

Strategic Regional Plan

2022-2025



An Australian Government Initiative

Acknowledgements

Traditional custodians

Take a moment to pause and feel the earth beneath our feet. To recall our place in this timeless, bountiful country.

We acknowledge, with deep respect, the traditional custodians of this land whose stewardship continues to grace this country as it has done for more than 65,000 years.

We pay our respect to Aboriginal elders from the past, in the present, and those who are striving today to bring their very special relationship with country to our social identity. We endeavour to honour the full depth of history this country knows, with gratitude and care.

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Preparing the plan

RDA Murray prepared this Strategic Regional Plan (SRP) in consultation with stakeholders from throughout the Murray region. Our thanks go to all those who contributed: their ideas, feedback and insights are invaluable in forming a clear and robust path of action for the next three years.

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Overlooking vineyards near Tumbarumba in the Snowy Valleys region

Message from RDA Murray Chair

Regional Development Australia Murray Inc (RDA Murray) is a not-for-profit incorporated association. The skillsets and leadership networks of our 10 voluntary board members reflect the wide-ranging mix of natural resources, industry, business, workforce, social and economic opportunity drivers across the whole region.

We bring strategic oversight, high-quality governance and leadership to drive connectedness for the development of the Murray region. I am very confident that with such a dynamic team we will continue making an impact, improving regional economic development across our southern NSW border region.

The RDA Murray Strategic Regional Plan (SRP) 2022-2025 provides a wide range of stakeholders, potential investors and policy-makers with an improved understanding of our region. Our SRP considers future opportunities and aspirations, the evolving economy, natural assets and our changing demographics. We are committed to working with our networks to enable a socially, economically and environmentally stable, but vibrant, community across our region. Creating communication pathways between our region and government is key to how we operate.

I am excited to present this SRP to support regional development stakeholders and their communities to identify collaborative and comparative advantages, manage regional growth pressures (including climate change), identify opportunities and address environmentally responsible economic development and infrastructure needs.

Mary Hoodless
Chairperson

Mary Hoodless (left) & Edwina Hayes in the RDA Murray head office at Albury

Message from RDA Murray CEO

RDA Murray exists to help activate the Murray region. We connect people with opportunities to build economic and social advantage. In essence, our work revolves around:

- facilitating regional economic development, investment, procurement and jobs
- connecting our region with government
- championing regional policy development
- coordinating regional strategy, and
- advocating for the interests of residents and businesses in the region.

RDA Murray has established a network of over 18,000 people and organisations who are engaged in understanding and enabling regional opportunity and advantage. Using their diverse networks, our well-qualified staff can organise and act on economic and social issues raised in the region.

RDA Murray is agile and responsive. Our standout competitive advantage is that we can prosecute ideas into practice or policy in a short time frame. We are constantly monitoring and responding to emerging issues as they arise.

We are truly focussed on bringing all the small moving parts together to create nationally significant scale and unlock new frontiers of growth and productivity in our region.

Edwina Hayes
*Chief Executive Officer and Director
Regional Development*



About RDA Murray

Our purpose

RDA Murray has a leadership and facilitative role. We work with all levels of government as well as business and community groups, to support the growth and development of the Murray region.

We have a clear purpose to continue to advocate for a strong and vibrant regional economy that harnesses competitive advantage, seizes on opportunities and attracts investment.

We achieve this through activating a broad range of stakeholders and industries for strategic collective impact.

RDA Murray is a source of information, an advocate for the region, a partnership builder and an enabler of change.

Our vision

The Murray region will be a more connected, skilled and diverse community, embracing innovation and opportunities for inclusion and economic prosperity for all.

Our mission

To provide leadership, foster innovation and support collaborative action at a local, national and global level, to realise the region's potential.

Our values

Our decisions and actions are underpinned by our core values of:

- Integrity
- Leadership
- High achievement.

We are courageous and ethical in our leadership, bringing people together, working hard and inspiring new thinking and innovative solutions.

Local grower inspecting his rice crop at Deniliquin.

Role of RDA Murray

The RDA Charter¹ is to operate as a network with all levels of government and the private sector to:

1. Facilitate regional economic development outcomes, investment, local procurement and jobs.
2. Promote greater regional awareness of and engagement with Australian Government policies, grant programs and research.
3. Improve Commonwealth regional policy-making by providing intelligence and evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on regional development issues.
4. Coordinate the development of a strategic regional plan, or work with suitable existing regional plans that will align with the Commonwealth's regional priorities.

In this context, RDA Murray defines our role as unlocking new frontiers of production and growth in the region. We collect evidence of, and analyse the opportunities and constraints. We connect stakeholders and influence policy to improve the progress of regional development.

RDA Murray leads the Murray Socio-Economic Activation Taskforce³ (MSEAT). This collaboration of southern NSW leaders gathers and shares intelligence thus ensuring issues of importance are accurately conveyed to all levels of government, industries and sectors in a manner which reduces duplication and red tape.

RDA Murray specialises in government relations, bringing peak bodies and local government together to amplify our regional messages. We build partnerships and collaborations to progress economic, social and environmental initiatives.

At the coalface of regional business, RDA Murray regularly meets with stakeholders, conducts research, analyses and interprets government policy in order to give strategic advice. We provide connections to help a wide range of enterprises emerge and flourish within our region.

RDA Murray regularly prepares departmental and ministerial briefs to share information and activate responsive government policy. We use our extensive communication network of over 18,000 contacts to disseminate information to our region around government grant funding and policy opportunities.

Building on the more macro approach of government, RDA Murray specialises in engaging at the village or local scale. As a result, we provide smaller injections of support to a larger number of stakeholders. We pay attention to people and their connections. Our research and interviews build an accurate picture of the region.

RDA Murray plays an active and facilitative role in our region with the aim of growing a strong and confident regional economy. As an important driver of change, RDA Murray strives to harness competitive advantages, seize economic opportunities and attract investment.

