

# Helen Haines MP



The Hon Jim Chalmers MP  
Treasurer  
House of Representatives  
PO Box 6022, Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Treasurer,

## **Indi Budget Submission – October 2022**

Over the last three years, in advance of each Federal Budget, I have worked closely with the nine Local Governments in Indi to prepare a detailed Budget Submission outlining the key funding priorities in our region. I have subsequently met with the Treasurer to discuss that Submission and identify opportunities for funding for our regional priorities.

This is a practice I intend to continue into the 47<sup>th</sup> Parliament and I look forward to working closely with you over the forthcoming Budget cycles.

Please see below our submission in advance of the October 2022 Federal Budget.

The projects in this submission were identified in consultation with the nine LGAs across Indi including Alpine, Benalla, Indigo, Mansfield, Murrindindi, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta, and Wodonga, as well as the broader Hume Regional Local Government Network, the Alpine Resort Management Boards of Mount Hotham, Falls Creek, Mount Stirling, Lake Mountain and Mount Buller and other local stakeholders, including Albury Wodonga Health and Tourism North East.

Other funding opportunities across the electorate are also profiled spanning renewable energy, tourism, health, housing, aged care, and mobile and internet coverage.

I ask that you consider these projects in the upcoming budget, and I look forward to meeting with you and your cabinet colleagues to discuss them alongside the Expenditure Review Committee process.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen Haines".

**Dr Helen Haines MP**

28 July 2022

cc: Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister  
Senator Katy Gallagher, Finance Minister

**Dr Helen Haines MP**

117 Murphy Street  
Wangaratta VIC 3677  
E helen.haines.mp@aph.gov.au  
W helenhaines.org



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## Local Government Priority Projects

### Alpine Shire

#### Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing

The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing is a proposed multi-day 57-kilometre walk through the spectacular Alpine region from Falls Creek to Mt Hotham. It will be one of Australia's outstanding alpine walking experiences that captures the essence of the Australian Alps – the solitude, the seasons, the breathtaking beauty, and the stories of the High Country.

The Master Plan for the project outlines the proposed route, combining and upgrading an existing track network and adding up to 3 kilometres of new track. The facilities created as part of the five-day, four-night route may also provide options for shorter overnight walks. The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing is identified as one of Victoria's key long-distance walks, which also includes the Great Ocean Walk, the Grampians Peaks Trail and the Coastal Wilderness Walk.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$32,000,000
<b>State Contribution:</b>	\$17,000,000 for planning, business case and Stage 1.
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$15,000,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Tourism and Recreation

#### Alpine Better Places Harrietville

The project will deliver new and upgraded infrastructure at three of Harrietville's popular precincts - Dredge Hole Precinct, Pioneer and Tavare Parks and Community Hall - creating a vibrant and enhanced open spaces that uplift the heart of the township and community. Development of these popular landmarks includes a meeting plaza, picnic shelters, amenities, landscaping, and directional trail signage. The project designs draw inspiration from Harrietville's gold mining and Chinese settlement heritage. This community supported project will create a revitalised and connected town, improve liveability, and help strengthen Harrietville's reputation as a nature-based tourism hub. The project will aid social and economic recovery and resilience after the Black Summer Bushfires.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$4,600,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$4,600,000
<b>Other Information:</b>	If funded, this project would supersede the Harrietville Dredge Hole Precinct project above.
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Tourism, Community Infrastructure and Bushfire Recovery

#### Electric Vehicle Infrastructure for Alpine

The project would fund five Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations to be installed across Alpine Shire. Electrical vehicle infrastructure (charging stations) will be critical for our communities and visitors as



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the demand for electric vehicles continues to rise. This project strategically fills gaps by providing chargers at remote townships (e.g. Bright, Mount Beauty, Harrietville) and expanding EV tourism and regional connectivity by providing users low risk of running out of power with spacings of 50-100km between recharge sites. This will increase economic development with an estimated linger time of around 20-60 min, providing local cafes and businesses with greater visitation and tourism expenditure.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$600,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$600,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Transport and Environment

## Alpine Better Places Tawonga

This project will deliver new and upgraded infrastructure across the Tawonga CBD and Pioneer Memorial park, including vibrant playspaces for the local community and visitors, safer pedestrian connections through the CBD, and upgraded community facilities. A key feature of the upgrade will be a new public display facility showcasing the history of the area from the First Nations through to the more recent settlers. This well-supported project will deliver a sense of destination for the Tawonga township, encouraging passing traffic to stop and enjoy a revitalised and connected town. The project will aid social and economic recovery and resilience after the Black Summer Bushfires and subsequent impact of the COVID pandemic.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$3,500,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$3,500,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Tourism, Community Infrastructure and Bushfire Recovery

## Bright Western Gateway

This project will leverage benefit for visitors and the local community from a significant residential development taking place at the township's Western Gateway, through upgrades to adjacent public infrastructure including open spaces and footpath links, improvements to a local waterway, and upgrades to local roads. On completion, the residential development will increase the housing stock in the township by approximately 10% and is the largest residential development in Bright's history, and the works proposed through this project will ensure that the nearby public infrastructure supports appropriate connectivity between the new housing and our CBD.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$2,900,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$2,900,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Local Infrastructure



## Kiewa River Trail Extension

An extension of the shared trail from the existing end point to complete a full sealed loop via the Kiewa River East Branch has long been requested by the local community and will also add a significant draw card for visitors to the town. Mount Beauty and Tawonga South are currently poorly served by walking and cycling trails in close proximity to town, and particularly those accessible to the less mobile within our community and visitors to the town.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$550,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$550,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Sports and Recreation



## Benalla Rural City

### Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre

In 2017/18 the Council resolved to allocate \$10,000 towards a review of the 2002 Masterplan for the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre. A committee worked on the revised Masterplan and in October 2019 the Council received and adopted that Plan. Given the growth in the Benalla, there is a strong belief that there is a big opportunity to create a sporting hub for the future. This could be built into a community multi-purpose sport precinct for the future that could be utilised 7 days a week to build onto the 500-600 participants that currently utilise the facility.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$10,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$8,000,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Sports and Recreation

### Rail Precinct Upgrade

Aside from the benefits to the regional economy on the planned Inland Rail project that is to be delivered in the next 3-5 years, we see tremendous opportunity for increased activity in the visitor economy and general commuter use utilising passenger rail services.

The rail precinct that includes Mackellar Street, Carrier Street and Railway Place are key thoroughfares that connect the rail precinct to the Benalla CBD and surrounding areas. An upgrade of these streets and the land abutting the rail precinct will lift the visitor and commuter experience.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$2,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$2,000,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Local Infrastructure

### Benalla CBD Upgrade

In March 2021, Benalla Rural City Council commissioned a landscape architect to develop streetscape designs for the town centre and surrounding areas. The streetscape plan covers a number of components including pedestrian connectivity, entrance gateway feature, signage and way-finding, safer crossings, shaded structures, street planting, bicycle route and public spaces.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$8,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$8,000,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Local Infrastructure

### Benalla Art Gallery Phase 2

This project was drawn from the Benalla Art Gallery, Feasibility and Business Case completed by Urban Enterprises in August 2020. Phase one of the project which is funded and is due for completion in early 2023 will see the construction of a secure off-site facility for the optimal storage of art and



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cultural artefacts. It will also see enhancements to the café and facilities for back of house operations. Phase 2 will see an expansion of gallery space to activate opportunities to improve the interface and activities between the gallery, Lake Benalla, the CBD and the heritage Botanical Gardens to create a unique point of difference for Benalla.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$7,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$7,000,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Arts and Tourism

#### [Benalla Urban Growth Strategy – West Drainage](#)

An outcome of the development of the Benalla Urban Growth Strategy conducted by the Victorian Planning Authority has indicated that the growth of Benalla will be constrained if critical drainage work is not completed in the area to the west and northwest of Benalla. The Hume Regional Growth Plan provides strategic justification for the project and highlights the enduring benefits for the north-east region from the project. Over the past four years new industry has come to town and this combined with expansion of current businesses has led to an increased demand for residential development.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$10,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$10,000,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Local Infrastructure



## Indigo Shire

### Murray Felines AFLW Female Changerooms

The project will support the development of the change rooms and showers at Barkly Park, Rutherglen. On any given game day there are up to 150 female footballers playing at Barkly Park, however, there are no change rooms or showers with privacy for these girls. They often shower with their clothes on. The age groups are U14, U17 and Open Age.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$1,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$1,000,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Recreation and Community Infrastructure

### Beechworth Swimming Pool

Construction of new swimming pool to address structural safety concerns of existing infrastructure. (Designs and costings known). Construction of 8 lane 25m outdoor pool, Toddlers/Learners pool, Change rooms, staff room, administration/kiosk, store, first aid room, pool plant and sunshade. This facility will meet community demand for a new facility to improve health, wellbeing, and social connection needs across the town.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$10,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$10,000,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Recreation and Community Infrastructure

### Implementation of Pools Development Plan

The Pools Development Plan relates to the five Indigo pools which all require upgrades and improvements to basic amenities and infrastructure. The project would build on the importance of local swimming pools to local communities.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$1,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$1,000,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Recreation and Community Infrastructure

### Implementation of Playground Development Plan

Council is only able to undertake basic maintenance on its community playgrounds. This project would provide an opportunity to rejuvenate the playgrounds of highest use to maximise their amenity and opportunities for community connections.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$1,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$1,000,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Recreation and Community Infrastructure



## Beechworth Water Play Park

The project would install at Water Play Park in Beechworth to supplement the aquatic experience for children and families. The project is being supported by the Beechworth branch of Bendigo Bank which would provide a \$200,000 contribution.

**Total Project Cost:** \$750,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$500,000

**Portfolio:** Recreation and Community Infrastructure

## Kiewa Community Park Development

The project will support the development of the newly acquired Kiewa Community Park which has a Master Plan incorporating a range of community facilities and spaces including access to the Kiewa River, community market space, Men's Shed, playgrounds and other amenities.

