

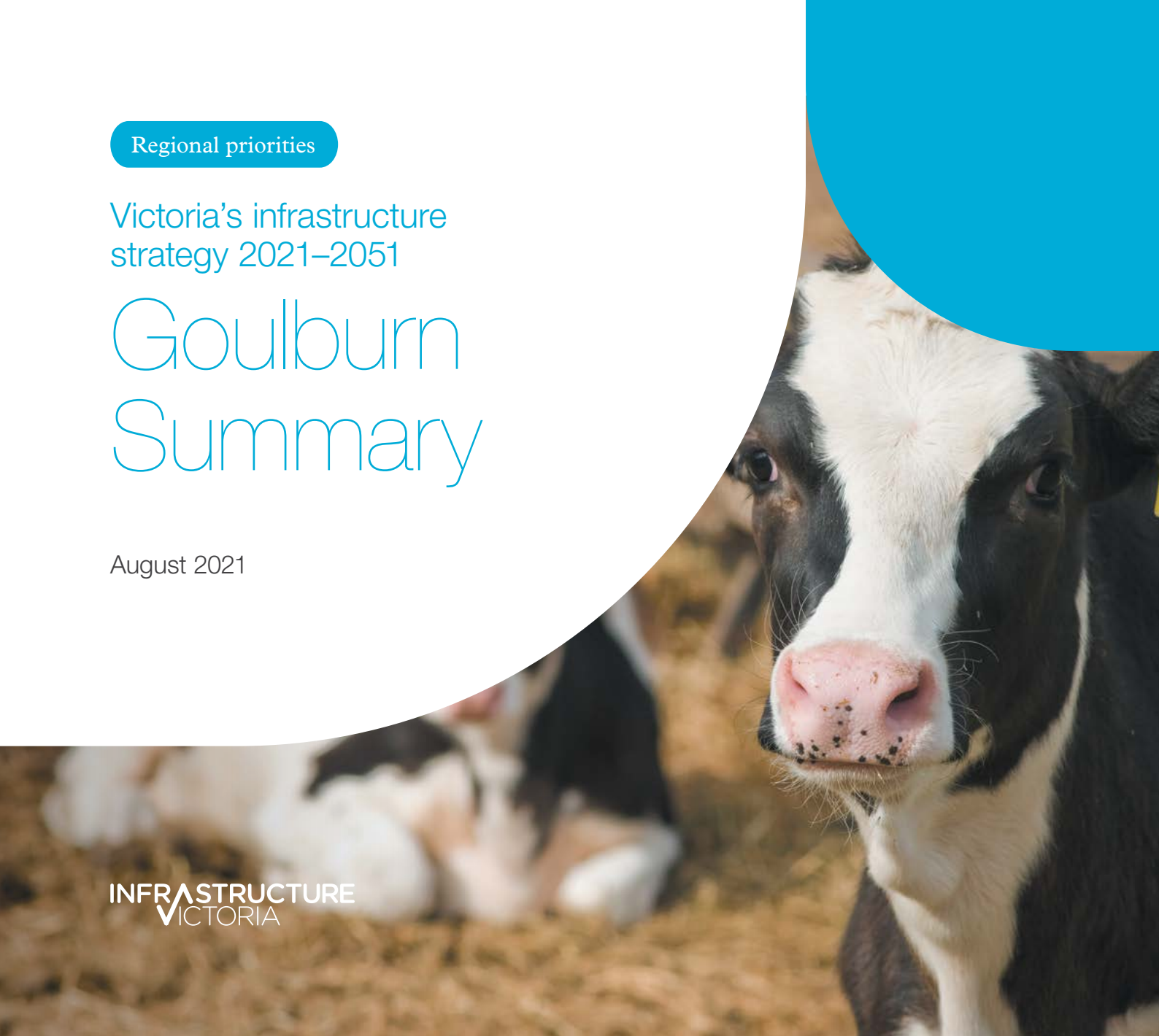


Regional priorities

Victoria's infrastructure
strategy 2021–2051

Goulburn Summary

August 2021



Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021–2051

In 2016, Infrastructure Victoria developed Victoria's first ever 30-year infrastructure strategy. The 2016 strategy was evidence-based, covered all types of infrastructure, and we consulted widely with stakeholders and the community. To stay relevant and reflect Victoria's evolving infrastructure needs, we update the strategy every three to five years.

Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021–2051 builds on the 2016 strategy, revising many of our original recommendations and adding others in response to Victoria's changing circumstances. But we retain a long-term view of Victoria's infrastructure needs over the next 30 years, remembering that infrastructure lasts many decades, and must meet both immediate needs and those in the future. The strategy can be downloaded from our website at infrastructurevictoria.com.au