Key Messages for Investors

The road to growth at scale

With financial investment in workforce attraction and retention, housing, health, digital connectivity, education, childcare and aged care services sectors, we will achieve regionalisation and business expansion.

RDA Murray is confident that we can then progress our key priorities, thereby unlocking new frontiers of production and growth at scale.

We work to eliminate historical state biases and ensure accountable and equitable levels of investment in border communities where working as one community would benefit both states.

Paddy's River Falls near Tumbarumba

Achievements of RDA Murray

RDA Murray's key projects and initiatives during the past four years include:

Improving the Building Better Regions Fund strike rate

RDA Murray has facilitated more investment, supporting 33 successful projects resulting in \$33 million of regional investment. In 2021 alone, seven out of 18 Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF) applications were successful, significantly above the national average. Success came from our collaboration with local tourism peak bodies and local government support for grant writing. Our advocacy and lobbying skills also came into play.

Coordinating regional leadership

By establishing the Murray Socio-Economic Activation Taskforce³ (MSEAT) in 2020, RDA Murray brings regional leaders together in monthly online meetings to provide coal-face intelligence and feedback on government policy, and to collaborate on emerging issues and solutions. The combined knowledge of MSEAT is passed on through ministerial teleconferences, briefings and regular departmental advice.

Influencing COVID-19 public health and economic stimulus

RDA Murray focussed intensely on COVID-19 impacts, facilitating a collaborative cross-border response to the pandemic and contributing to more than 15 public health and economic stimulus policies. We closely monitored all sectors of government, community, business and industry and provided leadership through MSEAT, actively gathering and collating intelligence to inform our actions.

RDA Murray responded to COVID-19 impacts by gathering and synthesising information and contributing to regional briefings to National Cabinet. We addressed issues such as state border closures, access to workforce and services, and the longer term effects on housing workforce, supply chains and logistics. We brought together more than 30 organisations and agencies to support a Joint Statement outlining priority policy needs in response to NSW-VIC Border restrictions and Public Health Orders.



Couple enjoying a visit to Corowa Whisky & Chocolate

Achievements of RDA Murray

Addressing workforce constraints

RDA Murray actively supports multiculturalism, encourages welcoming communities and helps bring approximately 200 skilled workers to the region each year.

Capacity building

RDA Murray adds value to and builds capacity in all levels of government and business. Industry support in the region is at the core of what we do. For example, RDA Murray provides deep intelligence and sophisticated advocacy, grant writing support, governance and business reviews and network development.

Responding to natural disasters

RDA Murray Chair, Mary Hoodless, has been widely recognised for her personal efforts in assisting bushfire-affected community members to access community, government and charitable support. In their dual roles as Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers and RDA Murray executives, Ms Hoodless, Deputy Chair Brian Millar

and CEO Edwina Hayes have all provided invaluable advice and connections for government representatives and agencies to rebuild essential infrastructure, deliver welfare and assistance, and generally maintain community health, financial wellbeing and resilience.

RDA Murray provided summary intelligence on fire impacts. We collated and shared Local, State and Federal Government and cross-border experiences across all levels, from farmers and firefighters to the Prime Minister. This information provided valuable community-based input into the Bushfire Royal Commission, NSW Independent Bushfire Inquiry, National Bushfire Recovery Agency, Snowy Valleys and Victorian Recovery Committees, especially cross-border perspectives.

Dunns Road and Green Valley fires responses and lessons continue to require RDA Murray intelligence collection, strategy and advocacy. We provide advice and practical solutions to issues such as incompatible cross-border communications systems, digital connectivity and community social, financial, economic and mental wellbeing. RDA Murray continues to move towards longer term resilience planning and preparation for drought, bushfire and flood recovery.



Green Valley fire approaching Jingellic, January 2020

RDA Murray Region

The Murray region of NSW extends from the Snowy Mountains in the east, along the Murray River to the South Australian border in the west.

Our region is characterised by a network of cross-border communities, regional centres and small towns many of which contribute to the agricultural, hospitality and tourism, manufacturing and renewable energy sectors.

The Murray region plays an important role in connecting NSW, Victoria and South Australia due to its strategic transport routes and geographic position.

The Murray region is expected to grow strongly as a centre of production to meet both traditional and emerging markets. For instance, horticulture is becoming more significant as citrus fruits, grapes (table and wine) and nut (almonds and pistachios) production increases so does the level of advanced manufacturing in support of that industry.

The planned South-West Renewable Energy Zone is expected to deliver economic benefits and unlock energy generation capacity in parts of Murray and surrounding regions.

A variety of population trends is occurring at a sub-regional level. For instance, the pattern of younger people leaving for tertiary education but returning in their thirties. Ageing residents tend to drift from rural areas to regional centres, and Covid-19 has driven population growth through the regionalisation of workforce-age and skilled people. RDA Murray region is a popular destination for skilled migrants.

The region's main centre of Albury-Wodonga is currently the 20th largest city in Australia and expected to reach 124,000 residents by 2036 at an average annual growth rate of 1.7%².

Mildura, on our western boundary, is a regional centre of local economic and social significance as are cross-border communities all along the Murray River.

Improved digital connectivity, greater technology uptake by industries, the growth and availability of a skilled workforce and improved housing supply will all contribute to future growth and competitiveness in the Murray region.



Source: Geoscience Australia

RDA Murray Region

RDA Murray operates across a complex range of jurisdictions. There are:

- 10 Local Government Areas (LGA)
- Four Joint Organisations of Councils (JO)
- Two NSW Government Regions
- Two State electorates (Albury and Murray) and
- Two Federal electorates (Eden-Monaro and Farrer).

Cross-border communities

RDA Murray views cross-border communities as economic centres in their own right. Cross-border communities are generally the centre of regional economic zones but straddle local/state jurisdiction boundaries.

State Governments identify cross-border communities and recognise them as a single economic zone, but this does not diminish the daily bureaucratic obstacles faced by the residents and businesses operating across jurisdictions.

Daily life for these neighbouring border towns is often inextricably intertwined. While one may be the identified commercial centre, the other generally operates as the residential centre. There are clear historic reasons for this pattern of development.

