



The Hon. Michaela Settle MP

Minister for Regional Development

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
Inquiry into the 2026/27 Budget Estimates

20 May 2026



Jobs, Skills,
Industry
and Regions

State of the Portfolio

The Victorian Government is working with industry, business and local communities to drive strong economic outcomes for regional Victoria.

- Victoria's regional economy is now worth **\$118.6 billion**, a **23.4% increase** since 20 14- 15.
- There are now **811,800** people employed in regional Victoria.
- Regional Victoria's unemployment rate of **3.9%** is the second lowest of regional areas in Australia.
- Regional employment has grown by **more than 22%** since November 20 14.
- Regional Victoria excels in key industries including energy production, natural resources, food and fibre and advanced manufacturing.



Our Achievements

- ➔ In the past decade, Regional Development Victoria has committed more than **\$2.27 billion** of funding and delivered over **4,000** projects.
- ➔ The Regional Development Portfolio has:
 - created more than **14,200** jobs
 - attracted and facilitated almost **\$8.45 billion** in private sector investment
 - facilitated more than **\$765 million** in exports from regional businesses.
- ➔ The portfolio is on course to attract more than **\$736 million** in private sector investment over 2024-25 and 2025-26.
- ➔ We are currently delivering more than **610** projects across the state worth **\$1.317 billion**.



Our Achievements

- The 10-year **\$676 million** Geelong City Deal is in its 7th year with **21 of 32 projects complete**.
- The Twelve Apostles Precinct Redevelopment is under construction and on-track for completion in 2026.
- Launched the **\$15 million** Trunk Infrastructure Fund, which will unlock new regional industrial land for business and industry investment.
- **48** Regional Worker Accommodation Fund projects announced to date, leveraging approximately **\$370 million** in housing and accommodation investment, creating **1,750 fit-for-purpose bedrooms** for key workers and their families.
- Almost **350** regional projects announced through two rounds of the Tiny Towns Fund, across more than **300** towns.

In 2025-26, we enabled economic transformation through targeted place-based investment and facilitation

Mallee:

Irymple worker housing project completed, providing 10 new units to support local jobs in healthcare, education and the police.

Wimmera Southern Mallee:

Delivered 4 new homes at Hopetoun enabling **employment and residence for 12 key workers**, resulting in the re-opening of the Rural NW Health Urgent Care Clinic.

Central Highlands:

Rijk Zwaan has completed a glasshouse expansion at Bacchus Marsh that will create **40 jobs**.

Great South Coast:

Midfield Meats in Warrnambool is expanding production, **creating up to 300 new jobs** and increasing annual exports.

Barwon:

Avalon Airport freight, domestic and international terminal upgrades enhancing operations and services creating **80 new jobs**.

Loddon Campaspe:

Upgrade and expansion of the **Tongala Nutrition** dairy manufacturing facility, **creating 40 new jobs** under the Victorian Investment Fund.

Goulburn:

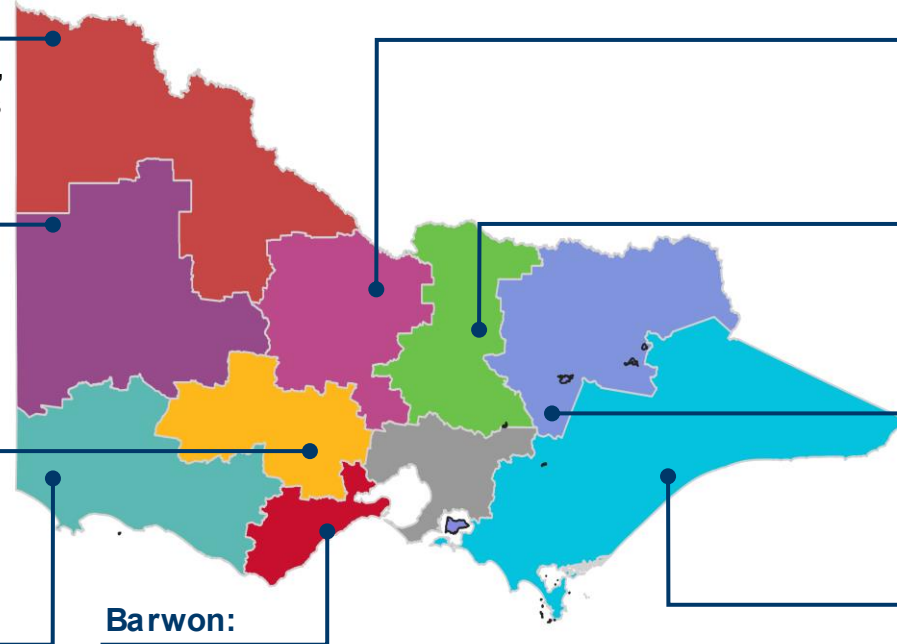
Seeka's key worker accommodation project will provide 64 beds for seasonal workers in the Goulburn Valley Food Bowl.

Ovens Murray:

The new multi-million dollar **O'Briens Transport** facility in Logic industrial precinct has **created 30 new jobs and brought 140 jobs** into Wodonga.

Gippsland:

Latrobe Valley Village's key worker accommodation project transformed an unused wing of the existing building into new self-contained units to house 7 professional aged care workers.



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT VICTORIA ACTIVITIES

Facilitating private sector investment to create long-term, quality jobs

Collaborating across government to secure new investments of state significance

Delivering enabling infrastructure for regional growth

Collaborating with stakeholders to plan for economic development opportunities, including Regional Partnerships

Improving liveability of our regional cities and rural towns

Facilitating solutions for border communities and economies



Budget Initiatives

- **\$26.5 million** to boost productivity, liveability and investment in Victoria's regions.
- **\$0.5 million** to support the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council in delivering programs that develop skills and reconnect those who are unemployed or experiencing long-term unemployment with education and training.
- **\$0.8 million** for the Ride High Country Marketing Phase 2 project to support longer-term tourism in Porepunkah, Bright and the surrounding region.
- **\$0.2 million** to strengthen the Country Women's Association of Victoria's capability and capacity to deliver critical support services to regional communities.
- **\$0.9 million** for the Victorian Cross Border Commissioner to continue to streamline regulatory and licencing requirements, promote economic growth and reduce barriers to accessing services in Victoria's border communities.