Aboriginal acknowledgment

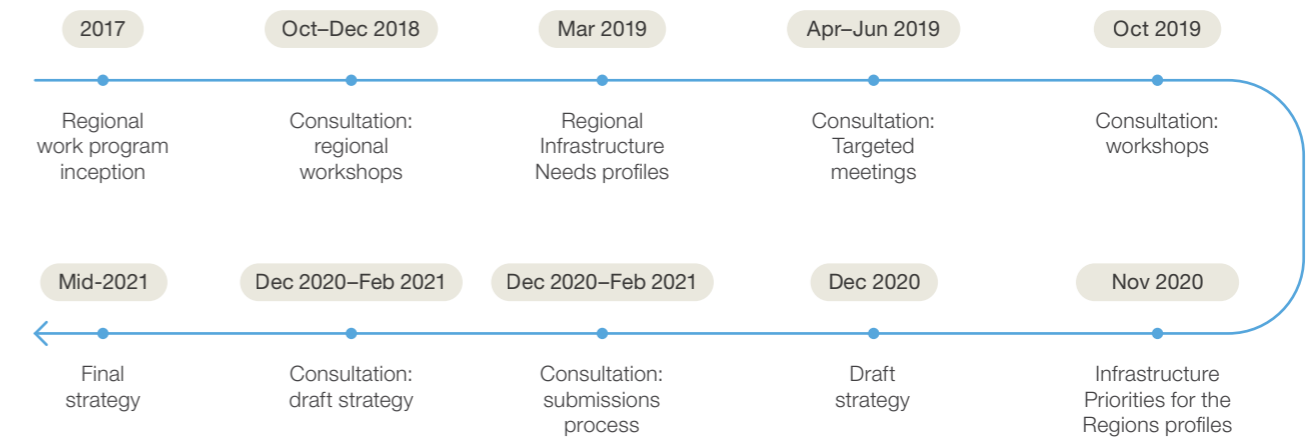
Infrastructure Victoria acknowledges the traditional owners of country in Victoria and pays respect to their elders past and present, as well as elders of other Aboriginal communities. We acknowledge the Yorta Yorta, Taungurung, and Wurundjeri peoples, whose traditional lands are in the Goulburn Region. We recognise that the state's infrastructure is built on land that has been managed by Aboriginal people for millennia.

Infrastructure Victoria listened to regional Victorians

Over the last four years, we built a deeper understanding of the Goulburn region's infrastructure needs, industry composition, and social disadvantage, in our *Regional infrastructure needs and Infrastructure priorities for the regions* projects. We have consulted widely with Goulburn communities, industries and local government to build our regional knowledge, and examined the unique opportunities and challenges that face each of Victoria's regions.

This work produced a *Goulburn regional profile*, a *Goulburn regional industry profile*, and a *Factsheet on Goulburn's regional disadvantage*, all available on our [website](#). We used this evidence to develop strategy recommendations that can apply to the Goulburn region.

Engagement timeline



During the consultation period for the draft strategy, we provided more opportunities for Goulburn communities and stakeholders to offer feedback on our draft recommendations, including through surveys, submissions, and hosting a Goulburn regional roundtable discussion.

Combined, this comprehensive process of consultation and engagement guided the development of this Goulburn regional summary and the relevant strategy recommendations. It focusses on infrastructure-related opportunities to build on Goulburn's economic and industry advantages, and to strengthen local communities by improving health, education, and social inclusion outcomes, while reducing disadvantage.

This document provides a summary of selected recommendations from Victoria's infrastructure strategy which respond to the needs and opportunities we identified in Goulburn.



Overview

Goulburn's economy is mainly focused on agriculture, manufacturing and health care. The region is also abundant in natural resources such as timber, sand and stone, as well as solar and wind energy. The region is a well-known centre for irrigated fruit and dairy milk production. Goulburn's highly fertile soils and ready access to irrigation water are the foundations of its productive capacity. Traditionally considered a 'food bowl' for Victoria, Goulburn's economy is heavily reliant on the agriculture and food processing industries. Goulburn is also home to the Puckapunyal army base which is an important employer for the region.

The Goulburn region includes the traditional lands of the Yorta Yorta people in the north and the Taungurung and Wurundjeri peoples in the south.

Bordering metropolitan Melbourne, Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires are within Melbourne's peri-urban fringe, leading to population and development pressures. The fast-growing parts of Mitchell Shire are located within Melbourne's northern urban growth corridor. Goulburn's north is dominated by rural areas with smaller established towns, lower population growth and fewer development pressures. Shepparton, the regional hub, provides economic diversity, services and employment opportunities for the region.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many regional towns experienced increased demand for housing and increase in house prices. Some of these towns experienced a shortage of affordable housing for the first time.



Enhance market access and regional economic growth

Unlock industry growth opportunities

Renewable energy is an emerging opportunity for the region, with growth potential identified by the energy industry. However, Goulburn Regional Partnership and other stakeholders have identified that inadequacies in the region's current transmission infrastructure limit energy innovation. Transmission network connections are essential if Goulburn is to realise the potential benefits associated with pumped hydro energy generation.

Electricity infrastructure has been identified as a potential constraint on farm productivity and future growth, particularly for Goulburn's dairy industry. Where farms are powered through outdated single wire earth return power lines, changing industry practices and more energy intensive farming equipment are leading to capacity constraints which limit production and stop farms from expanding. The benefits of better power supply can be significant, allowing businesses to expand, to attract new investment and support local communities.

Recommendations to remove energy barriers to business investment

Removing constraints to future industry development and leveraging potential renewable energy opportunities can help grow the Goulburn economy. Developing the region's Renewable Energy Zone could unlock new renewable energy resources – including pumped hydro across the Goulburn region, as well as in the Ovens Murray region.

Our recommendation to co-fund power supply upgrades responds to constraints associated with outdated power supply infrastructure, opening up new investment opportunities for Goulburn's dairy farmers and other industries. Where upgrades are shown to deliver benefits to existing users and unlock potential future investment, upgrade costs can be shared between the Victorian Government, power distribution companies and local businesses.

Recommendation 04

Identify and coordinate Renewable Energy Zones

In the next year, identify Renewable Energy Zones, especially in the state's north-west, and continue to coordinate their development over the next 10 years.