General disruptions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic created division and exclusion in these communities for the first time in more than a century. There are ongoing negative social and economic ramifications from these unexpected and unplanned state border closures.

The region's prosperity is intrinsically linked to cross-border economic zones that are significantly dependent on the small number of bridges crossing the Murray River in the region, some of which cannot accommodate modern agricultural machinery and freight loads.

Both NSW and Victoria have Cross-Border Commissioners working on these locality-based constraints and opportunities.

- Khancoban - Corryong
- Tooma - Tintaldra
- Jingellic - Walwa
- Wymah Ferry
- Albury - Wodonga
- Howlong - Barnawatha
- Corowa - Wahgunyah & Rutherglen
- Mulwala - Yarrawonga
- Barooga - Cobram
- Moama - Echuca
- Barham - Koondrook
- Murray Downs-Swan Hill
- Koraleigh - Nyah
- Tooleybuc - Piangil
- Euston - Robinvale
- Buronga - Mildura
- Wentworth - Merbein

RDA Murray Sub-Regions

RDA Murray



The RDA Murray region, with a total population 137,686, is divided into three sub-regions: East, Central and West.

EAST - Population 93,858 (68%)

LGA	Population*	Centres of local significance
Albury	55,754	Albury
Federation	12,735	Boree Creek, Corowa, Howlong, Morundah, Mulwala, Oaklands, Rand, Urana
Greater Hume	11,020	Culcairn, Henty, Holbrook, Jindera, Walla Walla
Snowy Valleys	14,349	Jingellic, Khancoban, Rosewood, Tooma, Adelong, Batlow, Tumut, Tumbarumba

The Eastern sub-region is dominated by the major centre of Albury where economic drivers include manufacturing, logistics, education, healthcare, retail and tourism. Predominant industries in the Upper Murray (or Snowy Valleys LGA) are beef and forestry. The area is notable for its reliable higher rainfall and spectacular scenery and resultant strong visitor economy. Greater Hume is important for its agriculture, forestry and visitor economy and its emerging solar energy sector. Known for its arts, culture, heritage and visitor economy, Federation is a productive grain, wool, lamb and beef cattle growing area.

Examples of major projects

Circular Economy (private)
 Defence Estates – Riverina Redevelopment
 Hume Link
 Inland Rail
 Nexus Jobs Precinct
 Snowy 2.0

* AEC Group Pty Ltd, *Murray Region Economic Profile*, see Appendices p31.

RDA Murray Sub-Regions

CENTRAL – Population 34,410 (25%)

LGA	Population*	Centres of local significance
Berrigan	8,810	Berrigan, Barooga, Finley, Tocumwal
Edward River	9,158	Boooroorban, Blighty, Conargo, Deniliquin, Mayrung, Pretty Pine, Wanganella
Murray River	12,571	Bunaloo, Barham, Caldwell, Goodnight, Koraleigh, Mathoura, Moama, Moulamein, Murray Downs, Tooleybuc, Wakool
Murrumbidgee	3,871	Coleambally, Jerilderie

In the Central sub-region Edward River and Murrumbidgee LGAs feature established and significant agricultural areas as well as emerging horticultural enterprises. Manufacturing, agriculture and the visitor economy are also important to Berrigan and Murray River LGAs.

Examples of major projects

Reconnecting River Country
Renewable Energy Wind and Solar (private)

WEST – Population 9,418 (7%)

LGA	Population*	Centres of local significance
Balranald	2,276	Balranald, Euston, Hatfield, Homebush, Mungo, Oxley
Wentworth	7,142	Avoca, Arum, Buronga, Burtundy, Curlwaa, Dareton, Gol Gol, Pooncarie, Wentworth

In the west of the region, the geographically diverse (ie irrigated Sunraysia vs dry rangelands) Wentworth and Balranald LGAs host a range of established and emerging industries from agriculture and horticulture to nuts, solar energy and mineral or rare earth sand mining.

Examples of major projects

Energy Connect
Trentham Cliffs Development (private)
Substantial almond planting and mineral sands mining



Sun setting over a cattle property near Albury

Regional Analysis

An analysis of the RDA Murray region guided by the Australian Government's *The National Priority Foundations for Regional Growth 2020* (see Appendices p31) and focussing on the strengths, emerging investment and gaps in regional development is presented on the following four pages.

The six Foundations are:

- **Connectivity and Infrastructure** incorporating digital connectivity, transport links, and freight and supply chain infrastructure.
- **Human Capital and Skills** to provide skilled and adaptable workforces, regional universities and training, and schooling.
- **Regional Employment and Business** to develop regional businesses and industry, local research and development and innovation, and a strategic regional vision.
- **Leadership and Collaboration** by investing in regional leadership, capable local government and the Indigenous community.
- **Amenity and Liveability** through providing services, facilities and liveability, and support for local priorities.
- **Sustainable Natural Resources** to build future resilience, ensure sustainable foundations and provide economic opportunities and jobs.

This analysis is further informed by the *Stakeholder Strategic Priorities Analysis Matrix* (see next page) which demonstrates the complex intersections of priorities for regional development stakeholders in the Murray.

Many plans assessed for the Matrix are being reviewed or updated as a result of COVID-19 and the relevant electoral cycles. Consequently the views and projections of senior staff and representatives of agencies were weighted strongly in our considerations.

The conversations and lived experiences of people investing in regional development in the Murray point to:

- The infrastructure pipeline is at an all-time high with a peak expected in 2023-24. These projects are relying on resources such as workforce requirements (an estimated 3,500-5,500 people), housing and temporary accommodation, machinery, materials and the supply of services such as education, health, digital connectivity and banking.
- Capitalising on the impact of the large infrastructure projects bringing newcomers to the region with new skills and energising the school-training-jobs pathway.
- Training and skills development, while a priority on paper, requires much more place-based investment to meet projected needs.
- Business development is relatively well supported for the longer term job markets in the region.
- Environmental sustainability and disaster preparedness concerns leading to informed community engagement in communications, business adaptation to drought and disaster, diversity of enterprises suited to a changing climate, and making the most of capacity to sequester and build carbon stores.
- Leadership and collaboration, rather than competition, being considered critical to progress regional development.

