



An Australian Government Initiative



MURRAY NSW

Strategic Regional Plan 2022-2025

Implementation Review December 2023



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.

Funding

Regional Development Australia Murray Inc (RDA Murray) receives core funding from the Australian Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.

Preparing the plan

RDA Murray prepared this Strategic Regional Plan (SRP) in consultation with stakeholders 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.

Enquiries about the document should be directed to:

CEO, RDA Murray
2/566 Kiewa Street
Albury NSW 2640
(02) 6060 2491
edwina.hayes@rdamurray.org.au

All images courtesy of Destination NSW except those marked*

Cover: *Cycling along Wagirra Trail and Yindymarra Sculpture Walk at Albury, Restdown Wines at Barham* (*Visit River Country), *Fishing on Lake Mulwala, First Nations Ranger at Mungo National Park* (*Tyson Mayr).

© Copyright Regional Development Australia Murray Inc. Published June 2022. Updated January/February 2023, republished June 2023. Updated October/November/December 2023 and republished February 2024.

Disclaimer

While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information presented, Regional Development Australia Murray Inc and its employees, to the extent permitted by law, disclaim any liability to any person in respect to errors and omissions. We recognise that policies, programs and statistics may have changed since publication date. Regional Development Australia Murray Inc produced this strategic plan and it does not necessarily represent the views of the Commonwealth, its officers, employees or agents.

Contents

Messages from RDA Murray Chair & CEO	4
About RDA Murray	5
Role of RDA Murray	6
Key Messages for Investors	7
Achievements of RDA Murray	8-9
RDA Murray Region	10-11
RDA Murray Sub-Regions	12-13
Regional Analysis	14-16
Regional Snapshot	17-19
Regional Development Priorities 2022-2025	20-23
Strategic Regional Plan Methodology	24
Review of Progress	25-26
Workforce Development Plan	27-28
RDA Murray Stakeholders	29-30
Abbreviations & Acronyms	31-32
References	33

*Sunset at the Walls of China, Mungo National Park (*Tyson Mayr)*



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, service sector, industry, business, workforce, social and economic opportunity drivers across the whole region.

RDA Murray is consistently engaging with stakeholders and government, providing intelligence and novel ideas to support evidence-based regional investment.

The past year has demonstrated the compassionate teamwork and high level of contribution from all board members. We have given agency to local voices, built the evidence for priorities with flexibility, integrity and transparency, in a coordinated and integrated manner.

The board's optimism, skills and networks helped us weather the unpredictable local impacts of commodity price fluctuations, floods, and local housing and workforce pressures. We are reassured by witnessing the strong sense of community and cooperation in the Murray region.

We enjoy the leadership, energy and enthusiasm of Minister Kristy McBain who has genuinely engaged with RDA Murray since coming to office in May 2022. We respond to the Minister's commitment with regular communication and connections, working towards overcoming issues that constrain workforce development, housing, renewable energy and net zero transition, softwoods and agri-industry, circular economy manufacturing and processing and rural and remote services.

I am delighted to present this updated Strategic Regional Plan knowing we are delivering on our objectives to impact decision making, drive meaningful collaboration, use the evidence and ensure local voices are heard to influence the design and delivery of regional initiatives.

We are committed to serving the needs of our communities and creating a brighter future for local people, especially First Nations people, through advocacy and facilitation.

Mary Hoodless
Chairperson

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

Message from RDA Murray CEO

RDA Murray drives meaningful collaboration across and between governments using evidence and local voices to implement the Australian Government's *Regional Investment Framework*.

Broadly speaking, we are investing in:

- People, places, services, and industries and local economies,
- Regional stakeholders to advance strategic regional priorities,
- Decarbonisation and the transformation to a net zero economy,
- Building the evidence base to inform regional economic development, and
- Facilitating meaningful engagement across all levels of government to deliver better outcomes.

RDA Murray has established a network of over 20,000 people and organisations who are engaged in understanding and enabling regional opportunity and advantage. Using their diverse networks, our well-qualified staff can collaborate, organise and act on economic and social issues raised in the region.

RDA Murray is agile and responsive. We are constantly monitoring and responding to emerging issues, as they arise, working with our broad range of stakeholders. We use our local cross sector expertise and regional voice to prosecute ideas into practice or policy relatively quickly.

We are truly focussed on bringing all our diverse communities together, especially First Nations people, to support the Government's ambition of '*no one held back and no one left behind.*'

Edwina Hayes
Chief Executive Officer & Director
Regional Development



About RDA Murray

Our purpose

RDA Murray has a leadership and facilitative role to deliver the Australian Government's regional development vision, guided by its *Regional Investment Framework*. We work with all levels of government, First Nations people and community groups to support the growth and wellbeing of a strong and sustainable Murray region.

We have a clear purpose to listen and provide a voice for a more coordinated approach to investment in community, industry and the environment.

By building on our unique strengths, we achieve this through quality relationships and place-based decision making with a broad range of stakeholders, including First Nations people, 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, resilient and ethical in our leadership, bringing people together, working hard and inspiring new thinking and innovative solutions.

Role of RDA Murray

The role of RDA Murray is to support the Australian Government's vision for strong connected regions where people, businesses and investments thrive. This vision is detailed in the *RDA Charter*¹.

RDA Murray will help drive economic growth, innovation and entrepreneurship through facilitating investment in community, industry and the environment.

RDA Murray supports the successful implementation of the Australian Government's new *Regional Investment Framework* (RIF)² which creates a more coordinated approach to regional development and the delivery of the Government's strategic priorities.

In summary our four priority focus areas are:

1. Investing in people including First Nations, policy and gender equality

- Listening to local voices and partnering with communities
- Targeted investment in skills, education, training and local leadership capacity.

2. Investing in places

- Supporting adaptive, accessible, sustainable and liveable regions
- Delivering infrastructure where and when it is needed.

3. Investing in services

- Enhancing connectivity, accessibility and equity of services
- Investment including across communications, health, water and transport.

4. Investing in industries and local economies

- Investment to help activate economic and industry growth
- Supporting the conditions needed for regional industries to diversify and grow.

In this context, RDA Murray specialises in bringing people together - including First Nations people, local government, community partners and peak bodies - 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 20,000 contacts to disseminate information to our region relating to government grant funding and policy opportunities.

Complementing the more macro approach of government, RDA Murray specialises in giving voice to unique issues at the local scale, such as cross-border, interstate jurisdictional issues.

As a result, we fill a gap to inform coordinated investment. 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 include First Nations people and address gender equality and decarbonisation issues to ensure *'no one is held back and no one is left behind.'*

Key Messages for Investors

The road ahead: 'no one is held back and no one is left behind'

With financial investment in workforce attraction and retention, accommodation, health, digital connectivity, education, childcare and aged care services sectors, we will achieve regional wellbeing.