**Total Project Cost:** \$1,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$1,000,000

**Portfolio:** Recreation and Community Infrastructure



## Mansfield Shire

### Lords Reserve Community Hub

The Lords Reserve Community Hub project intends to provide critical infrastructure, create jobs, and increase the liveability of Mansfield. This project will deliver an inclusive multi-use community hub incorporating function room, commercial kitchen, and canteen facilities in the Mansfield Township.

In addition to creating jobs and stimulating the economy during construction, the Community Hub intends to have the following long-term lasting social and community benefits:

- Attracting new residents to the district and supporting changing demographics
- Catering to all demographics including youth, migrants, families, and ageing residents
- Allowing for improved access and amenities for all abilities and across generational participation
- Reducing youth loneliness and isolation through the increase in participation and capacity
- Supporting a vibrant and safe community, where people have strong connection to 'place' and work together to achieve well-being across all ages, abilities, and circumstances
- Combining cultural change into the facility development to provide a strong foundation for increased female participation in sport.

**Total Project Cost:** \$3,200,000

**Commonwealth Contribution** \$2,700,000

**Council Contribution:** \$500,000

**Status:** Shovel Ready

**Portfolio:** Community Infrastructure

### Resilience and Recovery Hub

Construct a Resilience and Recovery Hub within an emergency precinct co-locating SES, CFA and Ambulance Victoria services (potentially VicPol later) and include Mansfield Community Radio, a licensed emergency broadcaster, including shared training and support facilities. Fit for purpose infrastructure will reduce the vulnerability of the Mansfield community, and increase its capacity to respond to and recover from emergencies and support the growing resident and visitor populations.

Mansfield Shire's natural assets, including the Alpine National Park, Lake Eildon, and vast tracts of land referred to as the 'High Country', provide challenges for visitors and the local community because of the topography, in some parts isolation, and the frequency of natural disasters events such as bushfires, storms or floods. Co-location of central infrastructure will promote efficiency and effectiveness of emergency response and recovery in Mansfield. Further, modern central facilities will attract volunteers and greater community effort.



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Response data from Ambulance Victoria shows the Mansfield Station is one of the lowest performing stations in the state with travel distances, local geography, and patient transfers to Wangaratta and Melbourne all having an impact. Co-location and integration of emergency services is consistent with State Government emergency services policies and plans and is repeated in the strategic plans for all Victorian emergency services agencies.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$7,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$3,000,000
<b>Status:</b>	Scoping Study Complete
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Emergency Services and Disaster Preparedness

### [Gough's Bay Cycling Trails](#)

This project will build more cycling/tourism product on and around Lake Eildon by constructing a network of cycling paths in and around Jamieson and Goughs Bay with a longer-term vision of cycling paths in these destinations joining up with the Great Victoria Rail Trail from Mansfield to Tallarook.

Currently over 160,000 annual tourism visitors to North East Victoria who cycle contribute approximately \$131 million in direct expenditure to the region. There is a need to develop product in the southern part of the Tourism North East region following solid investment by Government to the northern part of the region. This project is consistent with the Ride High Country Strategy for North East Tourism and the Lake Eildon Master Plan.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$TBC
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$TBC
<b>Status:</b>	State Government funding sought for design and feasibility
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Tourism and Recreation



## Murrindindi Shire

### Alexandra-Thornton-Eildon Rail Trail Link – Great Victorian Rail Trail Extension – Stage 2

The GVRT currently terminates at Alexandra and there is no rail trail or similar linkage between the towns of Alexandra, Thornton, and Eildon. Any cycle traffic between these towns at present is along the main road with other road users. This project will ultimately link the premier tourist attractions of the GVRT and Lake Eildon. Eildon is a high-profile water-based activity destination, notably fishing and boating. Provision of an off-road trail will add to the list of tourist offerings and encourage visitors to stay. Stage 2 covers Back Eildon Rd to Thornton section.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$3,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$3,000,000
<b>Other Information</b>	Open to co-fund
<b>Status:</b>	Shovel Ready
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Tourism and Recreation

### Tourism Roads and Infrastructure Upgrade Package

This proposal includes a range of local tourism, road and infrastructure projects:

- Recreational Vehicle Accreditation Program – infrastructure delivery
- Kinglake West Streetscape works
- Castella Rd, Castella - upgrade
- Snodgrass St, Yea – long vehicle parking
- Cheviot Tunnell Rd, Limestone – sealing
- Two Hills Rd, Glenburn – sealing
- Yea Wetlands Discovery Centre, Yea – carpark extension and upgrade
- Alexandra Township – tourism parking precincts

The fast-tracking of these infrastructure projects will allow Murrindindi Shire to capitalise on the fluctuations experienced in the tourism sector through the COVID19 pandemic. While the sector has been crippled during Victoria's lockdowns, visitation has increased exponentially as restrictions have eased and Victorians are limited to or have chosen to holiday within Victoria. This has impacted some of our more popular destinations and the need to upgrade or renew infrastructure accordingly is increasing.

<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$9,000,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Community Infrastructure



## Kinglake Memorial Reserve Master Plan Implementation

The Kinglake Memorial Recreation Reserve Master Plan has been prepared to optimise the use and benefits of the Kinglake Memorial Recreation Reserve for active and informal recreation and seeks to provide quality facilities to meet current and future community needs. The infrastructure works will deliver appropriate upgrades and renewal that ensure this valued precinct meets the needs of the community into the future.

**Total Project Cost:** \$3,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$3,000,000

**Portfolio:** Community Infrastructure

## Mansfield and Murrindindi Shire Joint Project

### Skyline Road Touring Route

The construction and sealing of the last remaining section of Skyline Road will remove a missing link to complete an iconic continuous touring route around Lake Eildon, Victoria's largest inland water storage and popular visitor destination. The touring route also connects the two communities of Bonnie Doon (Mansfield) and Eildon (Murrindindi) whose economies are reliant on tourism.

The project to seal this section of road and create a touring route, is one of four catalyst projects identified in the recently adopted Lake Eildon Master Plan to activate the region, create jobs and increase visitation and yield.

The unsealed section of road is identified in the Lake Eildon Master Plan as a major barrier to mobilising private 'investment ready' opportunities in much needed contemporary tourism related infrastructure, including higher standard accommodation, restaurant and attractions, to improve visitor attraction, dispersal around the region, and visitor spend. The Skyline Road Tourism Precinct Business Case identifies that such investment would contribute to economic growth through the creation of 148 jobs with an annual increase in economic output of \$54 million across the Hume region in the short term. The design for the road is underway.

**Total Project Cost:** \$15,500,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$15,500,000

**Portfolio:** Tourism and Roads



## Strathbogie Shire

### Foundational energy infrastructure upgrades to renewable energy – energy security

Reliable power supply infrastructure - Energy security to Strathbogie Shire towns and their surrounding districts has been problematic for many years. In January 2019, Euroa, Nagambie, Avenel, Longwood and surrounds experienced an extended power outage lasting up to three days. Outages continue during the height of the summer heat at intermittent periods and create considerable risk to community including through the loss of most mobile communications and internet services. The lack of energy security is the single significant barriers to attracting new small to medium businesses to Strathbogie Shire.

A single Ausnet electricity supply connecting Benalla to Euroa via Violet Town is the only infrastructure to service the surrounding localities. The tenuous supply situation creates considerable risk to the community in the event of failure of this supply line during natural disasters such as bushfire. Council has been advised by the power supplier Ausnet that a second supply line from Seymour to Euroa would form a “loop” that would alleviate this issue and ensure that power would still be available in the event of failure of a single supply line. Previous discussions with Ausnet indicated that it would cost approximately \$20 million to provide this second supply line and that current rules prevent Ausnet from investing in this infrastructure as they are prohibited from cross subsidising from other regions to build infrastructure. Ausnet has advised Council that the only circumstances in which they would consider investment on its merits is if council identified a major power user such as a manufacturer that would commit to investing in the region if the power supply was improved, a scenario which is unrealistic at best.

The Shire is well placed to accommodate large scale renewable energy generation and distribution, There is no doubt that the contribution of renewable energy to the Victorian grid will increase and with a secure and stable distribution network Strathbogie is well placed both to contribute and to benefit.

Strathbogie Shire has been pursuing funding for a microgrid project through the Australian Renewable Energy Authority's Regional Australia Microgrid Program. The Community has had some success in developing small-scale microgrid technology however a large-scale micro-grid for the Euroa township (Stage 2 expanding to Violet Town) will support SME businesses to the Shire due to a more reliable and secure supply of energy via the grid.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$5,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$5,000,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Climate Change and Energy



## Equitable digital and telecommunications infrastructure

The standard of mobile telephone and digital connectivity/capacity remains poor across much of Strathbogie Shire. Slow speeds, dropouts, congestion at peak usage times and no mobile signal are causing dissatisfaction and disparity.

Violet Town continues to suffer from poor NBN and telephone services. A recent application for funding under the Regional Connectivity and Co-Investment funds to install fibre to the premises in homes and businesses in Violet Town was declined by the previous federal government on the cusp of the recent federal election, even though state and NBN funding was available. We are endeavouring to ensure this funding remains available whilst we lobby federal authorities to provide a contribution to the funding of these projects. A similar application was also made for the town of Avenel. The provision of fibre to the premises in these towns will significantly improve their commercial and residential investment potential as well as the liveability for current residents.

Increased telecommunications and digital connectivity is something that our towns and businesses should not have to fight for where our city based counterparts enjoy this by right.

- Project Ask:**
1. Provide fibre to the towns of Avenel and Violet Town as a Stage 1 response of a comprehensive roll out across the Shire
  2. Eliminate mobile black spots in Strathbogie Shire

**Portfolio:** Communications

## Greening Euroa – Water Security

The Greening Euroa Project is an innovative community driven project that will use recycled water to irrigate public green spaces during the summer months. We know that adaptation to drought is important to provide a sustainable future for rural townships, communities and facilities. This plan taps into the available excess water from the Euroa Wastewater Treatment Plant. It's climate smart, cost efficient and community inspired. More than this, this proposal is the first of its kind in Victoria.

