the recommendations identified in the regional housing strategy (C)
 - Increase usage of social media channels (L)
- Achieve coordination in policy areas shared between Commonwealth, State and Local Governments**
 - Advocate for improved models of Childcare that are appropriate for the thin markets found in rural areas. The lack of childcare options in rural areas impacts on the participation of women (particularly) in the workforce (L&C)
 - Advocate for cross-jurisdictional support for place-based initiatives that are tackling entrenched disadvantage in the northern part of our region (L&C)
 - Seek funding through Australian and Victorian Government grant opportunities aligned to our priorities (L)
- Support stakeholders in the Loddon Mallee region to develop project proposals to access funding**
 - Provide stakeholders in the Loddon Mallee region with letters of support for their applications (L)
 - Promote program information through Committee Chair speaking engagements (L)

Anticipated Outcomes

Level of involvement

(L) = RDA Loddon Mallee lead or champion this initiative

(C) = RDA Loddon Mallee contribute to this activity

(O) = RDA Loddon Mallee otherwise assist this activity.

Time frames

- Subject to Commonwealth funding allocations, the activities opposite are scheduled for completion by 2024.

Anticipated outcomes

- Improved understanding of the roles of the RDA Loddon Mallee Committee and other regional stakeholder groups.
- Improved understanding of the relationships between regional stakeholder groups and the Victorian and Australian Governments.
- Improved consistency of messaging.

OBJECTIVE THREE

Contribute to Commonwealth regional policy-making by providing intelligence and evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on regional development issues

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- a. Outline instances where you have provided intelligence and evidence-based advice to the Australian Government
- b. Number of instances information / feedback was provided.

What will we do?

1. **Increase targeted advocacy on priorities and issues for the Loddon Mallee Region as identified in this Business Plan (L)**
 - *Refer to details on pages 12 -19*
2. **Provide evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on critical regional development issues; and provide information on regional activities and competitive advantages to all levels of government, industry, business and community sectors**
 - Respond to any Ministerial and other Commonwealth Department requests in relation to the region (L)
 - Provide Business Plan and Outcomes Report as per reporting schedule (L)
 - Contribute to Briefing teleconferences and Town Hall series (L)
 - Maintain contact with local Members of Parliament (L)
 - Schedule Canberra advocacy meetings (pending COVID) (L).

Anticipated Outcomes

Level of involvement

(L) = RDA Loddon Mallee lead or champion this initiative

(C) = RDA Loddon Mallee contribute to this activity

(O) = RDA Loddon Mallee otherwise assist this activity.

Time frames

- Subject to Commonwealth funding allocations, the activities are scheduled for completion by 2024.

Anticipated outcomes

- Reduction of duplication and inconsistent evidence.
- Improved confidence in regional evidence.
- Consistency of the evidence referenced across all regional stakeholder groups.

OBJECTIVE FOUR

Contribute to regional policy making by providing intelligence and evidence-based advice for and on behalf of the Victorian Government

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- a. Outcomes and performance indicators being sought by State Government
- b. Activities that will contribute to the achievement of common outcomes and performance indicators
- c. Number of activities that will contribute to the achievement of state government

What will we do?

1. **Work with the Victorian Government to implement the Regional Economic Growth Strategies (REDS) for each of our Regional Partnership regions (C)**
2. **Work with the RDA Victorian Network in partnership with the Victorian Government (C)**
 - Contribute to addressing the Victorian RDA's four state-wide regional priorities (C)
 - Key worker housing (C)
 - Digital capability (C)
 - Workforce & skills (C)
 - Renewable energy (C)
3. **Work with the Vic Govt's Regional Partnerships and Regional Development Victoria (RDV)**
 - Maximise outcomes for the Victorian Regional Partnerships by providing advice to the Commonwealth on Regional Partnership priorities that align with the RDA Charter and RDA LM Business Plan (L)
 - Leverage Commonwealth Funding programs and provide advice to regional stakeholders on current Commonwealth programs, particularly where there is an opportunity for joint funding (C)
 - Undertake conversations with neighbouring and cross-border RDA Committees to identify areas for collaboration and knowledge sharing (C)

Anticipated Outcomes

Level of involvement

(L) = RDA Loddon Mallee lead or champion this initiative

(C) = RDA Loddon Mallee contribute to this activity

(O) = RDA Loddon Mallee otherwise assist this activity.

Time frames

- Subject to Commonwealth funding allocations, the activities are scheduled for completion by 2024.