RDA Murray is confident these investments will meet the needs of, and provide opportunities for both our First Nations people and decarbonisation projects. At the same time we will be working towards achieving gender equality.

Cross-border communities need to address 'border discounting', the practice of historical state biases that means less investment happens closer to state borders. RDA Murray aims to identify and eliminate these practices 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 recent key projects and initiatives include:

- Improving the Building Better Regions Fund strike rate
- Coordinating regional leadership
- Influencing COVID-19 public health and economic stimulus
- Addressing workforce constraints
- Capacity building
- Responding to natural disasters.

However in the past year, in particular, RDA Murray has provided leadership and assumed responsibility for high achievement throughout the region by delivering on some key points of the current SRP.

Leadership

For instance, initiation of the RDA Murray *Dare To Lead* Program and participation in *The Fischer Community Leadership* Program and AlburyCity Leadership and Resilience Scholarship. Modelling commitment, energy and investment in local leadership skills, knowledge and networks has improved the number of people engaged explicitly in leadership journeys and provided 'in place' local opportunities to progress what people of the region wanted.

Workforce development and support

Addressing growing workforce shortages has been a highlight this past year. To attract and retain a professional workforce (for instance Melbourne COVID lockdown 'escapees' and onshore skilled migrants) RDA Murray has collaborated with RDA Orana, RDA Riverina Southern Inland and RDA Central West to build a case for and request an extension of the Orana Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA). This should enable further attraction and retention of offshore migrants.

Changing social and economic patterns post-COVID saw a shift in communications and strategic policy priorities, from health and safety to economic recovery and growth enablers such as workforce, housing, public services and infrastructure in the region. RDA Murray is an active participant in the engagement and development of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) Local Jobs Program (LJP).

RDA Murray continuously sought input from regional leaders to brief local government. We joined the Regional Australia Institute's (RAI) Regional Activators Alliance which provides coal-face intelligence and feedback on government policy and foresees emerging issues. We collectively work up solutions which are passed on through ministerial teleconferences, briefings and regular departmental advice.

We also formalised our role in ground-truthing the Federal Think Tank.

Enjoying a cruise aboard PS Cumberoona, Lake Mulwala



Achievements of RDA Murray

Inter-agency cooperation

RDA Murray worked collaboratively with RDA Hume, Loddon Mallee, Riverina, ACT and Southern Inland as well as actively participating in the RDA ACT-NSW Committees Network. RDA Murray dynamically engaged in partnerships with local governments, state, NSW, cross-border and Victorian agencies and organisations to collect and interpret regional information for strategic planning.

We have provided advice and helped implement Australian Government programs and policies.

Emergency response

RDA Murray actively supported emergency services, and disaster response and recovery agencies through the region's hugely impactful floods, the largest since 1956. The region suffered major flooding from October 2022 to March 2023 through seven LGAs. RDA Murray provided advice, linkages and connection between locals, interstate and cross-border communities, agencies and government departments. Collaboration with regional leaders and emergency services and disaster response agencies continues to reduce duplication while more effectively responding to community and business needs.

We used our networks to communicate early and consistent messages, particularly government funding and programs, media releases and emergency broadcasts relating to biosecurity, public

health, infrastructure and policy opportunities for disaster cleanup and recovery.

RDA Murray promoted and connected people to government support and stimulus, business support, migration settlement and travel advice, multicultural, disability, aged care, childcare and healthcare work solutions and support. A wide ranging and variable recovery response saw positive results and a powerful bounce back at times during the year.

Enabling local procurement

Our economy was buoyed by a third consecutive, widespread, outstanding agricultural season with significant flow-on into manufacturing. This created a sound base from which to participate in local procurement and supply for Project Energy Connect, Hume Link, VNI West, Riverina Redevelopment, Inland Rail and Snowy 2.0

*Green Valley fire approaching Jingellic, January 2020 (*Mary Hoodless)*



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. It 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 the Murray Region has recently experienced population growth due to 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%³.

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.

Investment in skills, education, training and local leadership capacity, together with improved communications, health, water and transport services, will all contribute to positioning the Murray region for sustainable future growth, greater diversification and competitiveness.

This investment in services, amenities and infrastructure will consolidate population movement to our region, which in turn will drive workforce development.



RDA Murray Region

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

- Nine Local Government Areas (LGA)
- Four Organisations of Councils (JO & REROC)
- Two NSW Government Regions (Far West and Riverina Murray)
- 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.

Communities are recovering after being significantly adversely affected by the unexpected and unplanned state border closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Murray region was devastated by flooding between October 2022 to March 2023 as a result of heavy rain and flood events interstate⁴.

This flood event was the largest since 1956, with an unprecedented number of impacted homes, businesses and infrastructure. In particular transport and roads were impacted requiring councils to focus on emergency stabilisation works and reopening roads that are essential access routes. In many cases, roads have not yet been reinstated to pre-flood standard⁵.

The region's prosperity is intrinsically linked to cross-border economies 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.

New South Wales, Victorian and South Australian Cross-Border Commissioners continue to work with us on these locality-based constraints and opportunities in our Tri-State region.

RDA Murray operates broadly on Wiradjuri, Walgalu, Ngarigo, Yorta Yorta, Barapa Barapa, Wemba Wemba, Wadi Wadi, Nari Nari, Dadi Dadi, Kureinji, Muthi Muthi, Barindji/Paakantji, Ngyiampaa, Barkindji and Danggali country.

Cross-border communities

- 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

First Nations communities

Local Aboriginal Land Councils⁶

- Albury & District
- Brungle-Tumut
- Balranald
- Cumeragunja
- Dareton
- Deniliquin
- Moama
- Narrandera
- Wagga Wagga
- Wamba Wamba

Other traditional owner groups

- Barkindji Maraura Elders Environment Team (BMEET)
- Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre
- Burraja Riverina Murray Regional Alliance
- Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS)
- Albury Wodonga Community Working Party
- Dareton Community Working Party
- Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly
- Maari Ma Health
- Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation

RDA Murray Sub-Regions

RDA Murray



The RDA Murray region, with a total population 133,815, is divided into three sub-regions: East, Central and West.