With the support of our local water authority, Goulburn Valley Water, this wastewater would be safely upgraded from Class C to Class B, before being piped underground to storage tanks throughout the Euroa Township. Once the pipe is laid, water will be available to irrigate the many public ovals and sports grounds, the pride of the community.

More than ever, community health and wellbeing are priorities for our region and by maintaining our green open spaces during prolonged dry periods, members of the public will enjoy increased opportunities to get out and participate in community life through exercise and sporting activities.

This project is being driven by a committee of passionate locals who came together to find a way to lessen the impacts of chronic water shortages in a rapidly warming climate. Additionally, the purple



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standpipe and pipeline presents a clever solution to a growing concern for many rural communities about how to sustainably manage outdoor spaces in the scorching summer months.

This infrastructure will make our Strathbogie Shire a more climate resilient region, attractive to visitors and keep our open spaces green during years of climate variability and increasing water insecurity. The Greening Euroa project is climate smart, cost efficient and community inspired. It demonstrates a smart use of a valuable resource while taking pressure off our potable water supply and our waterways heavily relied upon by farm dams and groundwater bores.

**Total Project Cost:** \$3,800,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$3,800,000

**Portfolio:** Water and Community Infrastructure

#### [Nature Based Playground – Euroa Sevens Creek](#)

Strathbogie Shire Council and the Euroa community has a vision. We want to develop an intergenerational destination nature-based play space in our town that is suitable for all ages and abilities. Modern life has removed the traditional nature play many of today's adults experienced as children.

Euroa is the perfect place located two hours from Melbourne. With a Tesla Electric Charge station, this proposal will not only support residents of the Shire with an exciting place to meet, but also those arriving at our Traveller's Rest and others who stop to charge their vehicle. A destination playground would create a place for families wanting a genuine child and youth friendly place to stop with a unique offering.

This community supported project will offer improved liveability and help strengthen Euroa and our Shire's reputation as a destination. Increasing economic development with an estimated linger time of between 20 to 60 minutes provides local cafes and businesses with greater visitation and tourism expenditure.

This project will help re-engage children's relationship with nature by bringing it back to the play and learning places of everyday life. Sensory stimulation derived from interacting with natural environments allows children to learn with sight, smell, touch, and sound.

Research indicates that, when children play and learn in nature, they do so with more energy, engagement, imagination, and cooperation than in wholly artificial environments. Creating natural environments supports children to become environmentally engaged and show respect for the environment, and it is well known that physical activity is greatly beneficial for children's cognitive development, health and wellbeing. From a sensory garden to explore, rocks to clamber over, to logs to balance on, the possibilities to interact with nature and the environment are endless. It is



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proposed the all-abilities play space will be designed with the people who will use it most. This means extensive consultation with children, young people, families, grandparents and carers.

**Total Project Cost:** \$1,500,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$1,500,000

**Portfolio:** Tourism and Recreation

#### [Streetscape Renewal Project: Stage 2 Works – Euroa, Violet Town, and Strathbogie](#)

Effective streetscape design is an integral part of shaping a community's identity, increasing civic pride and improving a sense of well-being and belonging. Following extensive community engagement, a township-based streetscape renewal plans have been developed to provide a visual guide for future streetscape development which can be implemented progressively. The plans aim to improve the commercial vitality of our main streets by:

- delivering infrastructure improvements that create a distinctive sense of place for local residents, visitors and businesses,
- provide a high quality, attractive public space where people want to visit and shop, and
- improve the attractiveness, comfort, accessibility, connectivity and safety each of our main streets or main commercial areas.

Whilst the primary goal of the streetscape renewal program is to support and drive economic uplift in our business areas in a post Covid environment, these designs also aim to improve connection to place, by:

- Creating a local sense of place by reinforcing identity and telling local stories through the choice of materials and placemaking, and
- Reinforcing visual and physical connections to the surrounding landscape and heritage

**Total Project Cost:** \$650,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$650,000

**Portfolio:** Community Infrastructure

#### [Balmattum Hill – Mountain Bike Track](#)

The development of a mountain bike facility at Balmattum Hill has been a key element in the Strathbogie Shire Council Plan since 2014 and remains a high priority. Balmattum Hill is situated on the outskirts of Euroa approximately 3km from the town's centre. The building of an all-abilities mountain bike facilities at this site will result in substantial increase in visitation to the town by family groups and mountain bike enthusiasts. It provides an attraction for mountain bike enthusiasts travelling from Melbourne to visit other mountain bike facilities in the north-east completing existing facilities and the visitor experience for those travelling to the region.

Strathbogie Shire's tourism opportunities are headlined by the extraordinary natural assets and environment within the Strathbogie area, with an abundance of rivers, lakes, mountains, forests, farmland and national parks for visitors to explore.



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Strathbogie Shire and the Euroa community have undertaken considerable work over the past 6 years to develop the concept of a mountain bike trail at Balmattum Hill. We are seeking funding for the development of detailed planning activities which will allow Strathbogie Shire and the Euroa community to conduct the necessary investigations, detailed planning to bring the concept to an infrastructure investment ready stage.

**Total Project Cost:** \$450,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$450,000

**Portfolio:** Tourism and Recreation

### Sales Yard Biosecurity Truck Wash

Our Saleyard committee and users understand that hygiene and sanitation play a critical role in the prevention of spreading of disease. Biosecurity of our agriculture industry has never been more important, particularly in a post Covid environment. The biosecurity truck wash will see the development of a specifically designed bio secure truck wash to accommodate small transport vehicles up to large b-doubles. Trucks and transport vehicles that exit a saleyards premise must be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly to prevent the spread that can happen through the movement of vehicles and equipment.

This much needed facility will be available 24/7 and uniquely located to draw from a broader region to support agribusiness to thrive and prosper. By implementing biosecurity measures in day-to-day transport operations, it aims to improve on-farm biosecurity across the region to minimising production losses and unnecessary costs. Biosecurity at the local level underpins regional biosecurity, which in turn underpins national biosecurity.

**Total Project Cost:** \$450,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$450,000

**Portfolio:** Agriculture



## Towong Shire

### Telecommunications Towers and Last Mile Connectivity Program

Telecommunications towers at Burrowye and Shelley are required to address significant mobile blackspots within the region, ensuring reliable communication and digital connectivity for emergency services, residents, and commercial operations. A last mile connectivity program will complement the towers, targeted at the remote valleys across Towong Shire which have no or limited access to mobile telephone reception.

The project will establish sub-networks at the edge of the existing telecommunications network providing connection to householders in remote valleys. It will have a major impact on the resilience and safety of some of the Victoria's most bushfire prone areas. Successful delivery of the program would provide a full-scale pilot that could be translated across Australia for remote areas.

**Total Project Cost:** \$5,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$5,000,000

**Portfolio:** Telecommunications and Disaster Preparedness

### Our Bellbridge Our Future

Building the capacity of services in the Berringa Peninsula area is key to supporting regional growth. The development of an integrated community, childcare and kindergarten centre and commercial services precinct including a café, brewery, and boat club facilities will see the Peninsula's infrastructure ready to support its growing population, and position Bellbridge as the key service centre. A new integrated community centre will support the delivery of community services to the growing town of Bellbridge, increase social opportunities for existing and new residents and position the town for the future. A unique, architecturally designed Bellbridge Boathouse will become an iconic regional epicurean attraction synonymous with Lake Hume, broadening the region's current offering, and encouraging dispersal of visitors into regional areas from nearby Albury Wodonga.

**Total Project Cost:** \$12,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$12,000,000

**Portfolio:** Community Infrastructure

### Corryong Integrated Community Centre

Establishment of a multipurpose integrated family and community centre in Corryong to deliver integrated community, library, maternal child health, childcare, and kindergarten services. This centre will improve support for the regional cross border community, build community connections, and provide additional capacity to local community service organisations to expand their operations.



**Total Project Cost:** \$7,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$7,000,000

**Portfolio:** Community Infrastructure

### [Benambra Corryong Road Upgrade](#)

The Benambra – Corryong Road (C545) is 137 km long and links the Towong Shire, Upper Murray town of Corryong, through Nariel Valley into the Australian Alps to Benambra in East Gippsland. 70km requires upgrade and sealing to establish a reliable and safe link between East Gippsland, North-East Victoria, and Southern New South Wales; as well as providing alternate access to Canberra. The three alternative routes available in linking these two destinations are longer and often inadequate and unsafe due to adverse weather conditions.

The project aims to achieve reduced travel times, save on fuel usage and general wear and tear of vehicles for users, improved public safety and access for emergency services. Increased employment opportunities and economic benefits to communities through tourism and development and long-term financial benefits for governments by minimising maintenance and repair costs to the unsealed section and distributing heavy vehicle traffic across the arterial road network.

**Total Project Cost:** \$40,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$40,000,000

**Portfolio:** Transport and Tourism

### [High Country Rail Trail Extension](#)

Development of Victoria's longest rail trail creating an iconic cycle path linking the Victorian High Country between Wodonga and Corryong this project will build the region's economic development opportunities through increasing tourism visitation and multiday cycle experiences. This project will see 46 km of trail upgraded to link Corryong to the existing 80km of High-Country Rail Trail which traverses from Wodonga, through Tallangatta, and onto Shelley.

Traversing through diverse and offering breathtaking scenery the completion of the High-Country Rail Trail will provide a hero tourism product for the region. The high yielding cycle tourism market will greatly assist in the economic recovery of the region.

**Total Project Cost:** \$12,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$12,000,000

**Portfolio:** Recreation and Tourism



## Rural City of Wangaratta

### Grit and Resilience Program – Mental Health

The Grit and Resilience Program has had extraordinary success since the Federal Government funded a trial program in 2019 in Wangaratta in response to high suicide rates and community-based activism. The program brings together a range of partner agencies across the community who support it. The recent Royal Commission into the Mental Health System of Victoria highlighted the impact the program has had, and will continue to have, in Wangaratta. The Commission recommended the establishment and recurrent funding of ‘community collectives’ to support community-led activity that promotes social connection and inclusion in each of the state’s 79 local government areas.