Recommendation 80

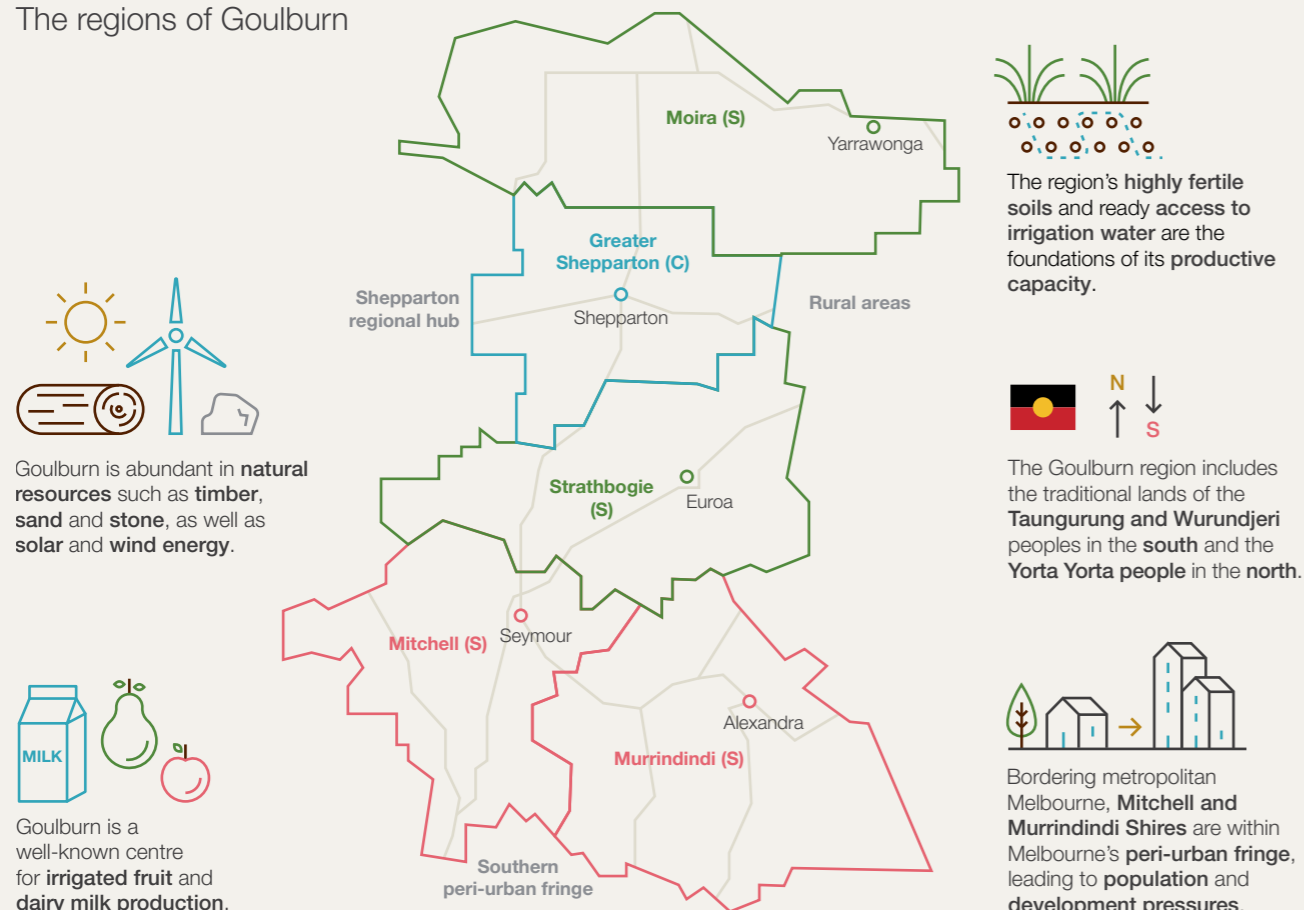
Upgrade power supply for agriculture and regional industry

In the next five years, contribute toward strategic power supply infrastructure upgrades for agriculture and regional industry, where an independent assessment demonstrates significant potential for increased productivity, competitiveness and growth.



Please refer to *Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021–2051* (section 1.1) for additional recommendations on navigating the energy transition.

The regions of Goulburn



Improve water security and industry resilience

Agriculture is an industry of competitive strength for Goulburn. The region is a nationally significant production base for dairy, apples, pears and stone fruits, and the region’s agricultural products have a reputation for quality and safety. Goulburn farms produce over 50% of Victoria’s table tomatoes and almost 50% of the state’s fruit (excluding table grapes).

The projected impacts of climate change have significant consequences for agricultural production in the region. By the 2030s, Goulburn’s average maximum temperatures could increase by up to 1.8°C, while average annual rainfall is projected to decrease by 9%. By the 2050s, Goulburn could have twice as many days over 35°C and up to 60% more very high fire danger days. The *Goulburn Murray resilience strategy* also recognises the need to respond to climate change and the decline in water resources in the region.

The availability and cost of irrigated water are likely to become a significant challenge. Irrigation infrastructure upgrades through the Goulburn-Murray Water Connections Project have increased water use efficiency and will generate long-term savings. Further opportunities are associated with implementation of priority actions from the *Goulburn Murray irrigation district master plan*.

Recommendations to improve water security for the agriculture industry

Our recommendations aim to strengthen water security for Goulburn’s agriculture industry, including by

- \ Modernising irrigation systems
- \ Maximising every source of water supply
- \ Upgrading Victoria’s emergency water supply network to ensure farmers can get water as rainfall continues to decline.

The recommendations build on Victorian Government funding for network improvements in drought-affected areas, including the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District.

Recommendation 13

Consider all water supply sources

Consider all water sources for supply augmentation, including identifying and addressing barriers to purified recycled drinking water within the next 10 years. When planning for future water supply, investigate all options including, but not limited to recycled water, seawater desalination, stormwater harvesting and better use of the water grid.