EAST - Population 93,858 (70%)

LGA	Population ⁷	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**) 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
- Defence supply chain
- Hume Link
- Inland Rail
- Nexus Jobs Precinct
- Snowy 2.0

RDA Murray Sub-Regions

CENTRAL - Population 30,539 (23%)

LGA	Population ⁷	Centres of local significance
Berrigan	8,810	Berrigan, Barooga, Finley, Tocumwal
Edward River	9,158	Boooroban, Blighty, Conargo, Deniliquin, Mayrung, Pretty Pine, Wanganella
Murray River	12,571	Bunaloo, Barham, Caldwell, Goodnight, Koraleigh, Mathoura, Moama, Moulamein, Murray Downs, Tooleybuc, Wakool

The Central sub-region **Edward River** LGA features 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)
- Moama Bridge Arts
- Australian Farming Systems Almond Processing Plant
- Deniliquin residential elders precinct - Edward River Village
- Victoria/NSW Interconnector - VNI West
- Environmental watering and biodiversity projects

WEST - Population 9,418 (7%)

LGA	Population ⁷	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

- Project Energy Connect
- Trentham Cliffs Development (private)
- Substantial horticultural projects
- Iluka mineral sands mining
- Tronox mineral sands mining
- Light/State Wentworth



Riding bikes along the Edward River at Deniliquin

Regional Analysis

The following pages contain an analysis of the RDA Murray region guided by the Australian Government's new and more coordinated approach to delivering regional investment which aims to support strong and sustainable regions: namely the *Regional Investment Framework*²

Working to these guiding principles we will help realise the Government's ambition of '*no one held back and no one left behind*' by emphasising our unique strengths and challenges and making place-based decisions informed by our lived experience of our region.

We will help drive economic growth, innovation and entrepreneurship in our region through facilitating investment in community, industry and the environment. We will work with a broad range of stakeholders across sectors and support the delivery of the Government's strategic priorities.

The four priority focus areas are:

1. Investing in people including First Nations, policy and gender equality

- Listening to local voices and partnering with communities
- Targeted investment in skills, education, training and local leadership capacity.

2. Investing in places

- Supporting adaptive, accessible, sustainable and liveable regions
- Delivering infrastructure where and when it is needed.

3. Investing in services

- Enhancing connectivity, accessibility and equity of services
- Investment including across communications, health, water and transport.

4. Investing in industries and local economies

- Investment to help activate economic and industry growth
- Supporting the conditions needed for regional industries to diversify and grow.

This analysis is further informed by the *Stakeholder Strategic Priorities Analysis Matrix* in the original June 2022 edition⁸ of the RDA Murray Strategic Regional Plan. The matrix demonstrates the complex intersections of priorities for regional development stakeholders in the Murray region.

Many plans assessed for the *Matrix* were 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 2023-24⁹. 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.

Regional Analysis

Strengths

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

Emerging investment opportunities

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

Regional Analysis

Gaps - ie areas where investment will accelerate growth

Investing in people	Investing in places	Investing in services	Investing in industries and local economies
Regional monitoring and responding to wages indexation and inflation	Digital connectivity to support access to remote education, training, work and Regional University Study Hubs	Address border discounting. State investment applying equal criteria to like regions	Bridges MIL Prospectus
In situ, place-based, group learning options	Activate accommodation and housing programs	Telecommunications infrastructure policy and commitments. Governments, NBNCo, TelCos and private investment in technology/boosters/repeaters etc	Natural gas to the region
Learning Hubs to congregate and share learning experiences and create networks for leadership	Digital connectivity to participate remotely	RAMJO/REROC	Improving the minor road network quality is a critical industry access issue (eg agriculture, softwoods, workforce) DoHA responsiveness to community need, meeting timelines and legislative objectives
Local collaborations to develop progressive or sequential pathways to leadership for targeting diversity and inclusion in regional leadership groups	First Nations-led National Park and significant site development for conservation	Rural and remote training options, facilities targeting growth sectors such as irrigation, mechanics, engineering, project management, building and construction and ICT	Aus Gov policy/legislation to improve workforce availability – more regional migration options, visa processing times
Workforce shortage especially childcare staff and facilities, medical/nursing/allied health	Develop National Park and wildlife strategies for conservation	Workforce shortage especially childcare staff and facilities, medical/nursing/allied health	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
		Disaster management and preparedness	Formal avenues for peak bodies to advocate together and collectively engage three levels of government simultaneously Advanced manufacturing Workforce shortage especially childcare staff and facilities, medical/nursing/allied health Support in situ processing eg almond processing plant in Kyalite region How to attract businesses to create local opportunities Increase skilled migration visas 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 Encourage the market/pop-up economy to bring amenity to small rural communities Invest in local government growth strategies Signage and promotion to support awareness and use of natural resources Partnerships with environmental authorities to promote and enable local 'spin-offs'

Regional Snapshot*

Our people⁷

Population
137,686
(June 2022)

Average Age
41.8 years
(June 2022)

First Nations Population
3.9
(% of population)

People Born Overseas
9.1
(% of population)

Population Growth
0.32%
(June 2022)

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

Our economy⁷

GRP
\$9.4b
(2019-2020)

Jobs
62,884
(2020)

Businesses
14,033
(2016)

Visitors
2m
(December 2021)

Visitor Spend
\$538m
(December 2021)

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

Residential Approvals¹⁰
\$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

Couple enjoying a picnic at Noreuil Park, Albury

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 flights from Albury link the region to Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Sunshine Coast, Canberra and Brisbane. 75% of Australia's population can be physically accessed within 24 hours of Albury¹¹.

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!

Peak pressure from construction activity will begin as early as 2023/2024 extending for at least a decade. We expect local workforce and accommodation pressures to be amongst the main economic constraints for 10-15 years as competition between large infrastructure and local business and employers escalates.

The engine industry of primary production (broad acre agriculture and horticulture) 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. However, water and environmental policies and cyclical weather patterns mean adaptability, drought preparedness and disaster management are critical to the engine industries of the region.

Management of natural disasters is becoming increasingly important for all economies with recent

profound fire and flood impacts. For example, softwoods in the Murray River Forestry Hub have lost 50% of plantations in the last 15 years making fire management and suppression paramount to this engine economy.

Key industries

- **Agriculture:** A highly productive, diverse and thriving agricultural region worth over \$1 billion¹² 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 fire management technologies for continued competitiveness
- **Visitor Economy:** A wealth of natural assets supported by considerable tourism infrastructure contributes \$538 million¹³ 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 healthcare and social assistance sector featuring a range of public and private, large and boutique specialist disability support, aged care, childcare and welfare providers
- Net Zero industry
- First Nations projects such as Werai, Yarkuwa Farm and Mungabareena
- Circular waste economy
- NSW South West Renewable Energy Zone
- Emerging renewable energy and decarbonisation opportunities
- Emerging circular economy hubs such as Albury Nexus development.

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 Projects
- Albury Health precinct
- Murray Irrigation Limited infrastructure and environmental projects
- Edward River Council Growth Strategy
- *Light/State*
- Moama Bridge Arts
- Tri-State cross-border workforce development strategy.