The Rural City of Wangaratta is seeking \$300,000 per year through the federal and state governments to support a sustainable model for the Grit and Resilience Program in Wangaratta. The mental health and community services sector within the municipality consists of active and engaged partner agencies – including Northeast Health, Gateway Health, Victoria Police, Headspace, Albury Wodonga Health and Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$300,000 per year, ongoing
<b>Other Information:</b>	Open to co-fund
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Mental Health

### Organics Processing Plant

In 2020, Council developed the Wangaratta Organics Processing Plant, now in operation for almost two years. This project would increase the capacity of the existing plant and provide a local processing facility that will enable the acceleration of other councils to commence a full food and garden organics service, or to operate their existing service more efficiently, and with better environmental outcomes.

A full and comprehensive business case for the facility has been developed detailing both the physical and fiscal requirements of an expansion of the facility to 25,000 tonnes and beyond. The current license for this plant allows for the processing of 5,200 tonnes of organic material per annum however, the current set up has a capacity of 12,000 tonnes per annum.

This project would increase that capacity even further to 25,000 tonnes per annum so that the facility can service the Hume region of Northeast Victoria - becoming a true regional facility. The State Infrastructure Plan and the Regional Waste Management Plan identifies Wangaratta as a potential regional facility being ideally and centrally located in the region and right on the Hume Freeway.



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It is estimated 10 full time jobs would be created during construction with direct value-add and indirect consumption adding a further \$3 million to the local economy. With the increased processing capacity of the facility, it is expected that a further 5 full-time jobs will be created with a supply chain and value-add impact of \$3.3 million to the local economy. Victorian organic waste is estimated to account for 35% of household waste with recovery rate of only 43% in 2018. Removing organics from landfill saves 400kg CO<sub>2</sub>e (Carbon dioxide equivalent) per tonne of organic waste. With the plant at full capacity, it will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 10,000t per year or 30,000,000km in a medium sized car.

Based on an additional 20,000 tonnes, an analysis of the cost of transport and processing at facilities further afield, versus bringing it to Wangaratta, would result in annual savings of up to 33% per year to other Councils. The expansion to 25,000 could be completed within 2 years subject to material lead time and EPA approval.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$15,500,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$8,000,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Waste Management

#### [Benalla-Whitfield Road Upgrade](#)

The Benalla – Whitfield Road is a key link for rural communities in the upper reaches of the King Valley (Whitfield, Whitlands, and Myrrhee). It is increasingly being used as a key road for visitor movement throughout the valley. The road is narrow, and winding, with steep drop offs, and many hazards. The subbase pavement is poor, and the increasing impact of climate change on gravel roads makes this road a consistent issue for maintenance in both dry and wet conditions. Locally there is a significant crash history over several years. This project will see the last remaining 6km of gravel upgraded and sealed. This section of road is the last unsealed designated collector road within the municipality. The project construction will create 18 full-time jobs during construction phase. The estimated combined total output of direct, supply-chain and consumption effects of these additional jobs and construction activity will equate to up to \$5.75 million towards the local economy.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$5,000,000
<b>Other Information:</b>	Open to co-fund
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Road and Transport

#### [Wangaratta-Whitfield Road Upgrade](#)

The Wangaratta-Whitfield Road Upgrade will improve a 22km stretch of road running from Moyhu to Whitfield with works including widening and shoulders, improvements to blind spots and resealing the road in several sections to bring it up to the required quality. As a major arterial road that services almost half of the municipality, the road is of inadequate quality and too narrow to service the thousands of local, agricultural and tourism vehicles that pass along it every day. The quality and width of the road is also a significant concern for cyclists.



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The region is fast becoming known as a cycling destination; therefore, the issue of safety and shared use is of paramount concern. Further upgrades required include barriers, tactile indicators, and signage. From a direct increase in economic output of \$15 million it is expected that 26 jobs will be created during construction and the corresponding increase in direct value-added, flow on supply-chain effects in terms of local purchases of goods and services, and the indirect impacts would result in an increase to value-added of \$7.8 million to the local economy.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$15,000,000
<b>Other Information:</b>	Open to co-fund
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Road and Transport

## Prosecco Road Tourism Project

The King Valley to Milawa region is incredibly picturesque - surrounded by mountains, rivers and rolling vineyards. The area is a flourishing food, wine and cycling destination. The objective of the King Valley is to achieve sector ownership of the Australian Prosecco market. The 'Prosecco Road' project will build global acknowledgment of the brand and position the King Valley as Australia's premier Prosecco region. To achieve the King Valley's visitor economy potential as a premium destination, a range of enhancements and enabling infrastructure investment is required. This includes much needed improvements to public amenity, infrastructure, trail connectivity and accommodation.

In 2021 Tourism North East developed the 'Activating King Valley Prosecco Road Plan' and three supporting business cases which identify key actions and indicative costings for investment.

Investment in the three key project areas is expected to drive the King Valley visitor economy from an existing \$268m in output and 1,267 in jobs to \$369m in output and 1,734 jobs once projects are completed and operational. With 'The Prosecco Road' brand proposition, additional experiences that broaden and diversify the offering of tourism drivers to the valley are also required, with specific focus on the cycle/walking, family, outdoor and arts visitation markets.

This project focuses on developing the Prosecco Trail and will include key township enhancements in the form of streetscaping and upgrades to amenities, road infrastructure, support to the agricultural sector, development of tourism products such as farmgate sales, cellar door connections, gravel gridding cycle tracks, accommodation, and nature-based activities.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$53,100,000
<b>Private Investment (Hotel):</b>	\$30,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$22,100,000
<b>Other Information:</b>	Open to co-fund and private sector investors
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Tourism and Community Infrastructure



## Wangaratta Aerodrome and Industrial Precinct

The Wangaratta Aerodrome currently plays a key role in supporting a range of businesses, services and activities including emergency and charter services, recreational aviation, pilot training, heritage conservation and tourism. The strategic revitalisation and activation of the aerodrome will ensure its longevity and economic viability in addition to supporting business and community needs.

With connections directly onto the Hume Freeway and significant land availability, the precinct presents a unique opportunity to support a regional freight and logistics facility. The area is also suitable for a variety of industrial and warehouse uses, such as agricultural value adding manufacturing to storage. Enhanced infrastructure upgrades, taxiway extensions, and tourism activation will ensure the Wangaratta Aerodrome will be recognised as one of the best recreational airports in regional Victoria. The redevelopment will also better accommodate an increase in the number of emergency service uses either by air ambulance, police, and air firefighting.

Existing local businesses within the Aerodrome precinct will have the capacity to generate increased regional income and create further employment opportunities. Larger hanger facilities will meet market demand for aeronautical services including fabrication and mechanics which will generate significant economic activation and employment. Additional infrastructure to the airside in the form of new recreational hangars and upgrades to taxiways will encourage increased aviation activities, tour operators and aviation enthusiasts to the precinct and support the growing need to cater for air emergency response services within our region.

The **Airport Precinct** part of the project will cost **\$20.52 million** and includes:

### **Runway and Taxiway Pavement Strengthening Upgrades - \$8.2 million**

To facilitate ongoing use of the aerodrome and support code C aircraft, emergency services, business, and tourism operators.

### **Wangaratta Terminal Upgrades - \$320,000**

Refurbish and repurpose the Wangaratta Terminal into useable business space for commercial use such as boardroom/office space to facilitate meetings, coworking spaces and area to support on ground operations in times of need for emergency services.

### **Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5 - \$11.5 million**

Extension of aprons and taxiways, building of new commercial hangers & hobby hanger infrastructure, road & infrastructure upgrades.

Council has allocated a contribution of **\$4.97 million** towards airport precinct infrastructure within its long-term financial plan.

The **Industrial Precinct** part of the project will cost **\$7.7 million** and includes:

### **Infrastructure Services - \$3.2 million**



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Infrastructure Design and Development Plan (\$250K), Infrastructure services upgrades - Drainage, Sewage, Power, Gas from Wangaratta to the aerodrome precinct (\$3m). Will provide the precinct with required services and allow for future development of the area by developers. (Costs are indicative as detailed infrastructure design plans still to be undertaken).

### **Industrial Precinct Subdivision - \$4.5 million**

Detailed design and Subdivision Development Plans (\$500k), Infrastructure services (Drainage, Sewage, Power, Gas) and subdivision road infrastructure. (Costs are indicative as detailed design subdivision plans still to be undertaken – Council will advocate for private development of site).

This call for funding follows \$413,500 from the Commonwealth Government in 2021, to fully realise the potential of the precinct.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$28,220,000
<b>Council Contribution:</b>	\$4,970,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$23,250,000
<b>Other Information:</b>	Open to State co-fund and private sector investors as well
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Aviation Infrastructure

### [\*\*Wangaratta Creative Precinct Expansion Project\*\*](#)

The Wangaratta Creative Precinct is a vision that sees the co-development of the Wangaratta Art Gallery with the Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre and the Wangaratta Visitor Information Centre, creating a holistic and vibrant creative precinct. The current site holds two successful, yet independent cultural services offering diverse and inspiring programming. The two venues both face major barriers of accessibility, synergy and activation for local visitors and tourists. The constraints within the existing facilities include a lack of space for expansion for programming and major exhibitions, and a lack of quality conference facilities that could attract large new events.

This project will continue to activate the CBD precinct area of Wangaratta and directly link the existing cultural infrastructure to the successful Railway Precinct Project completed in May 2021. Connecting the Creative Precinct to the Railway Precinct through Docker and Norton Streets will bring many opportunities to expand and enhance creative offerings in Wangaratta. It will also incorporate a modernised Visitor Information Centre, promoting a contemporary visitor and tourist experience to our dynamic regional city.

Amplifying and unlocking cultural economy offerings will attract new residents and improve the region's growth. This will be a tourism driver to the city and will tap into the cultural tourism growth market of the current desire for arts and cultural experiences, day trips and overnight stays. The project will allow for future regional tours of arts festivals, exhibitions, and performances.