Stakeholder Strategic Priorities Analysis Matrix

Stakeholder Plans reviewed January 2022*

	Connectivity & Infrastructure	Leadership & Collaboration	Human Capital & Skills	Sustainable Natural Resources	Regional Employment & Business	Amenity & Liveability
Aus Government						
NSW Government						
Regional NSW						
NSW Riverina Murray						
NSW Far Western						
RAMJO						
CRJO						
RJO						
FWJO						
REDS NSW						
REDS VIC						
Local Government						
Business NSW						
AIGroup						
MasterBuilders VIC+NSW						
Murray Arts, South West Arts						
MRT						
DRM						
DNSW						
Tourism Australia						
Sports						
NDIA						
NIAA						
NSW EES						
Aged Care						
Health Care						
Mental Health						
DAWE						
Southern Drought Hub						
LLS						
DPI						
DPE						
RDCs						
MIL						
MRFH						
Softwoods Working Group						
NSW Housing						
NSW Education						
TAFENSW						
TSNSW						
CSU						
LaTrobe University						
UNSW Medical School						
NRHA						
Multicultural NSW						
DoHA						
Investment NSW Immigration						

* Refer to the lists on pp26-29

Regional Analysis

This radar graph represents the focus of strategic priorities from 47 plans which all apply to the Murray region, reviewed against the Australian Government's *National Priority Foundations for Regional Growth 2020* (see Appendices p31).

The work to be done in leadership, climate change and social services capacity development becomes obvious.

All levels of government currently prioritise these issues. There are significant opportunities here to influence and deliver profound regional development capacity building and outcomes for future generations.



Couple enjoying a scenic walk through Woomargama National Park

Regional Analysis

Strengths

Connectivity & Infrastructure	Human Capital & Skills	Leadership & Collaboration	Regional Employment & Business	Amenity & Liveability	Sustainable Natural Resources
Nationally significant infrastructure projects: Inland Rail, Energy Connect, Snowy 2.0.	RDA Murray Skilled Migration Program, DoHA and NSW Skilled Migration support	Existing networks eg Women in Ag, Aboriginal Environmental Management and Riverina Murray Regional Alliance, Murray Region Forestry Hub Softwoods Working Group	Murray Socio-Economic Activation Taskforce, gathering intel from all corners of the region and directing leads to support growth	Murray River experiences, water security, and access to nature	Murray River water security, management and use
Highways: Hume, Newell, Riverina, Sturt, Silver City. Potential for alternate Transport/Freight/Logistics/Warehousing Hubs at intersections eg Balranald, Deniliquin, Moama, Albury-Holbrook	CSU, TAFE NSW, UNSW Medical School School careers, employment agencies Refugee resettlement program MNSW GROW Volunteer ethos	Women for Election and high numbers of AICD, ARLF and Nuffield alumni in the region Community leadership Snowy Valleys and Fairley Leadership programs Advocacy with Business NSW, peak ag bodies and JOs	Including cooperation between peak bodies: NSW Business, Murray Riverina Chambers, AI Group, Master Builders, Regional NSW, BEC, NSW Farmers and Murray Region Forestry Hub Murray Riverina Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce Innovative local manufacturing of primary produce	Local government investments in Invest Albury-Wodonga, North of the Murray, Discover Murray River Country etc Mildura Regional Development, MRT and DRM, Golf on the Murray Proximity to water sports, ski fields, Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney Relatively affordable and diverse housing stock	High soil fertility, weather patterns, sun, wind and rain Landcare and sustainable agriculture group networks eg: Murray Landcare Collective comprising 16 groups, Rice Growers Association Aboriginal Environmental Management Steering Committee Net Zero by 2030 World Heritage Listed and internationally recognised national park environments: Willandra Lakes, Mungo, Yanga, Kemendok, Euston, Mallee Cliffs, Murray Valley, Benambra, Woomargama, Kosciuszko NEC Forum
Gateway airports: at Albury & Mildura bookending local airport industry with expanding air travel networks, museums and attractions					

Emerging investment opportunities

Connectivity & Infrastructure	Human Capital & Skills	Leadership & Collaboration	Regional Employment & Business	Amenity & Liveability	Sustainable Natural Resources
MIL Prospectus: private on-farm water storage, waste management, recovery, sorting and product storage	Migration opportunities, private training orgs, Energy Connect, training investment, Jobs Boards, liveability promotion/ local and state government attraction strategies	Place based, in-person network development to help maintain and develop practices and participation in regions	Public, private partnerships for workforce and business development.	Digital connectivity	Permanent tree plantings, nuts and citrus
Local Government: public buildings, cultural infrastructure, water systems, e-upgrades eg lighting, monitoring, waste and movement	Regionalisation and population attraction strategies eg <i>Country Change or Move to More</i> Coordination of tertiary sector training and courses	Public, private partnerships for technology purchases Scholarships and sponsorships to access global offerings	Population attraction strategies – replicate regional Engage DESE LJP workforce job readiness Defence	Albury Wodonga health precinct Tertiary education options Residential, business and industrial land development Albury Wodonga Regional Deal	Organic produce Softwoods Agriculture - beef, lamb, wool, cotton, grains, rice, dairy Increase Aboriginal land management eg rangers program and Weraí Indigenous land management