Water strategy is a key feature in all stakeholder plans. The opportunity lies in adapting regional expectations and improving productive and environmental water use efficiencies.

Paying particular attention to collaboration will achieve optimal outcomes and management aligned with MDBA policy and plans.

Investment opportunities

- Murray Region Forestry Hub (MRFH)
- Trentham Cliffs development
- Murray River Adventure Trail
- Circular economy industry development
- Renewable energy, wind and solar developments and storage
- Primary produce manufacturing in situ
- Manufacturing automation
- Freight hubs
- Flexible housing and accommodation programs
- Airport add-ons
- Services and amenities
- Digital connectivity
- Hospitals and primary healthcare services, education, training and apprenticeships support
- Regional University Support Hubs (Deniliquin and Mildura)
- Mungo National Park
- Werai Indigenous Protected Area (IPA)
- Mungabareena Aboriginal Place
- Decarbonisation (MRFH).



Regional Development Priorities 2022-2025

Meeting the needs of, and providing opportunities for, First Nations people.
Supporting the transformation to a net zero economy and decarbonisation.
Achieving gender equality.

National Priority Focus Areas

1. Investing in People

Strategy	Actions	Outcomes	Prime Parties
Creating networked and knowledgeable learning communities capable of attracting, connecting and retaining workforce	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 Build workforce links with Phillipines India-Australia relationship	RDA Murray, DEWR, LJP, NSW GROW, Training Services NSW, DoHA, NSW Investment, MNSW
	2. Collaborate with TAFEs, RTOs, LJP, GROW & 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
Model ethical leadership and inclusion of diverse perspectives	3. 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, Border Trust, AVCLP, Goulburn Murray Community Leadership - FAIRLEY Leadership, LEAD Loddon Murray, Northern Mallee Leaders, First Nations organisations, peak industry & sector bodies, NSW Gov, CBC
		More community members participate in regional leadership opportunities	
Collaborate for stronger and more attuned collective impact	4. Facilitate connections between all government, community and private industry levels to identify solutions	Local plans have diverse and engaged voices representing the whole of the population	LGAs, peak industry & sector bodies, NSW Gov, AWH, First Nations organisations RDAS, multicultural peak bodies and inter-agencies, First Nations organisations
		Local projects are more inclusive	
Leadership development of subregions	5. 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, First Nations organisations
	6. Integrate systems to engage and develop economic participation of marginalised groups (First Nations, women, people living with disability, young people) eg LJP & GROW	More novel economic opportunities are realised earlier than otherwise expected	RDA Murray, DRNSW, DEWR, Training Services NSW, RDAS, First Nations peak bodies and LGAs
Growing Regional Communities of Welcome	7. Develop systems to identify, engage and settle newcomers to the region	More people coming to and staying in the region and contributing to workforce and society	Multicultural NSW GROW Taskforce, employers & LGAs

Regional Development Priorities 2022-2025

Meeting the needs of, and providing opportunities for, First Nations people.
Supporting the transformation to a net zero economy and decarbonisation.
Achieving gender equality.

National Priority Focus Areas

2. Investing in Places

Strategy	Actions	Outcomes	Prime Parties
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 fixed wireless and satellite upgrade	The <i>Australian Digital Inclusion Index</i> score for the region improves	RDA Murray, RAMJO, DITRDCA, NBN Co, Telcos
	2. MIL Bridges	Cost effective transport, freight and touring routes are maintained	DITRDCA, LGAs, NSW Government, Transport NSW, DRM, DNSW, MRT, MIL
	3. Engage SecureEnergy investment in legacy infrastructure in Wentworth & Balranald LGAs	Improvement to enduring amenity and services in Wentworth & Balranald LGAs	SecureEnergy JV, Wentworth & Balranald LGAs, Mildura Regional Development, 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, AusIndustry, AusTrade, Business NSW, Defence, Regional NSW
Build world standard housing, health, education, leisure and recreational opportunities, for all	5. 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, DITRDCA, AWH, Health Infrastructure NSW
	6. Active transport/public transport	Increased bus capacity and accessibility. More cycling and walking paths	NSW Transport, Regional NSW AlburyCity Council, DET, & LGAs

Regional Development Priorities 2022-2025

Meeting the needs of, and providing opportunities for, First Nations people.
Supporting the transformation to a net zero economy and decarbonisation.
Achieving gender equality.

National Priority Focus Areas

3. Investing in Services

Strategy	Actions	Outcomes	Prime Parties
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 fixed wireless and satellite upgrade	The <i>Australian Digital Inclusion Index</i> score for the region improves	RDA Murray, RAMJO, DITRDCA, NBN Co, Telcos
Develop multi-modal links and hubs to drive visitation and tourism	2. Support the creation of touring economies through markets, arts, crafts, food and other cultural events	More people attend more events in the Murray Region	DNSW, DRNSW, LGAs, local community organisations, MArts, SWArts, WArts
Build world standard housing, health, education, leisure and recreational opportunities, for all	3. Support seamless access to quality health and education services (eg Albury Wodonga Regional Projects). Explore models for equitable delivery to rural communities	More equitable healthcare and education services exist in the Murray Region	NSW Government, DITRDCA, AWH, AWAHS, ACCHOs, & Health Infrastructure NSW
	4. Advocate for equitable access to housing, healthcare, education, recreation and opportunities to socialise	All levels of government are engaged in the Murray Region eg AWH new emergency department and Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital project	RDA Murray and peak bodies, LGAs, NSW government, Vic government, Aus government
	5. Incentivise workforce through investment in amenity and liveability	Improved essential services, internet, health, GPs	DITRDCA, AWH, LGAs
	6. Support active transport/ public transport	Increased bus capacity	NSW Transport, Regional NSW, AlburyCity Council

Regional Development Priorities 2022-2025

Meeting the needs of, and providing opportunities for, First Nations people.
Supporting the transformation to a net zero economy and decarbonisation.
Achieving gender equality.