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The project will generate up to 148 jobs over ten years through construction and regional tourism, with over 109 of those jobs generated within the first year. Regional tourism and economic benefit income is also projected to be \$8.69 million in the first year, growing to \$12 million by year ten. An annual visitor spend of \$32.9 million and over 189,000 annual visitors is also anticipated by year ten.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$18,500,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$18,500,000
<b>Other Information</b>	Open to co-fund and private philanthropic suppliers
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Arts, Culture, Tourism and Community Infrastructure



## City of Wodonga

### Baranduda Fields

Baranduda Fields is a precinct of major regional significance offering unique and inclusive spaces for a variety of social interactions and recreation activities. Located at the heart of the Wodonga's growth centre, it will be the largest multifunctional sports and community precinct between Melbourne and Sydney. It will play an important role in servicing local residents as well as North East Victoria.

Wodonga Council is seeking \$24.8 m to complete Stage 2 works that will expand functionality of the regional sporting precinct and complement the initial works that commenced in 2021. Proposed works include installation of a third synthetic soccer field, second AFL football and cricket oval with large pavilion and grandstand. Total output, including all direct, supply-chain and consumption effects will increase by up to \$49.5 million. 36 direct jobs and 67 indirect jobs also expected to be created, with direct and indirect wages and salaries will increasing by \$9 million and an addition \$17.5 million in direct and indirect value added to the economy.

**Total Project Cost:** \$24,800,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$24,800,000

**Portfolio:** Sports, Recreation and Community Infrastructure

### Gateway Island

Gateway Island has the potential to develop into a major drawcard, attracting travellers off the Hume Freeway to enjoy a recreational and cultural revival during long journeys. It also has the potential to deliver on the long-held community desire to open up the waterfront and provide access to the river.

The island features a mix of natural environs, economic and tourism opportunities in and around Gateway Village and the Gateway Lakes event precinct. The majority of the land is Crown and council owned with several parcels of private land.

The area has been master planned and broken into several key precincts offering new places, experiences and event opportunities. One of the private sites on the market has been acquired by a private investor so there is an opportunity to leverage this private investment to further activate this precinct. Discussions are under way with the Federal Government on a proposal to transfer land holdings - consisting mainly of the quarry as well as some farmland and a homestead - to council.

Total output, including all direct, supply-chain and consumption effects will increase by up to \$20 million. 15 direct jobs and 27 indirect jobs are also expected to be created, with direct and indirect wages and salaries increasing by \$3.5 million and an additional \$7 million in direct and indirect value added to the economy.

**Total Project Cost:** \$10,000,000

**Already Received:** \$2,500,000



**Further Commonwealth Contribution:** \$7,500,000

**Portfolio:** Tourism and Community Infrastructure

### [Hothouse Theatre Redevelopment](#)

This project will assist to kick start Wodonga's creative industry by giving new life to one of the region's key cultural tourism assets – the Hothouse Theatre. HotHouse Theatre is the only regionally located producing theatre company in Australia, with a rich and celebrated history in commissioning, producing, nurturing, and presenting new, contemporary Australian theatre. The company offers professional creative development opportunities and education through theatre training and drama programs and engages the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD communities as well as focusing on young artists.

Total output, including all direct, supply-chain and consumption effects will increase by up to \$10 million. 7 direct jobs and 13 indirect jobs are also expected to be created, with direct and indirect wages and salaries increasing by \$2.1 million and an addition \$3.5 million in direct and indirect value added to the economy.

**Total Project Cost:** \$5,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$5,000,000

**Portfolio:** Arts, Culture and Community Infrastructure

### [Wodonga Creek Activation](#)

Improved access to and activation of Wodonga Creek provides the opportunity to promote an active and healthy lifestyle for residents and visitors, by encouraging greater use of the city's natural assets and recreational facilities and through enhancing the attraction of Wodonga Creek as a recreational and tourist destination. Infrastructure will include providing water access, paddling, and swimming areas, seating and viewing locations, picnic tables, toilets, barbecue areas and play areas including a splash park. Two distinct precincts will be activated including Diamond Park and Wright Road Precincts. The project includes access and path linkages, wayfinding signage and public art installation.

Total output, including all direct, supply-chain and consumption effects will increase by up to \$11 million. 8 direct jobs and 15 indirect jobs are expected to be created, with direct and indirect wages and salaries increasing by \$2 million and an addition \$3.9 million in direct and indirect value added to the economy.

**Total Project Cost:** \$5,560,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$5,560,000

**Portfolio:** Environment, Tourism and Community Infrastructure

### [Community and Commercial Space](#)

The construction of a modern multipurpose commercial and community complex in the southern end of Wodonga's Central Business Area (CBA) will serve as an important contributor to the social, cultural



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and economic activity of the precinct through the development of infrastructure which supports existing and diverse new community and commercial functions. Businesses in the CBA have been negatively impacted by Covid and border closures, so it is critical that development continues to be planned for and delivered to continue to strengthen the southern end of the CBA.

Initial scoping for this site identified a range of potential mixed-use options ranging from a curated historical exhibition space to complement the library-gallery and to draw on and support the visitor economy and enhance visitor experience, hospitality offering, and commercial space for a mix of diverse businesses stimulating new jobs for Wodonga.

Stage One will cost \$440,000 and will include a concept and feasibility study to assess the potential of a repurposing the Senior Citizens' facility into a multipurpose site. Stage Two, which involves detailed design and construction, would cost \$6 million. Total output, including all direct, supply-chain and consumption effects will increase by up to \$12.4 million. 13 direct jobs and 7 indirect jobs are expected to be created, with direct and indirect wages and salaries increasing by \$2.5 million and an addition \$4.7 million in direct and indirect value added to the economy.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$6,440,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$5,560,000
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Environment, Tourism and Community Infrastructure



## Key Stakeholder Priority Projects

### Hume Region Local Government Network

The Hume Regional Local Government Network (HRLGN) is a long-standing alliance of 12 regional and rural local governments. HRLGN advocates for policies, projects and initiatives that will support the regional economy, and have a positive impact on communities across the Hume Region. HRLGN have identified the following projects as additional priorities from a region-wide perspective:

- **Wodonga Logic Logistics Hub.** The Hub needs enabling infrastructure for it to provide maximum benefit to the regional economy. \$15.2 million to improve road infrastructure would create jobs in Wodonga while positioning it to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the development of inland rail. The upgrades have been designed and are tender-ready.
- **Accelerated Implementation of the Ovens Murray Plan and Goulburn Regional Digital Plan**
- **Development of the Northern Rail Plan, including fast rail between Melbourne and Albury**
- **Establish a Renewable Energy Zone for the Central Northern and Ovens Murray region**
- **Hume Region Affordable Housing Review.** Recent affordable housing announcements are welcomed however there is more to do and this is a region wide issue. A full review of the Hume region ask for affordable housing will allow existing funding to be efficiently placed and future funding targeted to real solutions.
- **Support the development of an Electric Vehicle Network.** The state-wide feasibility study 'Charging the Regions' shows that EV access in the regions could generate \$25 million in tourism spend over 10 years as EV use increases. The Victorian Greenhouse Alliances are advocating for a state-wide network.
- **Activating Lake Eildon Master Plan**

Lake Eildon is Victoria's largest inland water storage and plays a key role in both irrigation and recreation. It has suffered from a lack of investment over the past two decades and exacerbated by long-term drought; and its role as a tourism asset suffers from a lack of supporting infrastructure to facilitate investment. Stage 2 of Lake Eildon Masterplan includes game-changer projects for which business cases have been completed, including:

Mt Pinniger and Eildon Premier Nature-Based Precinct: The total project cost is \$16.2 million. Seeking \$5.2 million for a walking trail and iconic lookout structure. The project will create 96 jobs in construction and 119 ongoing jobs.

Fry Bay and Gough's Bay Nature-Based Precinct: Seeking \$1.9m (total project: \$23.9m) for mountain bike, walking trails, and lookout. 114 construction jobs, and 73 ongoing jobs.



## Alpine Resorts

### Ten Year Visitor Economy Development Plan

The Victorian Alpine Resorts are iconic tourism attractions and a key economic driver in the region.

Five of the six resorts – Falls Creek, Lake Mountain, Mt Buller, Mt Hotham, Mt Stirling – are within the electorate of Indi, with Mt Baw Baw being the one exception.

The resorts contribute \$2.5 billion in economic output, employing over 10,100 people and attracting over 1.3 million visitors in 2019. Visitation generates 9 per cent of all regional visitor economy jobs and visitor spend in Victoria, and 28 per cent of all tourist visitors to the High Country.

There is strong latent demand for Alpine experiences in Victoria. The resorts have the potential to increase the number of annual visitors from 1.1 million to 1.9 million during the snow season, and from 0.2 million to 0.9 million during the green season.

However, low public sector investment has limited the ability of the resorts to realise this potential and achieve the vision of a year-round visitor economy.

There are over 100 projects across the six resorts available for public sector investment which will deliver record levels of future growth.