Regional Analysis

Gaps – ie areas where investment will accelerate growth

Connectivity & Infrastructure	Human Capital & Skills	Leadership & Collaboration	Regional Employment & Business	Amenity & Liveability	Sustainable Natural Resources
Address border discounting. State investment applying equal criteria to like regions	DoHA responsiveness to community need, meeting timelines and legislative objectives	Digital connectivity to participate remotely In situ, place-based, group learning options	Formal avenues for peak bodies to advocate together and collectively engage three levels of government simultaneously	Housing affordability, diversity and quality of stock Automatically bring local government and tourism bodies information together to produce an invitation to visit/ stay and move to the region and encourage regionalisation eg create an RDA Murray <i>Move to the Murray</i> campaign by synthesising council and tourism body web campaigns into one regional website	Aboriginal led National Park and significant site development for conservation Develop National Park and wildlife strategies for conservation
Telecommunications infrastructure policy and commitments. Governments, NBNCo, TelCos and private investment in technology/boosters/ repeaters etc	Aus Gov policy/ legislation to improve workforce availability – more regional migration options, visa processing times	Learning Hubs to congregate and share learning experiences and create networks for leadership	Advanced manufacturing Workforce shortage especially childcare staff and facilities, medical/ nursing/allied health		Signage and promotion to support awareness and use of natural resources
Bridges	Regional monitoring and responding to wages indexation and inflation	Local collaborations to develop progressive or sequential pathways to leadership for targeting diversity and inclusion in regional leadership groups	Support in situ processing eg almond processing plant in Kyalite region		Partnerships with environmental authorities to promote and enable local 'spin-offs'
RJO/RAMJO	Digital connectivity to support access to remote education, training, work and Country University Centres		How to attract businesses to create local opportunities	Encourage the market/ pop-up economy to bring amenity to small rural communities	
MIL Prospectus			Increase skilled migration visas	Invest in local government growth strategies	
Natural gas to the region	Rural and remote training options, facilities targeting growth sectors such as irrigation, mechanics, engineering, project management, building and construction and ICT				
Improving the minor road network quality is a critical industry access issue (eg agriculture, softwoods, workforce)	Continue Home Builder				
	Regional attraction programs - replicate Country Change and Jobs Board				
	Incentives to encourage locals to upskill and live regionally by enrolling at CSU and TAFE NSW				

Regional Snapshot*

Our people

Population
137,686
(June 2022)

Average Age
41.8 years
(June 2022)

Indigenous Population
3.9
(% of population)

People Born Overseas
9.1
(% of population)

Population Growth⁵
0.32%
(June 2022)

Average Household Income
\$73,910
(June 2022)

Our economy

GRP
\$9.4b
(2019-2020)

Jobs
62,884
(2020)

Businesses
14,033
(2016)

Visitors⁶
2m
(December 2021)

Visitor Spend⁶
\$538m
(December 2021)

Non-Residential Approvals
\$103b
(June 2022)

Residential Approvals⁴
\$434m
(March 2022)

Unemployment
5.3%
(June 2021)

Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing

\$1.4b

7811 jobs

Manufacturing

\$828m

5095 jobs

Healthcare & Social Assistance

\$770m

9203 jobs

Construction

\$731m

5513 jobs

Education & Training

\$476m

5197 jobs

Public Administration & Safety

\$462m

4227 jobs

* AEC Group Pty Ltd, *Murray Regional Economic Profile*, June 2022, see Appendices p31.

Regional Snapshot

Trends and unique features

With its natural focus on Australia's longest river, the Murray region is blessed with an extraordinary natural environment—resilient and varied landscapes that belie climate change. Its proximity to Alpine, metropolitan and coastal destinations puts our region in prime position in terms of work and personal lifestyles.

The Murray region is experiencing an unprecedented scale of infrastructure development in both the public and private sectors, across all industries, and impacting all areas. As a consequence of this significant upswing in activity, there are increasing pressures on our workforce, housing and service sectors.

Direct daily flights from Albury link the region to Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Sunshine Coast and Brisbane. 75% of Australia's population can be physically accessed within 24 hours of Albury⁷.

Economy

Our regional economy will be turbo-charged over the next two to five years through over \$5 billion³ being invested in nationally significant large infrastructure projects which will build unprecedented workforce, supply chain and services well beyond our wildest dreams! There will be a peak in activity in 2023-2024.

The foundational industry of primary production is experiencing the highest growth and largest outputs year on year than ever before. Primary production in our region is relatively resilient to climate change with an exceptionally secure water supply and diverse landscapes.

Key industries

- **Agriculture:** A highly productive, diverse and thriving agricultural region worth over \$1 billion⁸ pa (cropping and livestock) and niche agricultural processing (eg Moama Abattoir Co-op)
- **Horticulture:** Including citrus, grapes (wine and table) and nut production (almond and pistachio)
- **Manufacturing:** Competitive and cutting-edge businesses with talented workforces provide high-quality products to our region, Australia and the world
- **Forestry:** Sustainable forestry plantations with stable long-term ownership are adopting new technologies for continued competitiveness
- **Visitor Economy:** A wealth of natural assets supported by considerable tourism infrastructure contributes \$538 million⁶ pa to our region
- **Education and training:** Charles Sturt University, TAFE NSW, independent and public schools, complemented by cross-border facilities in Wodonga and Mildura
- **Retail:** Major department and chain stores through to boutique and speciality stores
- **Service:** The Murray region attracts retirees and has a fast growing and responsive health care and social assistance sector featuring a range of public and private, large and boutique specialist disability support, aged care, child care and welfare providers.

Regional Snapshot

Enabling investment opportunities

This general economic boom presents an opportunity to establish and secure local business and social practices and behaviours that lead to enduring resilience and growth.

Investing in health and social services, housing, digital connectivity and a skilled and educated workforce will fortify gains in attracting and retaining population and economic growth in the region.

There are particular opportunities within the RDA Murray region to engage in government relations strategies to support a variety of public, private partnership projects that will move towards addressing these identified gaps. For example:

- Albury-Wodonga Regional Deal
- Albury Health Precinct
- Murray Irrigation Limited infrastructure and environmental projects
- Edward River Council Agrimaster plan
- *Light/State*
- Moama Bridge Arts.

While water strategy is a key feature in many stakeholder plans, the opportunity lies in productive and environmental water use efficiencies and collaboration to achieve optimal outcomes and management aligned with MDBA policy and plans.