National Priority Focus Areas

4. Investing in Industries and Local Economies

Strategy	Actions	Outcomes	Prime Parties
Develop multi-modal links and hubs to drive freight transport, logistics and warehousing	1. Support business development for multi-modal hubs	Accelerated development of intermodal freight hubs and warehousing investment Murray producers have better freight and supply chain access	DITRDCA, SWG, MRFH, industry & private equity investors
Creating networked and knowledgeable learning communities capable of attracting, connecting and retaining workforce	2. Connect potential employees with employers	More employees take up jobs in the Murray eg Jobs Riverina Murray GROW & LJP	RDA Murray, RDA Riverina, Transgrid, LGAs, NSW Govt, LJP & GROW
	3. Engage employers in workforce pipeline and support optional employment ecosystem	Employers are actively addressing workforce pipeline constraints More people come to the Murray Region eg Country Change, RAI Move to More, Local Govt programs	RDA Murray, Regions NSW, industry & business sector, LJP, peak bodies & education sector RDA Murray, RDA Riverina, Transgrid, LGAs, NSW Govt, LJP & GROW
	4. Population attraction program		
	5. Settlement support	New workforce recruitment and retention options in the region	MNSW, GROW, NGOs, AWECC, SMECC, AWVRB, Sanctuary, WWRRC, Our House
Accelerate capacity building and economic diversification	6. Optimise connectivity with international contemporary best practice to increase regional uptake of best practice	Murray businesses implement world standard best practices and are linked to international industry & sector leaders	Industry and sector peak bodies, AusGov & education sector
	7. 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
Champion behaviours that preserve, conserve and regenerate our natural resources (focussing on water, vegetation, soil and carbon) to address climate change	8. Support Murray Landcare Collective, a dynamic primary producer and land manager learning community	Normalising the use of sustainable practices eg alternative energy sources, circular use of waste, lower emissions vehicles, soils, water	Southern Innovation & Drought Hub, NSW Cultural Heritage, Landcare NSW, NLN, LAL, Murray LLS, NSW Reconstruction Authority, NEMA, MDBA, Emergency Management agencies, local peak bodies, NSW Gov & LGAs, SWG softwood working group, Murray River Forestry Hub
	9. R&D, extension of best practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circular economy Decarbonisation Net Zero (renewable energy production, transmission & battery storage) 	Murray Region industry, businesses and people are more prepared and have optimal mitigation infrastructure in place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plantation fire towers Livestock drought feeding pads Levee banks and optimised river management for local economies eg agriculture, tourism, horticulture 	NSW Reconstruction Authority, NEMA, MDBA, Emergency Management agencies, local peak bodies, NSW Gov & LGAs, SWG, Murray River Forestry Hub
	10. Drought, flood and bushfire disaster resilience programs		

Strategic Regional Plan Methodology

Our Strategic Regional Plan (SRP) is a dynamic document which records our region's basis for economic development activity. We developed it with the aim of providing a wide range of stakeholders, potential investors and policy-makers with a better understanding of the region.

After the introduction of the Australian Government's new approach to delivering regional investment in July 2023, RDA Murray has re-examined its SRP methodology to ensure it aligns with the four priority focus areas of the *Regional Investment Framework*² and *RDA Charter*¹.

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.

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.

RDA Murray listened to the voices of key stakeholders who agreed on a set of common needs and priorities. Our SRP was developed through listening and gathering data to inform a consultative and evidence-based approach. It was important to ensure the Plan reflected both quantitative data and the rich, in-depth insights offered by key stakeholders throughout the region.

However we aim to be concise!

The listening process included:

- Multiple discussions with the RDA Murray Board
- Interviews with key stakeholders from across the region including representatives from the three levels of government, including administrative and elected members, health boards, industry and tourism bodies, NGOs, multicultural community organisations, Landcare and producer groups, religious faith leaders, First Nations community leaders and agencies, MSEAT, private enterprise, NSW Farmers and MDBA
- Surveying key stakeholders in relation to regional priorities.

We considered a range of planning documents and processes including the priorities of the 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 and six neighbouring RDA strategic plans
- Ten Local Government strategic plans.
- *Making it happen: Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041*
- NSW Reconstruction Authority state disaster mitigation plan
- National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework and National Strategy for Disaster Resilience
- National Farmers Federation 2030 Roadmap and NSW Farmers Association Strategic Plan
- Regional Australia Institute
- South West Slopes Forestry Hub Strategic Plan

Successful planning depends on working with stakeholders invested in our region and we always welcome their feedback. Our SRP is reviewed regularly to ensure it is up-to-date.

Review of Progress

The RDA Murray Strategic Regional Plan 2022-2025 was first published in June 2022 and the following actions and achievements have occurred since publication.

Responding to natural disasters

The Murray region experienced its most widespread and long-lasting floods from October 2022 until the end of March 2023. RDA Murray provided significant emergency management, disaster response and community support across Federation, Berrigan, Murrumbidgee, Murray River, Edward River, Balranald and Wentworth LGAs. We have played an active role in emergency management, assessment, analysis and recovery activities with ongoing advocacy and support for those affected by the floods.

RDA Murray has been preparing for the 2024 bushfire season and drought resilience.

Federal Government

The Australian Government appointed Eden Monaro MP, Kristy McBain, as Minister for Regional Development, Local Government & Territories within two weeks of the May 2022 election. Minister McBain launched the RDA Murray Strategic Regional Plan in September 2022 at the Henty Machinery Field Days and immersed herself in the processes of regional development and investment as she met key stakeholders from Landcare, producer groups, state LLS, CSU and Federal Drought & Innovations Hubs, as well as members of the public throughout the Field Days.

In 2023, the Australian Government:

- released the *Regional Investment Framework* and *Regional Development Australia Charter*,
- conducted national RDA revitalisation and
- completed a boundary review of NSW RDAs as at October 2023.

NSW Government

The NSW State Government changed in March 2023 and both local members held their seats.

The Member for Albury (Justin Clancy) is the Shadow Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education while the independent Member for Murray (Helen Dalton) holds the balance of power in the NSW State government.

RDA Murray has been influential in progressing the following projects:

People

- Riverina redevelopment defence project
- Training services and skills cross-border investment
- *Light/State* funding
- Regional Partnerships & Precincts Program (rPPP) application support
- Dare to Lead Dareton
- Social work student unit
- ARLF mentoring
- Fischer Leadership program
- Financial Governance Benchmarking program
- AICD Boardroom Mastery
- Inter-regional RDA Board presentations
- Murray Socio-Economic Taskforce (MSEAT) has evolved to sub-regional consultation groups
- Dare To Lead regional leadership program commenced
- SW Student unit
- The Euston Economic Development Forum, in partnership with Department of Regional NSW, bringing Balranald and Wentworth LGA stakeholders together to coordinate their economic development activities
- Enabled the TransGrid VIC/NSW Interconnector West regional consultative group
- TransGrid Project Energy Connect (PEC) enabled connections with First Nations and multicultural communities for workforce development and community engagement.