**The resorts require a total of \$439 million in public and \$298 million in private funding over 10 years to implement this game-changing investment.**

10 Year Investment	Public Sector	Private Sector	Total
<b>Victorian Alpine Resorts</b>	<b>\$439M</b>	<b>\$298M</b>	<b>\$737M</b>
Mt Buller/Stirling	\$140M	\$67M	<b>\$207M</b>
Falls Creek	\$112M	\$119M	<b>\$231M</b>
Mt Hotham	\$82M	\$95M	<b>\$177M</b>
Mt Baw Baw	\$78M	\$19M	<b>\$97M</b>
Lake Mountain	\$26M	-	<b>\$26M</b>



The strategic projects span **four key investment areas**:

Investment	Public	Private	Total
<b>Vibrant, accessible, and diverse alpine villages:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amenity, beautification and placemaking projects including landscaping, lookouts, public art and placemaking, village lighting, village squares, and outdoor break out spaces to increase visitor satisfaction and stay length.</li> <li>Village community and visitor amenity buildings to provide indoor spaces for breakout, rest and protection from the weather. These buildings will centralise public amenity and improve the visitor experience, particularly for the daytrip and snow play market.</li> <li>Projects to diversify accommodation stock and provide experiential accommodation to meet visitor demand.</li> <li>Commercial development including diversification of retail, food and beverage offerings, night life and other commercial activities, and to encourage additional visitor spend and year-round village activation.</li> </ul>	\$112m	\$184m	\$296m
<b>Infrastructure to enable sustainable growth</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transport projects to address a range of mountain access, parking capacity and road quality issues as well as pedestrian and access issues.</li> <li>Critical services and infrastructure projects to remove barriers to growth in winter and to create demand in green season including water, sewer telecommunications and renewable power projects</li> <li>Affordable staff accommodation projects, to avoid reducing the amount of available visitor accommodation and help make commercial operators within the resorts employers of choice.</li> </ul>	\$179m	\$45m	\$224m
<b>Compelling and quality winter experiences for all visitors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in snowmaking, expansion of snow play zones, night-time snow play projects, and other diversification of the traditional snow experience will help to secure the future of the winter experience.</li> </ul>	\$76m	\$55m	\$131m
<b>Motivating green season products and experiences:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of iconic walking experiences to motivate visitors in green season. This will include low intensity and view oriented short walks with architecturally designed experiences such as the Hotham Heaven Walk.</li> <li>Investment in mountain biking across all resorts, including trail upgrades and extensions within the Mt Buller mountain bike park and continued investment in Falls Creek mountain biking experiences.</li> <li>A range of low intensity activities such as alpine coasters and ziplines, playgrounds, and pump tracks.</li> </ul>	\$71m	\$15m	\$86m
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$439m</b>	<b>\$298m</b>	<b>\$737m</b>



The impact of this investment, combined with the current economic contribution of the resorts as of 2019, will double the economic contribution of the Resorts to Victoria by 2031. A total of 2.7 million visitors across the Resorts will generate \$4.8 billion in direct and indirect expenditure, 20,400 ongoing annual jobs and \$2.1 billion GSP.

	Visitors	Output	Jobs	GSP
Current (2019)	1.3 M	\$2.5 B	10,133	\$1.1 B
Additional (2031)	1.4 M	\$2.3 B	10,300	\$1 B
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.7 M</b>	<b>\$4.8 B</b>	<b>20,400</b>	<b>\$2.1 B</b>

## Priority Projects – Mt Hotham

### Mt Hotham Business, Visitor and Community Centre

Mt Hotham is looking to develop a new commercial and administrative precinct that will provide the resort with a much-needed village hub. A key feature of this precinct will be the Mt Hotham Business, Visitor and Community Centre, which will centralise public amenity and range of new services and experiences in one facility. This includes a visitor centre and transport interchange, retail offering, commercial gym and office/operational space for a range of public, private and not-for-profit entities. This has been prioritised for funding due to the multifaceted nature of the facility and its ability to deliver triple bottom line outcomes for the resort in one icon development.

**Total Project Cost:** \$16,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$15,000,000

### Hotham Heaven Walk and Trails Upgrade

Mt Hotham aspires to be the lead walking tourism destination in Victoria, leveraging its 360-degree vistas of the Australian Alps and stunning natural assets to deliver a world class walk experience. In support of this goal, Mt Hotham is looking to upgrade and expand its existing trail network to better meet market demand, and also develop a new iconic tourism attraction called the ‘Hotham Heaven Walk’. Stretching from one end of the resort to the other, the Hotham Heaven Walk will feature cantilevered walkways and architecturally designed features and lookouts that will delight and inspire visitors, ensuring that it acts as major tourism driver for the High Country.

**Total Project Cost:** \$22,500,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$21,000,000



## Public Safety, Access and Amenity Upgrade

While Mt Hotham features striking natural assets, its urban amenity is old and tired, lacking visual appeal and intuitive form. This project will lift the entire resort offering, including placemaking initiatives (landscaping, lighting, walkways etc), verge and carpark sealing, and the upgrade of resort bus stop and transit areas. Collectively, the program will improve public access and safety; enhance the visitor experience; and improve operational efficiencies and environmental outcomes.

**Total Project Cost:** \$11,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$10,000,000

## Mt Hotham Alpine Arts Installation Series

Hotham is looking to diversify its year-round tourism offering through the installation of a series of artistic installations that provide people with reasons to visit and spend time in-resort, generating yield opportunities for mountain businesses. This project involves the installation of large, high-impact, permanent sculptural pieces across the resort's five key resort precincts, which draw from the natural environment, traditional owner heritage and ski field history.

**Total Project Cost:** \$1,500,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$1,500,000

## Priority Projects – Falls Creek

### Falls Creek Emergency Response Village Road Connections

To facilitate further growth and in order to ensure safe travel around the village precinct, the village road network needs to resolve a series of dead ends, which make navigation for large vehicles difficult (particularly CFA vehicles and medium sized heavy-duty transport).

This impacts safe access for fire response appliances and means constrained single direction egress for lodges. This project proposes to connect dead end roads to create a simple loop-based system allowing larger vehicles to easily navigate the road network in both summer and winter. The project will also consider future adaptation infrastructure needed for ski-to-the-node integration with the ski field to facilitate ski-in ski-out challenges posed by climate change.

**Total Project Cost:** \$3,500,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$3,100,000

### Critical Enabling Infrastructure - Lakeside Precinct

The Falls Creek Masterplan 2016 identifies development priorities extending from the Village to the south towards Rocky Valley Lake. In order to facilitate development, both public and private, key enabling infrastructure is required: safe, all seasons road access; provision of power, water, and sewer connections to existing reticulated resort networks; and provision of high-speed internet and a robust



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communications backbone. Delivery of this infrastructure will facilitate existing resort projects at the Lakeside Precinct and ensure other key projects, such as the Recreation & Events Centre, are provided with contemporary, supported critical utilities and safe access over summer and winter.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$3,200,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$2,900,000

### Falls Creek Recreation & Events Centre

The construction of the multi-purpose event, recreation and training centre will provide much needed facilities to a wide range of sporting groups and clubs, from the local primary school, and regional sporting clubs to elite athletes seeking the benefits of altitude training. The proposal incorporates a training field/oval alongside the universally designed venue facility that will expand the resorts reputation as an altitude training and event destination. The event centre will be a hub for the local community, providing much needed community space whilst also facilitating the hosting of local and regional community sports and training opportunities. In addition, the centre will be the base of the Australian Cross Country Ski team and enable the promotion of world class snow sports events.

At present, Falls Creek hosts the largest snow sports event in the southern hemisphere, the Kangaroo Hoppet. This 42-kilometre race attracts over 1000 competitors from 30 countries. The International Ski Federation have endorsed the event being made a World Cup event, with the completion of the venue and facilities. The Hoppet would then be Australia's only internationally recognised and accredited snow sport event. Applying universal design principles, the centre will offer Disabled Winter Sports and other groups catering to people with disabilities, a base for its members to utilise in both skiing and adaptive mountain biking camps and training. As a venue the centre will also host large scale indoor and outdoor events, from conferences, concerts, seminars, weddings etc.

This project is a critical part of the resorts green season adaptation planning and is shovel ready with all required permits in place for construction start.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$10,700,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	\$9,900,000

### Falls Creek MTB Park Network Expansion

Falls Creek Alpine Resort, along with Regional Development Victoria, has invested in 55kms of dedicated single track mountain bike trail. Staged over 5 development cycles, the existing network contributes to the North East Victorian cycling optimisation plan and the recognition of the region as a biking destination. The purpose built professionally designed trail has resulted in double digit visitation growth in the formal green season, attracting state and national mountain bike events, together with festivals and bespoke activations. The challenge for riders and resort stakeholders is providing a riding experience that facilitates both a longer stay opportunity for both whilst providing



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a progression perfect product to cater to a broader market. The resort tracks and trails expansion strategy identifies the need for the network to be expanded by a further 25kms of dedicated single track to deliver:

- Provision of a UCI accredited downhill course within resort - providing unique opportunity for global and national event hosting
- Increasing resort access to dedicated MTB single track
- Ensuring the network is focused on skills transition riding
- Increasing opportunities to host MTB events, including large international events
- Achieving the right mix of gravity and cross-country trails to respond to user needs
- Activating Cloud 9 area at the top of the mountain and lifting riders/sightseers from Slalom Plaza.
- Developing adaptive and accessible descent trails for disabled riders
- Undertaking trail planning, development and maintenance in a sensitive manner that responds to the social, environmental and cultural values of the resort and surrounding landscape.

**Total Project Cost:** \$2,300,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$2,000,000

### **Round The Lake Multi-use Trail**

This iconic project involves the completion of an 'around the lake' multi-use trail, circumnavigating Rocky Valley Lake and integrating with the existing trail network at Falls Creek. This trail will be flat gradient, designed as universal access and provide an unrivalled high plains nature based experience.

A section of the trail would include a pontoon across the highest body of water in Australia, providing a truly unique experience, like no other in Australia, supplementing the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing walking route at this location. The trail will be constructed in a manner which minimises ecological impact footprint, with a unique construction solution along the high-water mark of the lake. The project will be executed in partnership with AGL and Parks Victoria.