Recommendation 16

Strengthen agricultural water security by modernising irrigation

In the next 30 years, contribute funding toward planning and delivery of water infrastructure and irrigation modernisation projects across Victoria.

Recommendation 17

Upgrade Victoria’s emergency water network

In the next year, assess the condition, capacity and security of Victoria’s emergency water supply point network, and upgrade or replace inadequate supply points. Clarify ongoing responsibility for monitoring, maintenance and funding to secure a resilient network.

By the 2030s



Average maximum temperatures could increase by up to 1.8°C



Average annual rainfall is projected to decrease by 9%

By the 2050s



Could have twice as many days over 35°C



Could have up to 60% more very high fire danger days



Goulburn summary — Victoria’s infrastructure strategy 2021–2051

Mitchelton Winery, Nagambie

Fostering tourism in Goulburn

Goulburn is well-endowed with natural assets, including the Strathbogie Ranges, Lake Eildon National Park and Cathedral Range State Park. However, tourism across regional Victoria has been acutely affected by the 2020 bushfires, closely followed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rebuilding Goulburn’s tourist industry will be a central part of the region’s wider economic recovery, with an initial focus on domestic tourism.

Agritourism, which builds on Goulburn’s agricultural strength, has the potential to draw visitors out of Melbourne to the region and further stimulate industry recovery. As well as food and wine experiences, the region’s tourism offerings include nature-based tourism, Aboriginal culture and heritage, arts and festivals.

The region’s rich Aboriginal history and culture is celebrated at the Bangerang Cultural Centre. Important heritage sites in the lands of the Yorta Yorta people include:

- \ Barmah National Park
- \ Kow Swamp
- \ Gunbower National Park, and
- \ Kanyapella Wildlife Reserve.

The Murray and Goulburn Rivers are both important assets to the Yorta Yorta people and are attractive to tourists.

Our research has identified opportunities to enhance nature-based and rural tourism sites in Goulburn, which include linkages between experiences and the development of tracks and trails in national parks, such as the Strathbogie Ranges. The *Lake Eildon tourism masterplan* outlines opportunities to further develop Lake Eildon’s tourist offering.

Recommendations to support a recovery in regional tourism

Our tourism recommendations, centred on Aboriginal and nature-based opportunities, aim to enable future growth in the region. Development of a nature-based tourism strategy will guide future investment in the region’s tourist infrastructure to ensure that experiences, and supporting facilities and infrastructure, meet visitor expectations and that the region’s natural assets are protected and enhanced. Nature-based tourism sites, including national parks, require basic amenities and infrastructure to encourage investment in experiences, food and accommodation. Removal of investment barriers in national parks would help encourage investment in tourist facilities and services. The region has already identified opportunities for tourism investment in the region, for example through the *Goulburn Murray resilience strategy* and the *Lake Eildon masterplan*.

A Victorian Aboriginal tourist strategy, co-developed with Traditional Owners, can further drive sustainable economic activity in Goulburn, helping to preserve and promote the region’s Aboriginal cultural histories and heritage sites and create job opportunities for Aboriginal communities. The strategy should align existing joint management plans, including the *Joint management plan for Barmah National Park*, and guide Victorian Government investment in Aboriginal tourism infrastructure to meet Aboriginal cultural and economic development needs. It will complement Victorian Government funding to deliver the joint management plan for Barmah National Park in partnership with the Yorta Yorta people.

Collectively, these recommendations build on existing Victorian Government regional tourism infrastructure investments, including the funding for new fish hatchery operations in Shepparton to support recreational fishing in the region.

Recommendation 81

Plan for and facilitate regional nature-based tourism investments

In the next two years, develop a Victorian nature-based tourism strategy to guide industry development and prioritise further investments. During the next 15 years, support regional tourism investment by allowing more site-specific leases for up to 49 years for infrastructure proposals that meet strict criteria and complement environmental and cultural values.

Recommendation 82

Develop a Victorian Aboriginal tourism strategy with Aboriginal communities

Support and partner with Aboriginal communities in the next two years to guide future investments in Aboriginal tourism and cultural heritage, including through joint management plans.

Facilitate regional recycling industries in Goulburn

Victoria can transform its resource and recycling sector to recover up to 90% of our waste with \$1 billion of investment in infrastructure from both government and the private sector by 2039. Dozens of resource recovery centres across Victoria collect materials from their local areas for transport and further recovery, of varying capacity and capability. A resource recovery centre network with more strategically located and better resourced facilities can reduce the costs of transporting materials, and bring them closer to end users.

The supply of recyclable materials has not been matched by demand for them. More reliable markets for priority materials – recyclable glass, plastic, paper and card, organics, tyres and e-waste – can support economic development, help address the stockpiling of recovered materials, and reduce Victoria's reliance on landfill. Markets for these materials vary greatly, presenting different challenges for each material. Ongoing research and development can help to identify new potential uses for recycled materials, either as direct substitutes for virgin materials or new uses.

Facilitate regional recycling industries

Infrastructure Victoria's *Advice on recycling and resource recovery infrastructure* recommends upgrading or building new processing infrastructure for six priority materials – plastics, paper, cardboard, glass, organics, tyres and e-waste. This would create over 5000 new jobs and produce high quality, recycled products for use in major infrastructure projects, manufacturing and agriculture. Regional Victoria stands to benefit most from significantly increased processing capacity, with the advice recommending 52 out of 87 new or upgraded facilities be located outside of metropolitan Melbourne.

The extra recycling and resource recovery infrastructure required in the Goulburn region could include plastic processing plants and organic composting facilities. By processing materials from both Melbourne and local areas, regional Victoria can provide products closer to end users, reducing transport costs and creating new jobs and services.