Anticipated outcomes

- Alignment of Victorian Government Regional Economic Development Strategies with Commonwealth regional priorities.
- More opportunities for regional communities to engage on local digital investment priorities.
- Enablement of initiatives that help address Victoria's rural and regional digital divide.
- Recommendations and issues identified in RDV's Regional Digital Plans are addressed.

OFFICIAL

ABOUT THE LODDON MALLEE REGION

The Loddon Mallee region is where **liveability** and **economic prosperity** collide; communities value **sustainable development** and look to lead in the transition to a **carbon-neutral future**. It's where **creativity** finds new audiences, and **innovation** opens doors.

We have the most **diverse agricultural economy** in Victoria. Bendigo is both a "100-gig city" and a **UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy**, identifying it as a hub for creativity, food, and wine. Integrating **solar capture with battery storage**, Gannawarra Solar Farm is among the largest projects of its kind in the world. **Bendigo Bank** is the only major financial institution to be headquartered in a regional city. Loddon Mallee is home to Australia's only **antimony mine** and **Victoria's largest gold producer**.

Community spirit is palpable and the sense of belonging is strong. Life's more relaxed, with more time to spend on the things that really matter, like family and friends. Sports clubs, festivals, events, restaurants, nightlife, theatres, galleries, and shopping – Loddon Mallee boasts the advantages of city living, without the city price tag, and is home to some of Victoria's most lively and beautiful towns, that also provide a closer and deeper connection to **nature and culture**.

The region offers a **broad range of educational facilities** – preschools, primary schools, secondary schools, and TAFE and University Campuses. La Trobe University has campuses in Bendigo and Mildura; Monash University School of Rural Health operates in Bendigo and Mildura, and is ranked in the top 40 universities in the world for clinical and pre-clinical health sciences; Deakin University partners with Bendigo TAFE to provide guaranteed entry pathways to university study; and SuniTAFE was named "Australia's No. 1 Large Training Provider" in 2019.

Arts and culture are highly valued and visible. From the iconic Bendigo Art Gallery – one of Victoria's preeminent arts destinations – to the huge number of festivals operating across the region, the artistic community thrives. The region's **strengths in food and wine** deliver world-renowned dining experiences. Diverse communities offer an abundance of authentic cuisines that defy traditional expectations of country-town fare.

Loddon Mallee is **Victoria's largest grower of food and fibre** supported by an ideal climate and irrigation infrastructure. We are **leaders in solar and renewables** – the majority of Victoria's large-scale solar generation is concentrated here. The Loddon Campaspe Employment and Innovation Corridor offers high-speed train, freeway-grade road, linkage proximity to Melbourne Airport, and **100-gig internet**. Internationally-reputed tertiary institutions deliver a **pipeline of skilled workers**. Our creative industries sector contributes to a **vibrant culture**, which is underpinned by respect for and inclusion of **First Nations' voices**.

Loddon Mallee Local Government Areas

Buloke Shire – The place to grow sustainably. Dryland agriculture, friendly communities propelling a renewable future, and a tourist destination that's taking off.

Campaspe Shire – One of Victoria's most dynamic and diverse agriculture and food production regions. Campaspe is also experiencing huge growth in its mining sector.

Central Goldfields Shire – Strategically placed between Bendigo and Ballarat, but with more space to grow. Join a diverse and dynamic business community burgeoning across industry sectors.

City of Greater Bendigo – Connected, creative, culturally strong. Greater Bendigo is highly-liveable and proactively growing its surging and progressive economy.

Gannawarra Shire – Agriculture, Renewables, Tourism. The ART of Gannawarra is a strategic direction for the future development of Agriculture, Renewable energy and Tourism, key focus areas that will grow the local economy.

Loddon Shire – Space, character, ambition. The place for next-gen agribusiness supported by a professional services sector growing five times faster than the Victorian average.

Macedon Ranges Shire – Progressive, flourishing, outward-looking. Sustainability is at the heart of the region's vision of economic development.

Mildura Rural City – Mildura's agribusiness and value-add manufacturing sectors are not only thriving but leading the way in SMART Farming technology.

Mount Alexander Shire – Where creativity and innovation are driving economic growth across sectors, and sustainable development is a community priority.

Swan Hill Rural City – A major Australian food bowl with more than 40 commercially-grown products. An innovative engineering and manufacturing sector and a renewables hub.

LODDON MALLEE



FRUITFUL COMMUNICATIONS 2023

LODDON MALLEE

Contact us

RDA Loddon Mallee provides advice to the Australian Government and is committed to working with stakeholders across the region on critical development issues affecting the region.

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