Places

- Funding of Murray Irrigation Limited environmental projects
- Welcoming Communities activities:
 1. Cross-border migrant newcomers in partnership with Gateway Health
 2. Paskong Pilipino migrant welcome
 3. Review Murray region skilled migration welcome pack
 4. Review Murray region newcomers welcome information
 5. Hosted and presented skilled migrant international familiarisation webinar
- Multicultural policy launched by AlburyCity
- Melbourne University workplace English research project initiated
- Australian Rural Leadership Foundation (ARLF) and Regional Australia Institute's (RAI) Leading Australian Resilient Communities (LARC) program delivered

Review of Progress

- Inland Rail consultation and community engagement support
- TransGrid Hume Link community engagement, advice and support
- AlburyCity Council active public spaces and public transport review.

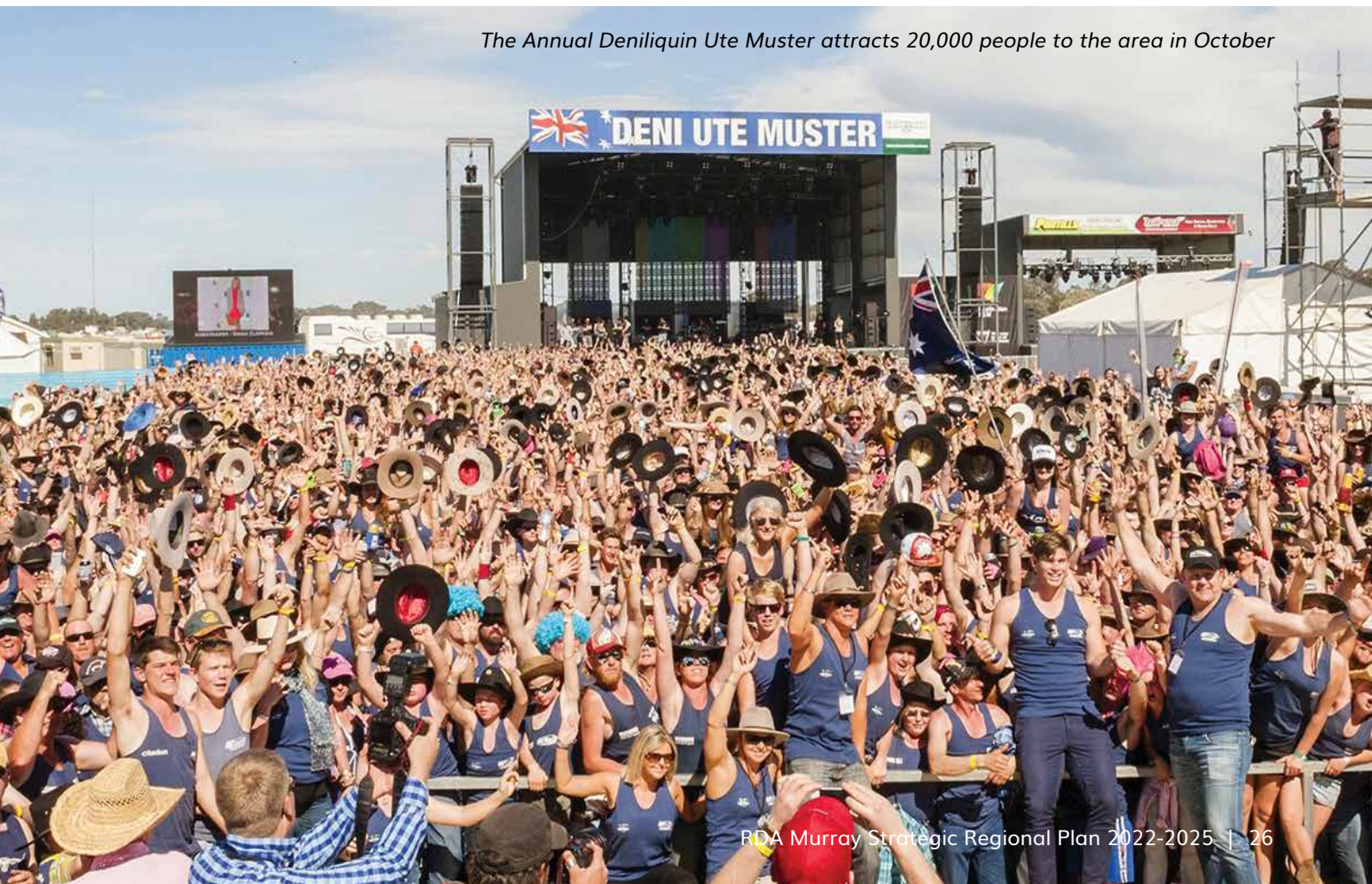
Services

- Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital Project - \$558m funding commitment announced to progress the project
- Wentworth Hospital funding commitment
- Launch of Jobs Riverina Murray Talent Community
- Extension of Country Change to five additional Murray LGAs
- Cross-border Multicultural childcare workforce round table
- Multicultural NSW Growing Regions of Welcome Taskforce
- DEWR LJP Taskforce
- Aged care LJP working group
- LJP Aboriginal employment working group
- NBN connectivity and cyber security event
- Community consultation took place and a working group was formed to advance Deniliquin Country Universities Centre.

Industries and Local Economies

- Funding for Balranald-Wentworth Joint Economic Development Plan
- Bushfire recovery and stimulus funding for Murray River Forestry Hub (MRFH)
- Nexus circular economy development
- Cross-border industry future workforce forum
- Workforce development through skilled migration, secondary settlement, refugee multicultural engagement and community development
- Solar, wind and battery farm investment
- Agricultural & horticultural workforce, livestock and cropping best practice awareness raising and implementation
- Horticultural seasonal workforce support system
- Skilled migration support
- Migrant & newcomer 'welcomes' & settlement support
- Jobs Riverina Murray online talent community launched
- Events & conference promotion & support

The Annual Deniliquin Ute Muster attracts 20,000 people to the area in October



Workforce Development Plan

The degree of disruption and constraint in the community has led to the prioritisation of a region-wide workforce development plan. Newcomers to the region expect similar access to services and amenity as they experienced in metropolitan areas.

1. New ideas for housing & accommodation

- Address quantity and quality of housing stock available to improve the liveability of the whole region
- Engage affordable housing operators across the region
- Support local government and planning initiatives
- Focus on fit-for-purpose accommodation
- Utilising vacant bedrooms in housing through sharing programs (eg Adopt A Granny, Flatmates)
- Retirement communities
- Employment related temporary accommodation
- Flood repair and replacement
- Promoting rental sharing and availability apps (eg Flatmates).
- Conversion of retail and commercial space to residential.

2. Better access to jobs

- Meeting the needs of 'work from home' workers requires improved digital connectivity in the region
- Matching people to jobs through Local Jobs Program, NSW GROW, Riverina Murray Jobs Board
- Collecting evidence of issues and responding accordingly
- Word-of-mouth mapping networks and researching evidence
- Research solutions for job seeker employment constraints.