Recommendation 28

Facilitate improved recycling infrastructure for priority materials

In the next year, focus efforts to increase and upgrade waste processing infrastructure on six priority materials. Facilitate increased recovery and reprocessing capacity and capability for paper and card, plastics, and organics by 2025. Revisit funding mechanisms and align recycling infrastructure with land use settings.

Recommendation 29

Strengthen end markets for recycled materials

Continue to deliver market development for recycled materials by updating standards and specifications to be performance-based rather than material-based, and explicitly require the Victorian public sector to use recycled products where feasible. In the next five years, support research, development and demonstrations to build confidence and demand for recycled products.

Improve freight networks

Facilitating domestic and export demand for Goulburn's fresh and processed fruit, milk and milk products is an important regional growth strategy, and is dependent on the region's capacity to harvest, transport, process and store produce locally and on efficient links to road, rail and air freight hubs. Goulburn is well connected to key economic centres through its major transport infrastructure, including the Hume Freeway, the Goulburn Valley Highway and the North East Rail Line.

The Inland Rail project, expected to be operational by 2025, will improve the region's connection to the national freight network.

But freight network inefficiencies are constraining the ability of Goulburn producers to increase agricultural exports, and better road infrastructure can improve linkages between dairy and fruit producers, storage, processors and Melbourne markets. Stakeholders in the region continue to advocate for the Shepparton bypass. The Australian Government added the proposed Shepparton Bypass (currently regional road C391) to the National Land Transport Road Network in 2020, and is yet to clarify its long-term intention and funding commitments. Goulburn regional stakeholders also suggested the following road and freight priorities:

- ✓ The safe and reliable Maroondah Highway over the Black Spur, which is a major entrance to the region
- ✓ The outer metropolitan road and E6 can activate future logistics and employment precincts in the region
- ✓ Well-connected and integrated freight terminals can support a broader and more equitable access to freight logistics.

Better local or country roads can link regional centres with agritourism experiences on the Murray River, benefitting Goulburn's tourism industry. Improvements to connecting roads can also support future development of the region's emerging solar and wind power generation sectors.

Recommendations to better connect Goulburn's businesses with processors and markets

Road and rail maintenance and upgrade programs can leverage Goulburn's road and rail freight networks to better support the needs of the region's businesses – helping to improve access, connectivity and safety while also reducing supply chain costs, allowing businesses to remain competitive. Ongoing maintenance and upgrades not only improve efficiency, but also work to keep all road users safe.

Developing the outer metropolitan road and rail corridor will improve access to proposed freight terminals and precincts, along with the future Bay West Port and connections to Melbourne Airport.

Upgrades to existing interstate and intrastate road corridors can effectively serve increasing travel demands between regional and metropolitan areas.

These recommendations will build on short-term Victorian Government funding commitments for road and rail maintenance, to deliver longer term funding certainty for freight networks. The Victorian Government has also invested in bridge structure renewals and maintenance at crossings along the Murray River.

Recommendation 66

Construct an outer metropolitan road and rail corridor

Within two years, determine staging for the outer metropolitan rail and road corridor. Subject to detailed business cases, start construction of priority sections, starting with the E6 motorway by the end of this decade. Progressively stage corridor development for completion in the next 30 years. Provide a freight rail link to coincide with the opening of the Western Intermodal Freight Terminal.

Recommendation 76

Expand and upgrade Melbourne's outer suburban road and bus networks

In the next 15 years, deliver a program of upgrades to Melbourne's arterial road, freeway and bus networks beyond what is currently funded, focusing on congested roads and corridors in outer metropolitan and growth suburbs council areas.

Recommendation 78

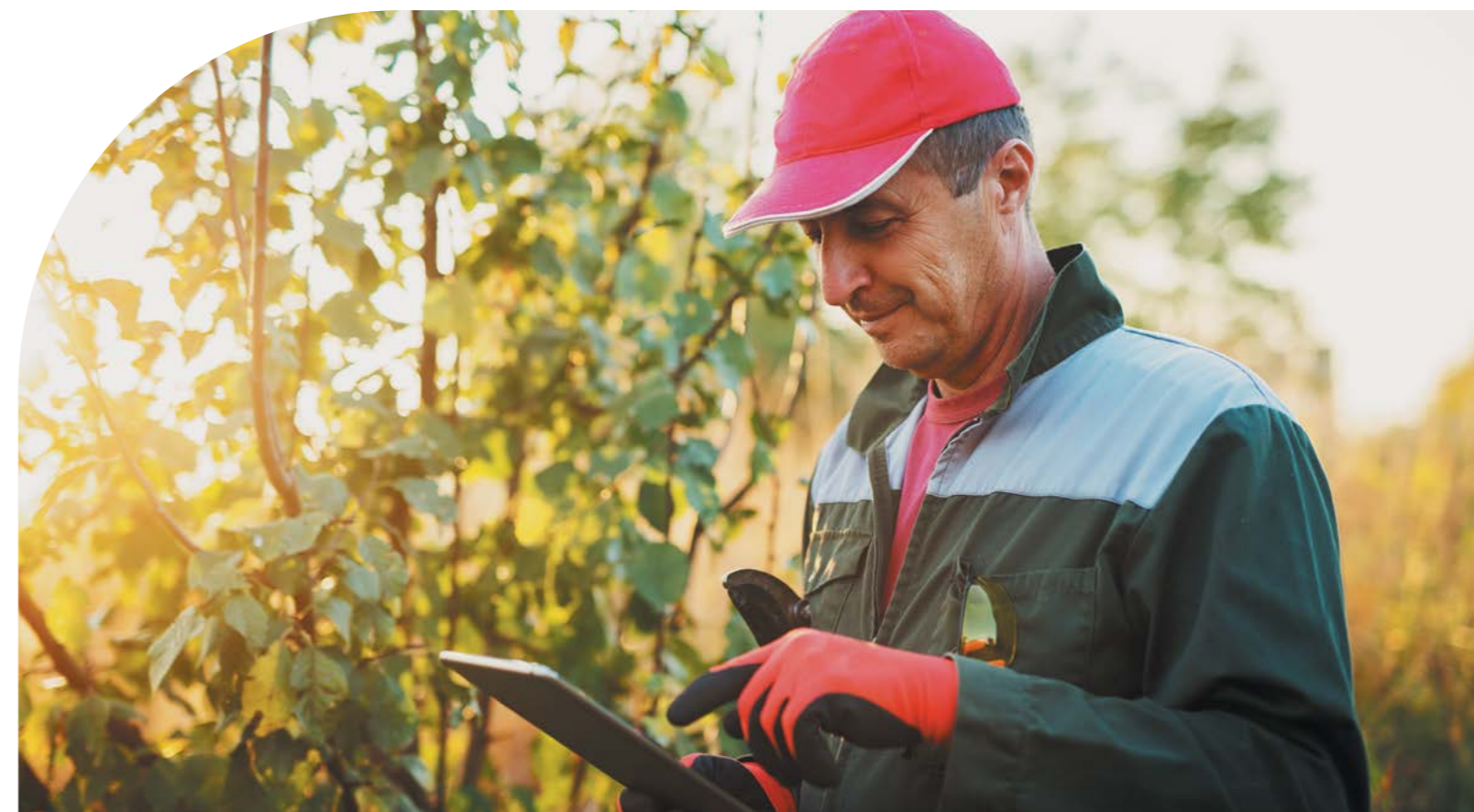
Deliver long-term funding certainty for regional road maintenance and upgrades