**Total Project Cost:** \$6,200,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** \$5,800,000

### Priority Projects – Mount Buller

#### **Releasing land and rebuilding the village square as a vibrant heart of the resort**

A public/private partnership to construct an undercover transport hub on top of a multi-storey carpark skinned with apartments. This, and replacing an existing road with a tunnel releases valuable real estate in the middle of the village to expand the range of visitor services and create a vibrant village heart. It also includes a public / private partnership to construct a new multi-storey, multi-purpose public shelter and toilets to deal with chronic shortages by more than doubling capacity, while adding retail spaces and capping the building with apartments. It then involves resurfacing the outdoor areas



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of the expanded village square including paving, seating, lighting, playground, and other visitor activations. This will in-turn unlock private investment in additional visitor activities which will be popular despite snow levels and increase year-round visitation.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$40,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	Co-fund opportunity

#### **Staff accommodation to address critical shortages impacting delivery of visitor services**

A public/private partnership to construct 2 buildings accommodating 240 staff on blocks within the Mt Buller village which are zoned for this purpose. It also involves the installation of 8x2-bedroom cabins at Mirimbah to accommodate 40 staff during the snow season on a fee to use basis and be hired out as riverside family holiday units during summer. Lack of staff accommodation is making it increasingly difficult to attract staff to provide visitor services and impacting business viability.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$9,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	Co-fund opportunity

#### **Priority Projects – Mount Stirling**

##### **Additional visitor attractions and improved amenities to increase visitation**

A new visitor centre to increase capacity and provide an educational base for an increased number of students who would be accommodated in three additional eco-camps. It also includes an iconic 15km extension to the existing horse trail network to connect Craigs Hut with Mt Stirling, and a 3-day Buller / Stirling cattlemans hut walk and camp grounds. This would increase visitation by 50% (4,000 p.a.) in the snow season and increase the number of commercial operators and visitors in summer.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$9,500,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	Co-fund opportunity

##### **Road and carpark sealing to improve visitor safety**

This project is to improve safety by sealing the 9km gravel road between Mirimbah and Mt Stirling (reducing geotech risk by routing water through culverts, removing the need to undertake seasonal grading, and allowing it to be cleared of snow during winter) and excavating and rebuilding the TBJ carpark (which was initially constructed on fallen tree trunks that are progressively rotting and resulting in sink holes and increased geotech risk).

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$11,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	Co-fund opportunity



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## Priority Projects – Lake Mountain

### Integrated Power Solution

Since the resort has been operating, Lake Mountain Alpine Resort has relied on diesel-generated power. The integrated power solution is designed to provide a continuous supply of three-phase power from solar and battery to any one of three diesel generators. A programmable logic device will monitor and select power sources according to load and stored energy conditions. The system will automatically select the most efficient energy source. A reduction of energy costs is accomplished with this solution and moving towards a more sustainable energy power option.

**Total Project Cost:** \$5,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** Co-fund opportunity

### Accommodation Project

A complete fit-out of upper-level Bistro would provide accommodation and conference space to generate a new revenue stream for Lake Mountain Alpine Resort. This will provide a new level of experience to guests during the day and throughout the evening.

**Total Project Cost:** \$5,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** Co-fund opportunity

### Portable Water Supply

Lake Mountain Alpine Resort currently has no potable water, relying on bottled water for staff and guests. This project will provide drinking water to our guests and our staff. In addition, the project will significantly reduce single-use plastic bottle use and contribute to a more sustainable solution and expectation of Lake Mountain Alpine Resort.

**Total Project Cost:** \$1,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** Co-fund opportunity

### Visitor Experience Building Project

In order to provide a greater visitor amenity, retail and guest services space, there is a requirement for the delivery of a new multi-level building that provides a link between the existing amenity buildings. Creating a welcoming visitor entry point, education spaces, repositioning & redesign of rental area, address resort accessibility issues.

**Total Project Cost:** \$10,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** Co-fund opportunity



## Mountain Bike Park Enhancements

The Lake Mountain Biking product has seen extensive development over the past 10 years and has been an instrumental driver of green season visitation. Continued enhancements are required to maintain interest levels, support all abilities of rider and continue our competitive position.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$5,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	Co-fund opportunity

Priority Projects – Mount Baw Baw

## Staff Accommodation

It is proposed to construct affordable on-resort staff accommodation facilities to support 120 winter seasonal staff within the Baw Baw Village. Adaptive family style cabins are proposed that can be hired to visitors during summer. Lack of staff accommodation is impacting business sustainability and reducing valuable higher yield public access accommodation capacity.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$4,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	Co-fund opportunity

## Visitor Welcome Hub, Indoor Recreation and Conference Facility

The development of a visitor centre ‘welcome hub’ will establish the resort as a gateway to the Mount Baw Baw National Park. This facility will act as an entry hub for resort services, for the Alpine walking trail, guided experiences, and deliver interpretive and educational outcomes for schools and families. To be constructed adjacent to the main day visitor car park, the facility includes multi-purpose indoor recreation facilities (emergency relief space, climbing and abseiling wall, multi-purpose sports court, all-weather outdoor education spaces) and meeting, conference, and event facilities.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$8,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	Co-fund opportunity

## Carpark, Roadway and Pedestrian Pathway Upgrades

Existing unsealed car parks require sealing to improve capacities, amenity and snow clearing efficiencies. New car parking spaces are needed to meet growing day visitor demand. Shared internal village roadways are in urgent need of re-sealing and addition of curbing and channelling to improve drainage and pedestrian safety. A protected pedestrian pathway connecting car parks to the Village is needed to get pedestrians off the main access roadway. Realignment of the Mt Baw Baw Tourist Road is needed at Chairlift Corner to support improved vehicle safety at a dangerous hairpin bend. Redesign of the entry precinct, including access lanes and chain bay, is urgently needed as well.

<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$8,000,000
<b>Commonwealth Contribution:</b>	Co-fund opportunity



## **Renewable Energy Power Solution**

The Baw Baw Village is remote to the national grid. The resort Microgrid energy power solution will be transformative for the resort. The resort plans to transition from high cost, inefficient and unreliable high emission carbon-based fuels to renewable energy. Options under consideration include solar PV, wind, micro-hydro, geothermal, short and long term storage, including hydrogen. This project will remove a significant barrier to sustainability and private investment at the resort.

**Total Project Cost:** \$5,000,000

**Commonwealth Contribution:** Co-fund opportunity



## Albury Wodonga Health

There are opportunities for the Commonwealth Government to co-fund, with state and local counterparts, up to \$341 million in priority service and infrastructure upgrade projects at Albury Wodonga Health ranging from proof of concept through to shovel ready.

### New Single-Site Hospital

Albury Wodonga Health is already one of the busiest regional health services in the state. As the population on the border grows, it's only going to get busier. People from all over Indi use Albury Wodonga Health services. We need a new hospital on the border before it is over capacity. Albury Wodonga Health runs one of the busiest regional health services in the state. Within 15 years, the population on the border will grow by a third. By 2040 we will need a hospital capable of handling 150,000 emergency presentations, 40,000 surgeries and 1,900 births every year.

The AWH Clinical Services Plan (2021) recommends that AWH increase the range and complexity of services it provides so that members of the local community can access the care that they need, close to home. It further recommends that all acute and sub-acute bed-based services be located on a single campus to improve patient safety, to increase the ability to provide higher acuity care and to create efficiencies for workforce and support services.

AWH has recently completed a master plan which identifies two main options to deliver the infrastructure required to achieve the Clinical Services Plan recommendations – a redevelopment on the existing Albury campus, or a new development on a suitable site in Albury or Wodonga. The unique nature of AWH as Australia's only cross-border health service means that collaboration between NSW and Victoria is required to deliver the necessary capital funding to build the new hospital. A Commonwealth co-contribution of \$300 million would offer a significant incentive for both states to commit to this high priority project.

**I am calling on the Commonwealth to commit at least \$300 million to the final masterplan to fund a new, single site world-class hospital on the border.**



## Research and Education Hub

A new, purpose-built research and education centre will be developed on the site of, or adjacent to, the Albury campus of Albury Wodonga Health, consistent with the Albury City Council's plans to develop a health precinct in the area. The centre will provide under-graduate and post-graduate student facilities including a simulation centre to support clinical training. AWH will work in partnership with the university sector to establish a strong translational research program including consideration of development of the Australian Rural and Regional Natural Disaster Health Research Institute to focus on the health impacts of natural disasters including drought, bushfire and pandemic and to develop new strategies in response.

### **Commonwealth Contribution: \$40 million**

## Brain and Mind Centre Albury – Phase 2

The new Brain and Mind centre opened in early 2020 and is providing community mental health and drug and alcohol services from a modern, purpose-built facility. Phase 2 would see the development of the second floor of the building to accommodate 38 additional workspaces, training facilities, student work areas, meeting rooms, storage and bathroom facilities to support the colocation of AWH's mental health access and immediate response teams and NSW TAFE to provide on-site training for the mental health workforce. This will create a one-stop shop for consumers and integrated care opportunities. Planning for Phase 2 is well progressed.

### **Commonwealth Contribution: \$1 million**



## Tourism North East

### TNE Marketing

To support a meaningful recovery of the visitor economy after the devastation of 2020, there is a need for demand driving activity of scale over a sustained period to raise awareness, drive consideration, and preference of Victoria's High Country as a destination.

This project aims to activate not only the latent demand within Tourism North East's (TNE) existing and potential target markets, but also new markets of visitors that the dual crisis of the bushfires and COVID-19 have presented as an opportunity to the region.

TNE will take a lead role in coordinating the regional tourism recovery efforts within the High Country, in conjunction with LGA and RMB partners, in order to generate positive outcomes for the region and sustain domestic tourism potential. TNE is seeking \$3.3 million over three years (2022–25) in funding to execute a multichannel, integrated marketing program targeting high-value consumers within the 'Lifestyle Leader' market, driving visitation, yield and dispersal across the region. This will dovetail into other projects including the launch of Victoria's High Country master brand, reimagining the High Country's visitor experience and industry and product development activity.

TNE has a proven track record of delivering successful domestic campaigns, most recently leveraging \$1.1 million in marketing spend into \$30 million in return to the visitor economy in 2019.

**Total Project Ask:** \$3,300,000

### TNE Digital Skills Program

The High Country aspires to achieve digital excellence, setting industry best practice for the use of digital technologies in all aspects of the region's tourism offering.

In 2019, Tourism North East secured \$243,000 from the Regional Skills Fund to deliver a digital upskilling program for the region's tourism operators. Launched in December 2019, the program provides industry partners with personalised training focused on developing the skills required to optimise online opportunities for both their business and the broader region.

The program is unaccredited, however the tourism industry is not looking to acquire formal qualifications, or embark on new digitally focused career pathways. They simply want to build the skills required to improve the digital capacity of their businesses. It is because of the low-commitment, practical and tactical nature of the program, it has been incredibly well received by industry operators.