3. Population attraction

The Murray Region has more jobs than people. Attracting domestic and international newcomers is vital, as is embracing multiculturalism. Key areas to address are:

(a) Welcoming newcomers to our region through:

- Regional returners
- Tree changers
- Retirees

- Remote professional workers
- Multicultural NSW GROW
- Skilled migration
- Refugee support.

(b) Connecting with metropolitan communities via existing programs such as:

- Country Change local campaign
- Multicultural NSW GROW
- Regional Australia Institute (RAI) Regional Activators Alliance (RAA) membership
- RAA *Move to More* national population attraction campaign.

(c) Connecting to global communities, particularly:

- Phillipines
- India
- Solomon Islands
- Other Pacific Islands.

4. Education and skills

Key opportunities for improvement, access and retention through DEWR LJP Taskforce are:

- Country Universities Centres
- DAMA
- CSU
- NSW TAFE & NSW Training Services
- Compact Inc
- Industry collaborations.

5. Workforce retention

Newcomers expect an equivalent standard of health and education, childcare, aged care, transport and digital connectivity as they previously experienced. In order to retain them, we will work on improvements across the board, in:

- Digital connectivity, literacy, affordability and accessibility
- Access to high quality childcare, aged care and disability care services
- Access to a general practitioner and other health services
- Access to schools
- Access to faith communities
- Trauma informed employment ecosystem trial
- Millennial intergenerational cultural adaptation
- Training every existing staff member.

Workforce Development Plan

6. Leaving no one behind

First Nations

In consultation with First Nations communities and through First Nations-controlled or led organisations and activities we aim to enhance economic and political participation by our First Nations people as well as creating new Business Development Programs for potential First Nations businesses.

- Prioritise targets from Closing the Gap and National Wellbeing Framework indicators
- Support Aboriginal-controlled organisation input and leadership in regional development.

Net Zero

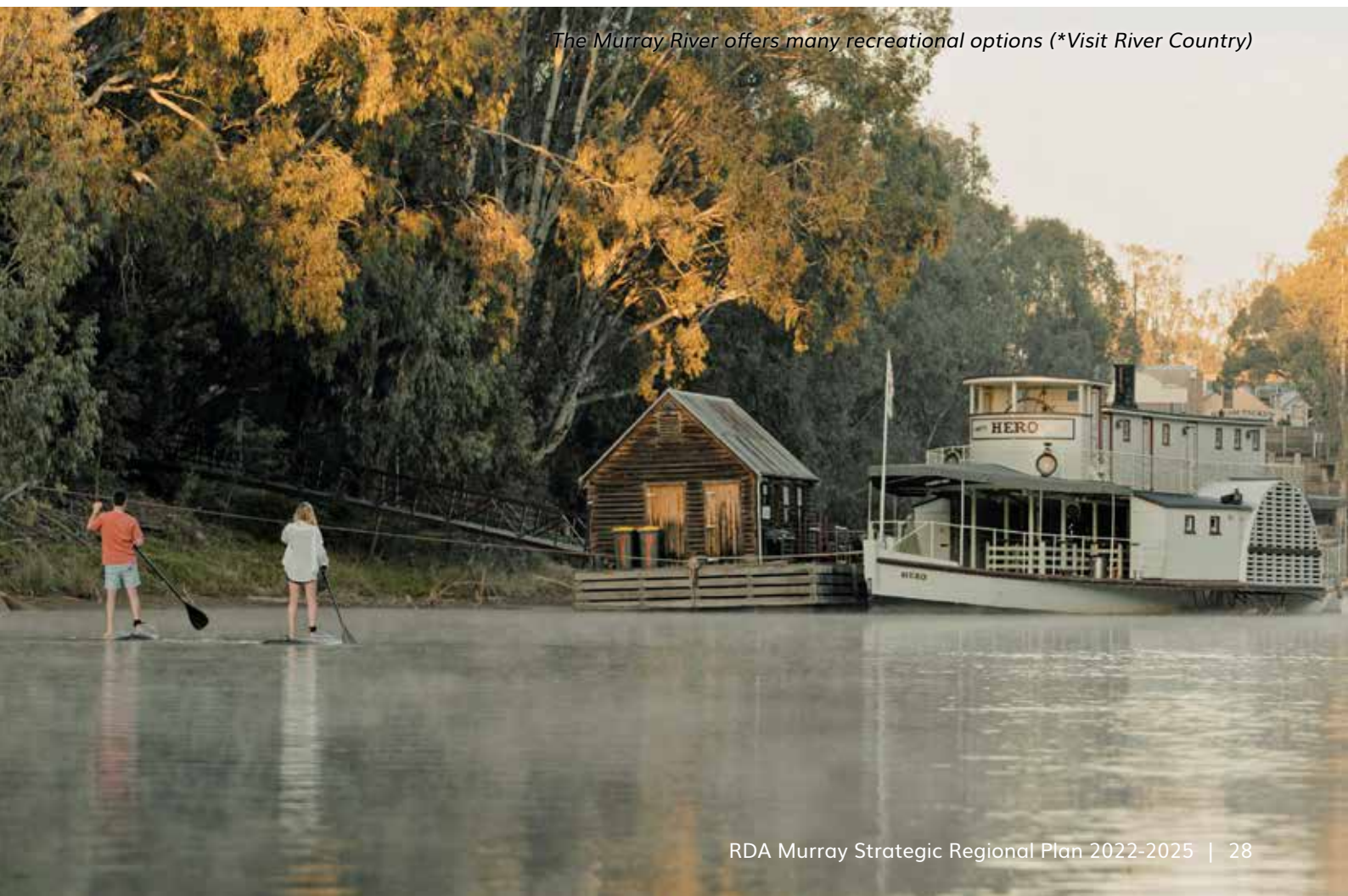
- Support policy and implementation of Southwest Renewable Energy Zone
- Support project delivery for transmission and creation of renewable energy
 - Snowy 2.0
 - VNI West
 - Project Energy Connect
- Promote best practice decarbonisation across agriculture, horticulture and manufacturing
- Encourage R&D and innovative decarbonisation activities.

Gender Equality

In consultation with women and peak bodies support activating gender equality across socio-economic barriers.

- Support programs that innovatively improve non-traditional workforce participation
- Engage more women in more employment
- Increase access to childcare to optimise womens' participation in the workforce
- Address barriers to socio-economic participation and inclusion for people who identify as non-binary
- Normalise non-binary gender identification
- Develop inclusive social, cultural and economic environments eg showcasing inclusive practices
- Engage employers in contemporary employment practices that foster inclusion and participation, especially for young people and those with non-traditional gender identity.