Within two years, specify clear levels of service for each type of regional road and bridge. Following this, dedicate a 10-year funding program to sustainably fund Victorian Government road and bridge maintenance and upgrades to meet these service levels. Funding should be prioritised based on improving safety, decreasing vehicle emissions, and lifting productivity.

Recommendation 79

Fund and plan for ongoing regional rail freight network development and maintenance

In the next year, fund a 30-year periodic regional freight rail maintenance program, informed by a publicly available network development and asset management plan. Using the plan, thoroughly determine the feasibility of the next major regional freight upgrade within five years.



Better connect the regions

Improving transport options

Shepparton, as Goulburn's regional hub, has good access to community services and resources. Residents across the region need ready access to Shepparton for work, education, health and other services, particularly those in the central and northern parts of the region. Better community transport could provide an alternative to public transport within the region to access services in the larger centres and townships such as Euroa, Kilmore, Yea, Alexandra, Yarrowonga and Seymour. Timely and reliable access to transport helps the Goulburn region's rural communities access the services they need and fosters social inclusion. This includes for residents who do not own a car or do not drive, including older residents, young people, low-income individuals, and people with a disability.

While 80% of Goulburn workers are employed within the region, many people living in the region's south travel to Melbourne for work. For example, around half of Mitchell Shire residents commute to Melbourne. This area is undergoing rapid population growth, causing transport corridors into Melbourne to face growing pressure.

Our regional consultation highlighted that access to public transport is low. For example, just 6% of Murrindindi residents live within ready access of public transport, creating barriers to accessing services for those who cannot drive. This includes young people accessing education, helping to perpetuate cycles of lower engagement with education in the region. Stakeholders highlighted that some students needed to travel up to 80 kilometres to access TAFE in the region. Goulburn Regional Partnership has also identified a relationship between transport difficulties and increased loneliness and social isolation for some people living in the region.

Recommendations to enable viable transport options in the Goulburn region

Reforming public transport can improve transport options within Goulburn. Solutions can integrate traditional public transport with more innovative, flexible options to deliver services which respond to community needs, such as community transport, on-demand services and the school bus network. Good regional transport services can provide long-term certainty to local communities and ensure that Goulburn residents can access education, health and other services, which are increasingly centralised in Shepparton, Kilmore, Seymour and other regional centres.

The Victorian Government's *Regional network development plan* is delivering better connections between Goulburn and Melbourne. A minimum frequency of a train every 20-minutes at peak times and every 40 minutes in off peak periods is planned between Melbourne and Seymour, and five services each weekday to Shepparton.

Expanding rail access in outer suburbs aims to further respond to growing demand for public transport into Melbourne from Goulburn's high-growth peri-urban areas. This aligns with the Northern Councils Alliance's advocacy and is expected to alleviate crowding on passenger rail services, both for V/Line passengers boarding from stations between Wallan and Seymour and beyond, as well as northern growth area communities such as Donnybrook and Beveridge.

Recommendation 74

Extend rail services in Melbourne's western and northern growth areas

In the next two years, develop business cases to extend electrified metropolitan train services from Sunshine to Rockbank, from Craigieburn to Beveridge, and on the Wyndham Vale corridor, to be delivered by 2031. Deliver extra services to south-east Melbourne by running Rockbank services to Pakenham via the Melbourne Metro Tunnel. Consider adding extra stations on the Wyndham Vale and Melton corridors, and secure remaining land required for stations and stabling.

Recommendation 83

Redesign regional public transport to meet local needs

In the next five years, redesign existing regional transport services so they are integrated, based on regional needs assessments, and sustainably funded. Use significant technological and reform opportunities to deliver innovative service models that meet local needs.



Please refer to *Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021–2051* (section 3.1) for additional recommendations on shaping the transport network for better access.