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Since launching in December 2019, the Digital Skills Program has delivered over 1,000 business engagements (as of June 2021) and is scheduled to conclude in December 2023. Tourism North East is seeking a further \$150,000 to extend the delivery of the program to December 2025.

**Total Project Ask:** \$150,000

#### Regional Digital Signage Network

To reflect both the changing needs and behaviours of consumers, Tourism North East seeks to develop and implement an industry leading digital path to market that will revolutionise the visitor experience and make it easier for visitors to dream, plan and explore Victoria's High Country.

Delivered via a smartphone enabled platform, the application will act as a central hub of information for visitors, enabling them to maximise their stay when in Victoria's High Country and maintain a relationship with the area when out of region. In September 2020, Tourism North East was successful in obtaining \$750,000 of funding from the Victorian State Government to undertake this unique and exciting project. The project commenced in November 2020 and is due to be completed in May 2022.

Benefits of the initiative include:

- Strategic engagement with consumers
- Visitor centred experience with the ability to curate itineraries based on individual preferences. Increasing capacity to increase visitor yield
- Improved regional experience navigation (geo-mapping, including walking and cycling trails)
- Ability to communicate with visitors in real-time, such as push notifications

Digitally enabled signage is one of the core three initiatives identified in the Victoria's High Country future state vision for visitor servicing. Tourism North East is seeking a further \$500,000 to implement digitally enabled signage across the region.

**Total Project Ask:** \$500,000



## Thematic Funding Opportunities

### Renewable Energy

#### Local Power Fund

The renewable energy transition taking place in regional Australia is witnessing billions of dollars of investment in large-scale renewable energy projects. The benefits of this transformation – in terms of jobs, income, lower power prices, lower emissions, and greater power reliability – are clear and overwhelming. However, everyday regional communities do not always capture the full benefits.

Community energy, whereby everyday people come together to develop their own locally-owned and driven energy projects, is a compelling model for the next phase of the renewable energy transition in the regions. If communities themselves are empowered with the technical capabilities and the financial resources, they can develop their own energy projects, delivering more local jobs, more local buy-in, and more local opportunities for income diversification, than purely commercial operations.

In order to accelerate the deployment of community energy in Australia, I am proposing that the Government establish a dedicated fund to invest in locally-owned renewable energy projects in regional Australia. This proposal follows the tabling of my Australian Local Power Agency Bill in 2021 and the publication of my Local Power Plan in 2020. It is my clear view that regional Australia would be best served with a dedicated agency with sole focus on regional renewables, however in the absence of a standalone agency, an earmarked regional community energy fund within ARENA is an appropriate next-best policy mechanism.

**The proposed Local Power Fund would sit within ARENA and provide \$300 million of grants over four years, or \$75 million each year.**

### Mobile and Internet

#### Mobile Black Spot Funding

Indi has been incredibly successful at securing funding to fix mobile black spots, in great part due to the advocacy of the Indi Telecommunications Advisory group convened by my office. Indi is the most successful electorate in Victoria when it comes to securing funding, and the second most successful in the nation. In 2021 alone, we secured funding for 10 new mobile towers, from Cudgewa to Harrietville. There are still 46 priority black spot locations across the electorate that I am committed to fixing.

**The Government must increase funding in the next round of the Mobile Black Spot Program so that Indi can fund as many black spots as possible, as soon as possible. I also call on the Government to increase the cap on funds from \$500,000 to \$1 million so we can tackle the most complex cases.**



## Finish the NBN Build in Regional Australia

In September 2020, NBN Co established a \$300 million Regional Co-Investment Fund (RCIF) to finance local NBN infrastructure projects to deliver high speeds to households, businesses, and communities primarily in regional and remote areas currently served by NBNs Fixed Wireless and Satellite footprint. The RCIF calls on local governments to propose commercially viable projects for joint funding.

This proposal is unacceptable. It shows that the Commonwealth Government has failed to deliver on its commitment to complete the NBN build to a high quality in regional Australia and is attempting to pass the buck to capacity-constrained local governments instead of finishing the job.

**I call on the Government to remove the LGA co-fund component of the RCIF and instead provide \$300 million in direct capital funding to regional communities to ensure the NBN build is complete and accessible to all without forcing local government to foot the bill.**

## Housing

### Regional Housing Infrastructure Fund

Indi is facing a housing supply and affordability crisis. In 2018 the Government set up the National Housing Infrastructure Facility (NHIF) – a \$1 billion fund that offers concessional loans, grants, and equity to help critical housing-enabling infrastructure. This means new or upgraded infrastructure for electricity and gas, transportation and roads, water and sewerage, and telecommunications. It makes funding available to community housing providers, LGAs, and state government owned entities.

The NHIF is not effective and has only spent very little money. Its mandate is very restrictive, it cannot fund social infrastructure, and it cannot fund the types of infrastructure holding back developments, like childcare centres and schools. In 2020-21, the NHIF made just four funding commitments worth \$111m, far below its spending target. Overall, the NHIF has spent just \$411 million out of its full \$1 billion allocation. That funding has supported around 6900 dwellings across Australia, none of which are within the electorate, and none of which had a regions-specific focus.

**I am calling on the Government to establish a \$2 billion Regional Housing Fund (RHF) to be deployed over four years in regional Australia to unlock private investment in new houses by building the basic infrastructure needed for new housing development, including social infrastructure.**

## Tourism

### Regional Tourism Recovery Fund

The North East tourism industry, including the Alpine Shire and Victorian High Country, was heavily impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires, with widespread closures, evacuations and direct fire damage. The subsequent COVID-19 pandemic and recurrent lockdowns have resulted in an extended period of economic change and uncertainty for business operating across Victoria's High Country.



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The visitor economy is critical to the economic recovery of the region, accounting for over 20% of gross regional product and 25% of employment. Visitor, expenditure, and employment losses have continued to increase since January. In the six months to June 2020, the region lost up to 1.6 million visitors – approximately 95% of the business-as-usual market. Visitor expenditure also fell by between \$400 and \$639 million in the same period and up to 6,390 jobs were disrupted or lost. The \$250 million package for regional tourism announced in the special budget in October 2020 was welcome but falls far short of activating the potential of shovel-ready regional tourism projects.

**I am calling on the Government to establish a permanent Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund – similar to the now retired Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure program – to provide ongoing support for projects in regions with strong domestic tourism potential like Indi.**

## Aged Care

### Rural Aged Care Facility Fund

Recommendation 46 of the Aged Care Royal Commission called on the Government to introduce, from 1 January 2022, a capital grants program for building or upgrading residential aged care facilities to provide small-scale congregate living. Commissioner Briggs recommended that the amount be \$300 million in 2021-22, \$600 million in 2022-23, \$1 billion in 2023-24, and indexed to inflation thereafter. However, in its 2021-22 Budget the former Government allocated \$396.9 million over five years to enable aged care providers to make needed improvements to their buildings and build new services. This is less than \$80 million a year. Over the next four years, the Commonwealth is investing less than 10% into residential aged care than what the Royal Commission recommended.

**I am proposing the Government substantially increases funding for residential aged care capital grants by establishing a Rural Aged Care Facility Fund to fund new and upgraded residential aged care facilities in rural and regional Australia. My proposed fund would distribute \$1 billion over 4 years, or \$250 million in grants each year.**

### Bright Aged Care

Bright is the only township of its size in Victoria that does not have a high needs residential aged care facility after a provider handed back an 80-bed operating licence in 2021.

The Bright District Hospital Health Precinct Development will co-locate hospital, aged care, medical and allied health services, and health education services in Bright and surrounds. It will include a new 35 bed high care aged care facility with the potential for additional units leading to 49 beds. It will also include refurbishment of the existing hospital bed-based services and nursing facilities with new extensions for a production kitchen (servicing the new aged care facility as well) and community and allied health services to ensure the provision of an expanded range of allied and specialist services.



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The existing Hawthorn Village will be adapted for re-use as Alpine Institute's health education facility and accommodation centre to support the provision of international nurse education and health worker accommodation. The co-location of medical services under a land lease or private capital investment model is also possible. In December 2021, I hosted a roundtable with then Federal Minister for Regional Health David Gillespie for the purpose of securing funding for the project.

**I call on the Government to deliver \$26 million to develop the residential aged care component of the Bright District Hospital Health Precinct Development.**

## Health

### Rural Hospitals Infrastructure Fund

There are several smaller towns in the south of the electorate which may not see the immediate advantages of a new hospital on the border in Albury Wodonga, particularly Euroa, Mansfield, Alexandria, Yea and Bright. These towns also require funding to enhancing existing local health facilities through capital funding. The former Government abolished the previous National Rural and Remote Health Infrastructure Program (NRRHIP) which funded essential health infrastructure (capital works and equipment), and strategic service planning for small rural private hospitals. Less than 2 per cent of the Building Better Regions mega fund has gone towards hospital infrastructure. This is unacceptable at a time when rural health services are bearing the brunt of the ongoing COVID pandemic without dedicated support from the Commonwealth government.

**I am calling on the Commonwealth to establish a \$1 billion Rural Hospital Infrastructure Fund for essential health infrastructure (capital works and equipment) in regional areas, with an initial focus on funding for future COVID outbreaks and pandemics.**

### Mansfield District Hospital

The Mansfield District Hospital Master Plan involves the construction of a new hospital, including community health and high needs facilities, on new land in Mansfield. The plan was submitted to the Victorian Building Authority over two years ago in November 2019 and has yet to see further action.

Average local population growth more than tripled during the pandemic in Mansfield, heightening the need for upgraded facilities – particularly the Urgent Care Unit which is often at capacity during peak tourism seasons. The hospital also suffered approximately \$50,000 worth of damage during the recent earthquake in September 2021. The designated site is located on Highett Street behind Bindaree, with the plan able to be rolled out in stages depending on funding allocation and respective State and Commonwealth contributions.

**I call on the Commonwealth Government to engage with the State Government to commit funding to invest in the implementation of the Mansfield District Hospital Master Plan.**