Investment opportunities

- Murray Region Forestry Hub
- Trentham Cliffs development
- Murray River Adventure Trail
- Circular economy industry development
- Renewable energy, Windlab and solar developments
- Primary produce manufacturing in situ
- Manufacturing automation
- Freight hubs
- Flexible housing and accommodation programs
- Airport add-ons



Country driveway leading to the Mungo Lodge in Mungo National Park.

Regional Development Priorities 2022-2025

National Priority Foundations for Regional Growth	Strategy	Actions	Outcomes	Prime Parties
1. Connectivity & Infrastructure	Improve digital infrastructure, communication and literacy, and accessibility	1. Engage with Australian Government connectivity programs eg <i>Connecting Regional Australia</i> initiative and NBN Co	The <i>Australian Digital Inclusion Index</i> score for the region improves	RDA Murray, RAMJO, DITRDC, NBN Co, Telcos
	Develop multi-modal links and hubs to drive freight transport, visitation and tourism, logistics and warehousing	fixed wireless and satellite upgrade	Murray producers have better freight and supply chain access and local infrastructure plans are progressed towards their apogee	RDA Murray, RAMJO, DITRDC, NBN Co, Telcos
		2. Capitalise on local <i>Regional Tech Hub</i>	Accelerated development of intermodal freight hubs, tourism offerings and warehousing investment	DITRDC
		3. Support facilitation and coordination to inform investment initiatives eg Albury-Wodonga Regional Deal and Infrastructure Australia large projects		
2. Human Capital & Skills	Creating networked and knowledgeable learning communities capable of attracting, connecting and retaining workforce	4. Engage SecureEnergy investment in legacy infrastructure hubs in Wentworth & Balranald LGAs		SecureEnergy JV, Wentworth & Balranald LGAs, Mildura Regional Development, Regional NSW
		1. Lead innovative development, attraction and retention of an adaptable and skilled new workforce and welcome newcomers for population growth	More people working in more jobs in the region	RDA Murray, DESE, Local Jobs Program, NSW GROW, Training Services NSW, DoHA, NSW Investment
		2. Incentivise workforce through investment in amenity and liveability		DITRDC
		3. Connect potential employees with employers		RDA Murray
		4. Collaborate with TAFEs & universities to align leadership and workforce skill development and deliver maximum relevant and viable courses	More courses delivered in the region New workforce recruitment and retention options in the region	CSU, Latrobe, Wodonga TAFE, TAFE NSW, UNSW Medical School, Wangaratta MCCC GP Training

Regional Development Priorities 2022-2025

National Priority Foundations for Regional Growth	Strategy	Actions	Outcomes	Prime Parties
3. Leadership & Collaboration	Model ethical leadership and inclusion of diverse perspectives	1. Support the delivery of leadership and governance training initiatives	More ideas are converted into reality (ie functional economic drivers)	RDA Murray, CSU, all LGAs, AICD, CLP, ARLF
	Collaborate for stronger and more attuned collective impact	2. Facilitate connections between all government, community and private industry levels to identify solutions	More community members participate in regional leadership opportunities	RDA Murray, LGAs, peak industry and sector bodies
		3. Support inclusive and diverse participation in leadership roles so that all the region's demographics are represented and visible in leadership settings	More diverse leaders are identified in local media.	Multicultural NGOs, Multicultural NSW, RDA Murray, LGAs, Aboriginal organisations
4. Regional Employment & Business	Accelerate capacity building and economic diversification	1. Discover and advocate for continued innovation and expansion opportunities especially value adding to processing primary production where it is produced	More novel economic opportunities are realised earlier than otherwise expected	RDA Murray, Business NSW/Murray Riverina, Mildura Regional Development, Regional NSW, Investment NSW, AI Group, ICN, all industry groups and associations
		2. Integrate systems to engage and develop economic participation of marginalised groups (Aboriginal, women, people living with disability, young people)		RDA Murray, Regional NSW, DESE, Training Services NSW, RDAS, Aboriginal peak bodies and LGAs
		3. Optimise connectivity with international contemporary best practice to increase regional uptake of best practice		RDA Murray, AusIndustry, AusTrade, Business NSW, Defence, Regional NSW
		4. Deliver programs through local agencies to encourage regionalisation as opposed to centralisation	Increased flow-on investment in local offices and procurement	RDA Murray, peak bodies, all levels of government

Regional Development Priorities 2022-2025

National Priority Foundations for Regional Growth	Strategy	Actions	Outcomes	Prime Parties
5. Amenity & Liveability	Build world standard housing, health, education, leisure and recreational opportunities, for all	1. Address housing affordability and range of stock. Encourage innovative accommodation programs eg audits and shared housing projects.	More equitable housing, healthcare, recreational and education services exist in the Murray Region	NSW & local government, MBAV & MBANSW
		2. Support seamless access to quality health and education services eg Albury-Wodonga Regional Deal. Explore models for equitable delivery to rural communities		NSW Government, DITRDC
		3. Advocate for equitable access to housing, healthcare, education, recreation and opportunities to socialise		RDA Murray and peak bodies
		4. Support the creation of touring economies through markets, arts, crafts, food and other cultural events		DNSW, Regional NSW
		5. Active transport/public transport		NSW Transport, Regional NSW
		6. Advocacy for high quality, accessible, sustainable and inclusive public spaces		LGAs, NSW Planning, Regional NSW
6. Sustainable Natural Resources	Champion behaviours that preserve, conserve and regenerate our natural resources (focussing on water, vegetation, soil and carbon) to address climate change	1. Support the optimal management of resources for future generations	Normalising the use of sustainable practices eg alternative energy sources, circular use of waste and lower emissions vehicles	DAWE, RDA Murray, MDBA, NSW and local government, Murray LLS
		2. Facilitate a sustainable region by 2030		DAWE, NFF/NSWF, Landcare
		3. Foster circular economies		NSW & local government, NPWS, MLC
		4. Support Murray Landcare Collective, a dynamic primary producer and land manager learning community		Southern Innovation & Drought Hub, NSW EES, NSW Cultural Heritage
		5. Support Aboriginal land management		NSW Cultural Heritage, Aboriginal CWP's, NIAA, NPWS, MLC, NRRRA

Strategic Regional Plan Methodology

We recognise our Strategic Regional Plan (SRP) as a dynamic document which records our region's basis for economic development activity. We were guided in its development by the aim of providing a wide range of stakeholders, potential investors and policy-makers with a better understanding of the region.