Seymour Station

Improve digital connectivity and telecommunications infrastructure

Goulburn residents have lower rates of internet connection and inferior internet speed when compared with Melbourne. One in five Goulburn households do not have internet access, rising to one in four in Moira Shire. This compares with an average of one in seven across Victoria. As more businesses and services move online, poor digital connectivity creates a barrier for Goulburn residents to access the services they need. Poor mobile quality and coverage have implications for public safety, affecting emergency services and the ability of residents to access critical information in times of need.

Poor internet connections meant that many of the region's students could not participate fully in remote learning or maintain their social connections during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Goulburn Region digital plan* identified that fixed access broadband had an intermediate supply shortfall in 17 localities.

Mobile and digital access in Goulburn can be inconsistent and unreliable, constraining productivity and business competitiveness. Poor digital connectivity can make it hard to do business, access information or even make mobile phone calls. Coverage is weak in more remote tourist areas, and service quality in primary production areas is variable. While larger towns generally have better coverage, quality and reliability can fade quickly outside regional centres and townships. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted a lack of digital capacity among the region's businesses.

The Goulburn Murray resilience strategy suggests that robotics, big data and the Internet of Things (IoT) can reduce the cost of production and make the region's agriculture industry more competitive. The Victorian Government's On-Farm IoT trial in Tatura is digitally enabling horticulture farms, to test the use of sensor technologies

in orchard management to optimise decisions, manage input costs and drive return on investment. But opportunities remain to improve digital coverage and capacity across Goulburn. Better mobile phone and internet connectivity in tourist locations would help meet visitor expectations. Better connectivity would also enable further process automation and sensor technologies in the region's food processing businesses.

The Victorian Government's Digital Future Now initiative aims to address Goulburn's connectivity issues by funding faster broadband for regional towns and eradicating mobile black spots in populated areas of regional Victoria, in partnership with the Australian Government.

Recommendations to continue to bridge Goulburn's digital divide

Continuing to address regional Victoria's digital connectivity gaps will include improving both fixed broadband and mobile services in the long term. Improved connectivity will ensure that more of Goulburn's businesses can take advantage of the opportunities digital technology provides. Reliable and high-speed internet connections can help businesses to operate and compete from any region, placing businesses in a stronger position to weather future crises, and take advantage of potential opportunities created by any longer-term shift to remote working. Improving the resilience of telecommunications infrastructure will help to ensure residents can remain connected in times of emergency.

Leveraging the existing infrastructure and expertise in Goulburn's library network can support digital literacy skills development and improve access for those without internet access at home. This can complement the Shepparton VicFreeWiFi pilot, a partnership between the Victorian Government, local government and industry.

Recommendation 84

Address regional Victoria's digital connectivity gaps

In the next five years, continue delivering regional digital connectivity improvements, and monitor and review the need for further government investment following the roll-out of the Digital Future Now initiative.

Recommendation 85

Improve regional telecommunications infrastructure resilience

In the next five years, develop more resilient regional telecommunications infrastructure so communities can stay safe during emergencies, including better mobile coverage, back-up systems and power supply, and emergency mobile roaming.

Recommendation 86

Fund regional libraries to provide better internet access

In the next year, start a five-year funding program for libraries in regional towns and rural areas to improve community access to fast, free internet services, leveraging existing library infrastructure.



Please refer to *Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021–2051* (section 4.2) for additional recommendations on better connecting the regions.

Foster regional Victorians' health, wellbeing, and inclusion

Improve access to health care

Goulburn has a higher per capita rate of registered mental health clients than the Victorian average in all local government areas and is much higher in Greater Shepparton. Ambulance attendances for alcohol and illicit drugs are increasing in the region. Goulburn Regional Partnership has identified gaps in the region's mental health and alcohol and drug treatment services, with no locally available residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities in Goulburn.

Aboriginal community controlled organisations (ACCOs) provide services to the region's Aboriginal people, and promote and protect their rights. Goulburn's Aboriginal population is projected to grow 44% between 2018 and 2028, which could lead to more demand for Aboriginal and other services. Current demand for services for Goulburn's Aboriginal residents is already high, particularly for child and family services. Increasing client numbers and limited infrastructure is restricting the ability of ACCOs to provide timely and effective service delivery.

Recommendations to improve health outcomes for people in Goulburn

New or innovative use of existing infrastructure can improve access to health services for Goulburn residents. A plan for future investment in Aboriginal community controlled infrastructure can respond to the current and future infrastructure needs of Goulburn's Aboriginal community and contribute to Closing the Gap in outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.

Fostering innovation by expanding the use of technology in service provision can better connect regional communities with specialist health services. This builds on Goulburn's progress in increasing uptake in online health treatments and support services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

New residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities in the region and improved mental health facilities can help address gaps in local service provision.

Recommendation 25

Use innovation to deliver better models of health care

Within two years, help slow the growth in demand for hospital infrastructure by developing a comprehensive statewide health innovation strategy, supported by a funding over five years to promote and progressively implement better models of health care.

Recommendation 67

Co-design an Aboriginal community controlled infrastructure plan

In the next year, start a co-design process with Aboriginal Victorians to develop a plan to guide investment in Aboriginal community-controlled infrastructure to meet current and future social, economic and cultural needs.

Recommendation 70

Deliver infrastructure for a more responsive and integrated mental health system

In the next year, establish a dedicated infrastructure fund to support more responsive and integrated mental health and wellbeing services, consistent with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

Recommendation 91

Build regional residential alcohol and drug rehabilitation facilities

Within five years, build residential detoxification and rehabilitation facilities in regional Victoria to provide equitable access to alcohol and other drug treatment.