*The Murray River offers many recreational options (*Visit River Country)*



RDA Murray Stakeholders

Our most important stakeholders are the people who live and work in the region.

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

AlburyCity Council
Balranald Shire Council
Berrigan Shire Council
Edward River Council
Federation Council
Greater Hume Council
Snowy Valleys Council
Wentworth Shire Council
Far South West Joint Organisation
Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation
Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils
Joint Organisation of Councils

NSW State Government

NSW Ministers and Members of Parliament

Department of Communities and Justice
Ageing and Disability Commission
Multicultural NSW
NSW Police Force
NSW Reconstruction Authority
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
Albury & District
Brungle-Tumut
Balranald
Cummeragunja
Dareton
Deniliquin
Moama
Narrandera
Wagga Wagga
Wamba Wamba

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
Victorian Skills Commissioner Our Place program

Wentworth/Dareton Community Working Party
Wentworth Regional Tourism Inc
Western Arts

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

ACC: AlburyCity Council

ACCHOs: Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations

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

AVCLP: Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Program

AWAHS: Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service

AWECC: Albury Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council

AWH: Albury Wodonga Health

AWVRB: Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau

BEC: Business Enterprise Centre

BMEET: Barkindji Maraura Elders Environment Team Limited

CBC: Cross-Border Commissioner

CLP: Community Leadership Programs

CRJO: Canberra Region Joint Organisation

CSU: Charles Sturt University

CUC: Country University Centres

CWP: Community Working Party

DAMA: Designated Area Migration Agreements

DAWE: Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

DCJ Housing: NSW Department of Communities and Justice

DEWR: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

DISER: Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

DITRDCA: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and Arts

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

DRNSW: Department of Regions

EES: Environment, Energy and Science Group (DPE)

FWJO: Far West Joint Organisation

GRP: Gross Regional Product

ICN: Industry Capability Network

ICT: Information Communications Technology

IPA: Indigenous Protected Area

JO: Joint Organisation of Councils

LAL: Landcare Australia Ltd

LALC: Local Aboriginal Land Councils

LARC: Leading Australian Resilient Communities

LaTrobe: Latrobe University

LGAs: Local Government Areas

LJP: Local Jobs Program

LLS: Local Land Services NSW

MArts: Murray Arts

MBA: Master Builders Association

MCCCGP: Murray City Country Coast General Practitioner Training

MDBA: Murray Darling Basin Authority

MIL: Murray Irrigation Limited

MLC: Murray Landcare Collective

MNSW: Multicultural NSW

Abbreviations & Acronyms

MRD: Mildura Regional Development	REDS NSW: Regional Economic Development Strategies New South Wales for the Snowy Valleys, Albury-Wodonga, Western Murray and Murray regions
MRFH: Murray Region Forestry Hub	
MRT: Murray Regional Tourism	REDS VIC: Regional Economic Development Strategies Victoria for the Ovens, Murray-Goulburn, Loddon-Campaspe and Mallee regions
MSEAT: Murray Socio-Economic Activation Taskforce	
NBN Co: National Broadband Network Company	Regional NSW: Department of Regional New South Wales
NDIA: National Disability Insurance Agency	REROC: Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils
NDIS: National Disability Insurance Scheme	
NEC: National Environment Centre	REZ: Renewable Energy Zone
NEMA: National Emergency Management Authority	RFS: Rural Fire Service
NFF: National Farmers Federation	RGA: Rice Growers Association
NGO: Non Government Organisation	RJO: Riverina Joint Organisation
NIAA: National Indigenous Australia Agency	RMRA: Riverina Murray Regional Alliance
NLN: National Landcare Network	rPPP: Regional Partnerships & Precincts Program
NPWS: National Parks and Wildlife Service	SDMP: State Disaster Mitigation Plan
NRHA: National Rural Health Alliance	SEGRA: Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia
NRRA: National Recovery and Resilience Agency	SMECC: Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council
NSW Education: NSW Department of Education	SWArts: South West Arts
NSW EES: New South Wales Environment, Energy & Science	SWG: Softwoods Working Group
NSW Far Western: refers to the NSW Government-defined region	Southern Drought Hub: Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub
NSWF: New South Wales Farmers Association	TAFE NSW: Tertiary and Further Education New South Wales
NSW Government: refers to the NSW Government in its entirety	TSNSW: Training Services New South Wales
NSW Riverina Murray: refers to the NSW Government-defined region	UNSW Medical School: University of New South Wales Medical School
Nuffield: Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust	VNI West: Victoria to NSW Interconnector
PEC: TransGrid Project Energy Connect	WWRRCC: Walla Walla Refugee Resettlement Community Committee
RAI: Regional Australia Institute	WArts: Western Arts
RAMJO: Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation	
RDAS: Regional Disability Advisory Services	
RDC: Rural Research and Development Corporation	

References

1. Regional Development Australia Charter, July 2023.
<https://www.rda.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/rda-charter.pdf>
2. Regional Investment Framework (RIF) <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/regional-investment-framework-july2023.pdf>
3. Infrastructure Australia, *Regional Strengths & Infrastructure Gaps, Regional Analysis: New South Wales*, March 2022
https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-03/3_RSIG_Regional%20Analysis_NSW.pdf
4. <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/>
5. <https://www.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au/>
6. <https://alc.org.au/>
7. AEC Group Pty Ltd, Murray Region Economic Profile
<https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/travel-to-the-murray-ye-december-2021.pdf>
8. <https://rdamurray.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/RDA-Murray-Strategic-Regional-Plan-2022-2025.pdf>
9. <https://www.businessnsw.com/content/dam/nswbc/businessnsw/pdf/Riverina%20Project%20-%20Down%20to%20the%20Wire%20Report.pdf>
10. Building Approvals April 21-March 22. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Housing Data.
<https://www.housingdata.gov.au/visualisation/housing-market/building-approvals-local-government-area>
11. Invest Albury Wodonga, Connected Location
<https://www.investalburywodonga.com.au/why/connected-location>
12. NSW Department of Primary Industries, *Agriculture Industry Snapshot for Planning*, August 2020
https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1260492/Murray-Snapshot.pdf
https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1260490/Lower-Murray-Snapshot.pdf
13. *The Murray Visitor Profile* Year ended December 2021. Source: National and International Visitor Surveys, Tourism Research Australia.
<https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/travel-to-the-murray-ye-december-2021.pdf>



An Australian Government Initiative



MURRAY NSW

Regional Development Australia Murray Inc
2/566 Kiewa Street
Albury NSW 2640

(02) 6060 2491
edwina.hayes@rdamurray.org.au
www.rdamurray.org.au