RDA Murray's SRP should assist regional development stakeholders and communities to identify comparative advantages, manage regional growth pressures, identify opportunities and address economic development and infrastructure needs, all the while taking into account Federal, State and Local Government plans. The SRP aims to help our region make the most of future opportunities, the evolving Australian economy and changes to the demographics of Australian society.

After key stakeholders agreed on a set of common needs and priorities, our SRP was developed by taking a consultative and evidence-based approach. It was important to ensure the Plan reflected both quantitative data and the rich, in-depth insight offered by key stakeholders throughout the region. However we aim to be concise!

The consultation process included:

- Multiple discussions with the RDA Murray Board
- Interviews with key stakeholders from across the region including representatives from local government authorities, health boards, industry and tourism bodies, MSEAT, private enterprise, NSW Farmers and MDBA
- Surveying key stakeholders in relation to each of the Commonwealth's regional priorities.

We considered a range of planning documents including the priorities of Australian, NSW and Local Governments:

- Commonwealth Murray Riverina Local Jobs Plan
- NSW 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW
- NSW Regional Economic Development Strategies (Albury, Murray, Snowy Valleys, Western Murray and Western Riverina)
- NSW Regional Housing Taskforce Report
- NSW Riverina Murray Regional Plan Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities
- Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities
- RDA Murray Strategic Plan
- Ten Local Government Associations' strategic plans.

Successful planning depends on working with stakeholders invested in our region and we always welcome their feedback.



Kayaking on the Murray River, Barmah National Park

RDA Murray Stakeholders

Australian Federal Government

Australian Federal Ministers and Members of Parliament

Attorney-General's Department
Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment
Department of Defence
Department of Education, Skills and Employment
Department of Home Affairs
Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

NSW Local Government

Albury City Council
Balranald Shire Council
Berrigan Shire Council
Edward River Council
Federation Council
Greater Hume Shire Council
Snowy Valleys Council
Wentworth Shire Council
Far South West Joint Organisation
Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation

NSW State Government

NSW Ministers and Members of Parliament

Department of Communities and Justice
Ageing and Disability Commission
Multicultural NSW
NSW Police Force
NSW Rural Fire Service
Resilience NSW
Department of Customer Service
Service NSW
Department of Education
TAFE NSW
Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade
Create NSW
Destination NSW
Investment NSW
Department of Regional NSW
Cross-Border Commissioner
Department of Transport
Infrastructure NSW
NSW Health

Other Entities

Aged Care service providers
Albury Community Working Party
AusTrade Export
Australian Industry Group
Australian Institute of Company Directors
Australian Rail Track Corporation
Australian Rural Leadership Foundation
Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service
Albury Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council
Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau

Barkindji Maraura Elders Environment Team Limited
Business NSW Murray Riverina
BEC South West Advisory

Cancer Council NSW
Charles Sturt University
Committee for Echuca Moama
Committee for Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia

Deniliquin Ute Muster
Destination Riverina Murray

Golf on the Murray

Henty Machinery Field Days

Industry Capability Network
Infrastructure Australia

Local Aboriginal Lands Councils

Master Builders NSW and Victoria
Mildura Regional Development
Murray Arts
Murray Darling Association
Murray Darling Basin Authority
Murray Irrigation
Murray Region Forestry Hub
Murray Regional Landcare (Landcare and producer groups)
Murray Regional Tourism

RDA Murray Stakeholders

NBNCo

NDIS providers (disability services and support organisations)

Kirinari Community Services

Community Living and Respite Services

NSW Farmers

Regional Disability Advocacy Service

Regional NSW

Rice Growers Australia

Riverina Murray Regional Alliance

Robinvale Euston Workforce Network

SecureEnergy Joint Venture

Softwoods Working Group

South West Arts

Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council

Tourism Australia

Transgrid

Upper Murray Inc

Victorian Cross-Border Commissioner

Wentworth/Dareton Community Working Party

Wentworth Regional Tourism Inc

Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre Aboriginal Corporation



Murray Valley Sanctuary Refugee Group's 15-year celebration

Abbreviations & Acronyms

The abbreviations and acronyms in the following list are referred to throughout this document.

ABS: Australian Bureau of Statistics

AICD: Australian Institute of Company Directors

AIGroup: Australian Industry Group

ARLF: Australian Regional Leadership Foundation

ARTC: Australian Rail Track Corporation

Aus Government: Regional Development Australia

BEC: Business Enterprise Centre

BMEET: Barkindji Maraura Elders Environment Team Limited

CLP: Community Leadership Programs

CRJO: Canberra Region Joint Organisation

CSU: Charles Sturt University

CUC: Country University Centres

CWP: Community Working Party

DAWE: Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

DCJ Housing: NSW Department of Communities and Justice

DESE: Department of Education, Skills and Employment

DISER: Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

DITRDC: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

DNSW: Destination New South Wales

DoHA: Department of Home Affairs

DPE: NSW Department of Planning and Environment

DPI: NSW Department of Primary Industries

DRM: Destination Riverina Murray

EES: Environment, Energy and Science Group (DPE)