Improve and better use community and council infrastructure

Goulburn's diverse and changing demographic mix is likely to alter future service demand. For example:

- \ An ageing population in Murrindindi Shire is likely to change the scope and mix of services needed, including health care.
- \ Mitchell Shire and, to a lesser extent, Shepparton, are undergoing rapid population growth, placing pressure on services and facilities. Often the existing facilities are far from the places where population growth is occurring.
- \ Addressing the unique service and infrastructure needs of the region's rapidly growing Aboriginal communities can help to Close the Gap in outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.

Local governments face many service delivery challenges, including different patterns of population growth, budget constraints, and funding multiple services to geographically dispersed towns with small, often disadvantaged populations. Social infrastructure, and the services it enables, can flexibly respond to changing community needs. For example, new schools in Shepparton and Mitchell Shire can provide opportunities for shared multi-purpose facilities on school sites.

The impact of climate change adds further complexity to the challenges facing local governments and communities. Goulburn is exposed to the impacts of climate change with higher temperatures, more days of extreme heat and declining rainfall forecast. Climate change also cause frequent catastrophic bushfires.

Recommendations to make better use of community infrastructure

Better using community facilities can support regions and local governments to provide fit for purpose social infrastructure which can respond to local needs. Service planning can help identify gaps in existing infrastructure, or opportunities for shared facilities, supported by funding to retrofit, repurpose or retire existing community facilities. Transport planning can integrate with service planning to ensure people can access essential services.

Developing multipurpose shared social service facilities aligns with an already identified opportunity to enhance Seymour's role as a regional service centre and employment hub. For example, Mitchell Shire Council has proposed an integrated health and community hub at Seymour, co-locating a library, allied and primary health consulting rooms and a variety of community spaces.

Creating climate-adapted facilities for rural communities can support local governments to develop facilities which can help reduce the health impacts of exposure to heat, and prolonged smoke from bushfires. Combined with the recommendation to build back better after emergencies, this helps build community resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Recommendation 19

Build back better after emergencies

In the next year, consider policy changes and funding mechanisms so high priority public infrastructure destroyed by emergencies is built to a more resilient standard or in less vulnerable locations.

Recommendation 88

Deliver multipurpose shared social service facilities in the regions

In the next year, start regional planning for social services to identify opportunities for multipurpose shared services facilities, then deliver them where appropriate, over the next five years, in partnership with local governments and community organisations.

Recommendation 89

Update community infrastructure

Fund regional councils in the next five years to update, repurpose or retire outdated community infrastructure for better service delivery.

Recommendation 90

Create climate-adapted facilities for rural communities

In the next five years, fund local governments to plan and help deliver a network of designated, accessible climate-adapted community facilities, to manage the health impacts of extreme heat and bushfire smoke.



Please refer to *Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021–2051* (section 3.3) for recommendations on aligning social infrastructure with better service delivery.





Recommendation 93

Expand social housing in regional centres, in locations with good access

Focus social housing investments in regional centres, near transport and services, for better access to health, social and economic support.



One in five low-income households in Goulburn experience **financial stress** from mortgage or rent.

Recommendation 94

Make social housing suitable for changing local climates

Continue to deliver a long-term program of modifying social housing to be climate-resilient by improving the energy efficiency and energy affordability of residences.



3.7 per 1000 people are **homeless** in the Goulburn region, rising to 5.5 per 1000 people in Greater Shepparton.

Address social housing challenges

The Goulburn region has the highest rates of homelessness in regional Victoria, an estimated 3.7 homeless per 1000 people at the time of the 2016 Census. This rises to 5.5 per 1000 people in Greater Shepparton, a higher rate of homelessness than metropolitan Melbourne.

One in five low-income households in Goulburn experience financial stress from mortgage or rent, which rises to one in four in Greater Shepparton and Mitchell Shire region. Goulburn also has the third highest rate of family violence in Victoria, further driving demand for social housing. Regional stakeholders highlight a particular regional housing need for seasonal agricultural workers.

Recommendations to enhance access to affordable, fit for purpose housing

Expansion of social housing in regional centres, in locations with good access to transport, work, education and services, aims to improve Goulburn residents' access to affordable housing. Rapid renewal of old public housing stock aims to ensure that the existing housing stock is fit for purpose. The Victorian Government has committed to building social and affordable housing in regional Victoria with minimum guaranteed investments already committed for Shepparton and Mitchell Local Government areas.

Making social housing suitable for changing climates responds to the need for adequate heating and cooling in the region's social housing, building on recent Victorian Government funding commitments for energy efficiency upgrades in social housing properties. As well as installing split system air-conditioning to better regulate temperatures in the home, solar panels are recommended to help low-income residents to manage energy-related cost of living pressures. Collectively, these recommendations aim to ensure a long-term focus on provisioning of social housing following the roll out of the Victorian Government's four-year Big Housing Build program.

Recommendation 55

Rapidly renew old public housing

Rapidly renew dilapidated public housing properties to improve functionality, accessibility and energy efficiency with a priority to renew at least half of all older low-rise apartments and older three bedroom detached dwellings by 2031.





Goulburn Valley Football League



This publication may be of assistance to you, but Infrastructure Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence that may arise from you relying on any information in this publication. You should seek appropriately qualified advice before making any decisions regarding your particular project.

Printed on 100% recycled paper

August 2021

© Copyright Infrastructure Victoria 2021

Except for any logos, emblems, trademarks, figures and photography, this document is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence. It is a condition of this Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 licence that you must give credit to the original author, who is Infrastructure Victoria.

This document is also available at infrastructurevictoria.com.au.

ISBN 978-1-925632-54-5 (pdf/online/MS word)



Goulburn River