FWJO: Far West Joint Organisation

GRP: Gross Regional Product

ICN: Industry Capability Network

ICT: Information Communications Technology

JO: Joint Organisation of Councils

LaTrobe: Latrobe University

LGAs: Local Government Areas

LJP: Local Jobs Program

LLS: Local Landcare Services NSW

MBA: Master Builders Association

MCCCCGP: Murray City Country Coast General Practitioner Training

MDBA: Murray Darling Basin Authority

MIL: Murray Irrigation Limited

MLC: Murray Landcare Collective

MRD: Mildura Regional Development

MRFH: Murray Region Forestry Hub

MRT: Murray Regional Tourism

MSEAT: Murray Socio-Economic Activation Taskforce

NBN Co: National Broadband Network Company

NDIA: National Disability Insurance Agency

NDIS: National Disability Insurance Scheme

NEC: National Environment Centre

NFF: National Farmers Federation

NGO: Non Government Organisation

NIAA: National Indigenous Australia Agency

NPWS: National Parks and Wildlife Service

NRHA: National Rural Health Alliance

NRRA: National Recovery and Resilience Agency

Abbreviations & Acronyms

NSW Education: NSW Department of Education

NSW EES: New South Wales Environment, Energy & Science

NSW Far Western: refers to the NSW Government-defined region

NSWF: New South Wales Farmers Association

NSW Government: refers to the NSW Government in its entirety

NSW Riverina Murray: refers to the NSW Government-defined region

Nuffield: Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust

RAMJO: Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation

RDAS: Regional Disability Advisory Services

RDC: Rural Research and Development Corporation

REDS NSW: Regional Economic Development Strategies New South Wales for the Snowy Valleys, Albury-Wodonga, Western Murray and Murray regions

REDS VIC: Regional Economic Development Strategies Victoria for the Ovens, Murray-Goulburn, Loddon-Campaspe and Mallee regions

Regional NSW: Department of Regional New South Wales

REROC: Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils

RFS: Rural Fire Service

RGA: Rice Growers Association

RJO: Riverina Joint Organisation

RMRA: Riverina Murray Regional Alliance

SEGRA: Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia

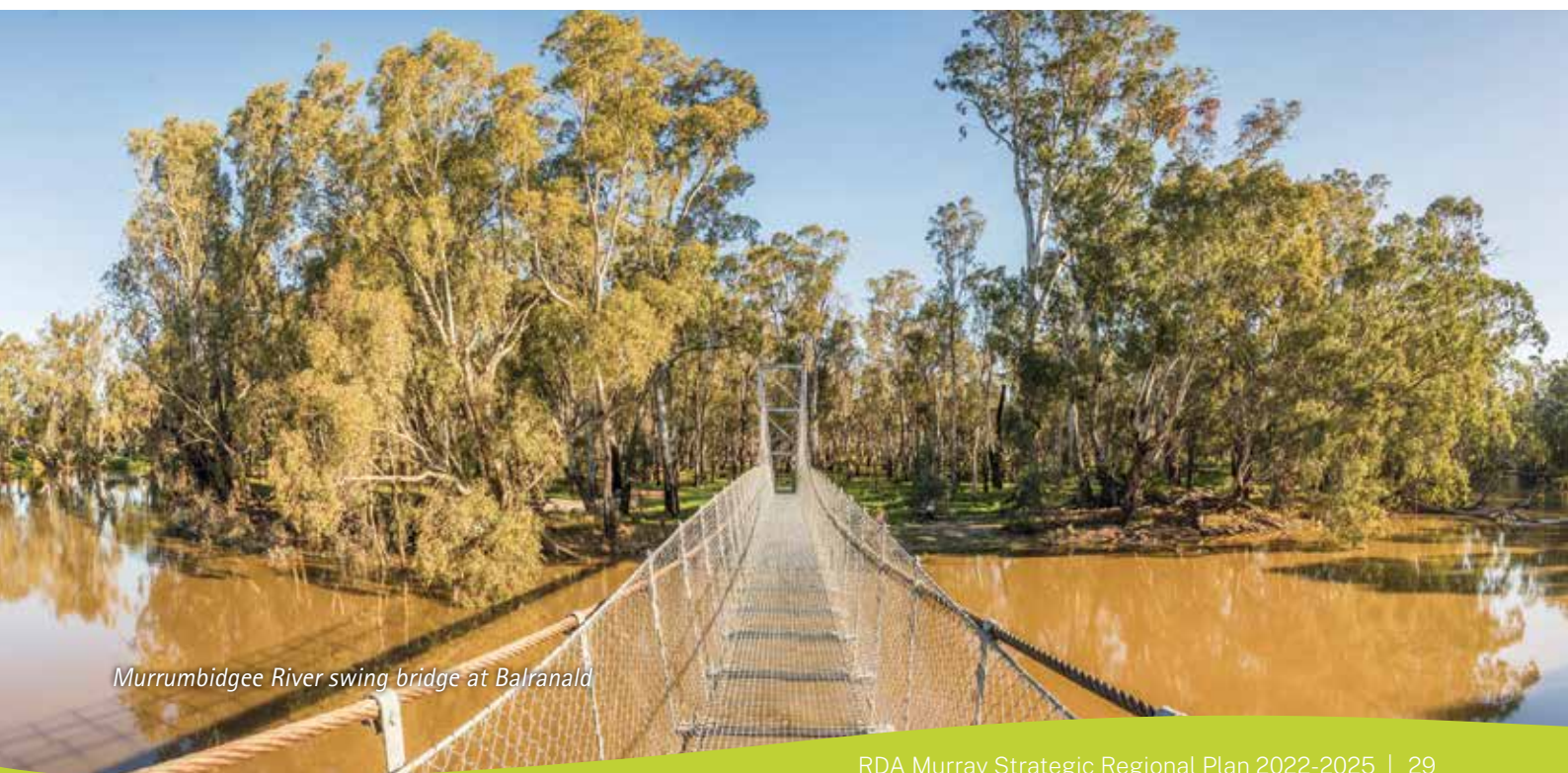
SWG: Softwoods Working Group

Southern Drought Hub: Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub

TAFE NSW: Tertiary and Further Education New South Wales

TSNSW: Training Services New South Wales

UNSW Medical School: University of New South Wales Medical School



Murrumbidgee River swing bridge at Balranald

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Appendices

RDA Murray Program Logic

Source: RDA Murray 2021



Murray Region Economic Profile

Source: AEC Group Pty Ltd



This link is live and regularly updated.

<https://dataau.com.au/pdf/619edb926501e>



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