



# Agenda

## Scheduled Council Meeting

Tuesday 21 April 2026

to be held at 2:00 PM

Council Chambers

Swan Hill Town Hall

53 – 57 McCallum Street, Swan Hill. VIC 3585

### Public Access

Open to the public and live streaming from  
Council's website: [www.swanhill.vic.gov.au](http://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au)



## Governance Rules

A copy of Swan Hill Rural City Council's governance rules can be found at <https://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/about/overview/policies/governance-rules-2020/>

## Executive Leadership Team

Scott Barber, Chief Executive Officer

Bruce Myers, Director of Community and Cultural Services

Leah Johnston, Director of Infrastructure

Michelle Grainger, Director of Development and Planning

Stephen Fernando, Director of Corporate Services

## Swan Hill Elected Members



**Cr Stuart King**  
0437 967 531  
[stuart.king@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:stuart.king@swanhill.vic.gov.au)



**Cr Terry Jennings**  
0429 449 578  
[terry.jennings@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:terry.jennings@swanhill.vic.gov.au)



**Cr Les McPhee**  
0427 319 394  
[les.mcphee@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:les.mcphee@swanhill.vic.gov.au)



**Cr Hugh Broad**  
0408 250 683  
[hugh.broad@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:hugh.broad@swanhill.vic.gov.au)



**Cr Peta Thornton**  
0417 219 229  
[peta.thornton@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:peta.thornton@swanhill.vic.gov.au)



**Cr Lindsay Rogers**  
0499 720 035  
[lindsay.rogers@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:lindsay.rogers@swanhill.vic.gov.au)



**Cr Philip Englefield**  
0429 079 650  
[philip.inglefield@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:philip.inglefield@swanhill.vic.gov.au)

## Vision Statement

Built on strong foundations that embrace our rich History and natural environment, our region will be a place of progressions and possibility. We are a community that is happy, healthy and harmonious - we are empowered, we are respectful and we are proud.

## Our Mission

We will lead, advocate, partner and provide efficient services and opportunities for growth and the wellbeing of our community, environment and economy.

## Our Values

Council values our residents and community and will be responsive to their needs. In pursuing our objectives, we believe in, and are committed to, the following values:

**Community engagement** - We will ensure that our communities are consulted, listened to and informed.

**Leadership** - We will be at the centre of our community and by actively engaging our community we will form the collective view on strategic issues and will then express our views through strong advocacy and action.

**Fairness** - We will value and embrace the diversity of our community and ensure that all people are treated equally.

**Accountability**- We will be transparent and efficient in our activities and we will always value feedback.

**Trust** - We will act with integrity and earn the community's trust by being a reliable partner in delivering services, projects and providing facilities.

## Table of Contents

<b>1 Procedural Matters</b> .....	<b>7</b>
1.1 Welcome .....	7
1.2 Acknowledgement Of Country .....	7
1.3 Opening Declaration .....	7
1.4 Apologies / Leaves of Absence.....	7
1.5 Directors / Officers Present.....	7
1.6 Confirmation of Minutes .....	7
1.7 Disclosures of Conflict of Interest.....	7
1.8 Joint Letters and Reading of Petitions .....	7
1.9 Public Questions Time .....	8
1.10 Open Forum .....	10
<b>2 Officer Reports for Decision</b> .....	<b>12</b>
2.1 Declaration of a Special Rate for the Swan Hill Region .....	12
2.2 Resource Ready Strategy .....	38
2.3 Planning Application - 45 Butterworth Street Swan Hill - Subdivision of Land (6 Lots) and Removal of Easement in the Low Density Residential Zone .	144
<b>3 Decisions Which Need Action / Ratification</b> .....	<b>203</b>
3.1 Sign and Seal.....	203
3.2 Councillor Briefings - Record of Attendance and Agenda Items .....	205
<b>4 Notices of Motion</b> .....	<b>212</b>
<b>5 Foreshadowed Items</b> .....	<b>212</b>
<b>6 Urgent Items Not Included In Agenda</b> .....	<b>212</b>
<b>7 To Consider and Order on Councillor Reports</b> .....	<b>212</b>
<b>8 In-Camera Items</b> .....	<b>212</b>
8.1 Contract Review - Supply and Delivery of Concrete, Quarry and Bituminous Products Panel.....	212

8.2 Strategic Disposal and Development of 64–66 McCrae Street Swan Hill..	212
8.3 Strategic Disposal and Development of 42 Monash Drive Swan Hill.....	212
<b>9 Close of Meeting .....</b>	<b>213</b>

## 1 Procedural Matters

### 1.1 Welcome

### 1.2 Acknowledgement Of Country

*“Swan Hill Rural City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, and pays its respects to their elders, past and present.”*

### 1.3 Opening Declaration

*“We beseech you Lord, that we may be granted wisdom, understanding and sincerity of purpose, in the decisions we are called on to make for the welfare of the people of the Rural City of Swan Hill.”*

Or

“We, the Councillors of Swan Hill Rural City Council, declare that we will undertake the duties of the office of Councillor, in the best interests of our community, and faithfully, and impartially, carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in us, to the best of our skill and judgement.”

### 1.4 Apologies / Leaves of Absence

None when the Agenda was distributed.

### 1.5 Directors / Officers Present

### 1.6 Confirmation of Minutes

#### 1.6.1 Confirmation of Minutes

#### Recommendation/s

**That the minutes of the Scheduled Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 17 March 2026 be confirmed.**

### 1.7 Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

### 1.8 Joint Letters and Reading of Petitions

Nil.

## 1.9 Public Questions Time

**You can access the form Public Question Time form from:**

<https://forms.swanhill.vic.gov.au/council-meeting-public-question-time/>

### **Please note**

- Only ONE question per form submission.
- Submission must be received no later than 10:00am on the day prior to the meeting.
- A time is set aside for public questions during a Council meeting at which time each question will be read after the Chairman has looked at its contents and determined that the question is appropriate.
- Statements and opinions are not permitted during question time and will not be read to the meeting.
- The Chairman may disallow any question. This may be because the question is repetitive of a question already asked, objectionable, irrelevant, raises an issue of a confidential nature or is asked to embarrass a Councillor or Council officer. The Chairman will provide reasons where a question is disallowed. Questions considered to be inappropriate will be made available to Councillors on request.
- The Chairman will nominate the appropriate Councillor or Council officer to answer the question or elect to answer it himself/herself.
- No debate or discussion of the questions or answers is permitted.
- The Chairman may elect to take a question on notice in which case a written response will generally be provided within 10 working days.
- A summary of the text of the question and the response will be recorded in the minutes of the Council meeting.

### **Who can use this form**

- Any community member

### **While completing this form, we will request**

- Your contact details (including your name, address, phone and email)
- Your question

It will take about 5 minutes to complete this form.

### **After you submit this form**

- We will send you an email receipt to confirm we have received your submission

### **What happens with your information?**

The information requested in this form is collected by Swan Hill Rural City Council to assist us in responding to your question.

Your name, suburb and question may be read out at the Council meeting and will be recorded in the Council meeting minutes but will not be used for any other purpose unless required by law.

We will handle any personal information you provide on this form in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. We record this information on our customer databases and make it available to relevant Council staff in line with our Privacy Statement.

You can access your personal information by contacting our Privacy Officer.

## 1.10 Open Forum

Please see below “Governance Rules 2023 – Section 7 referring to Open Forum” which outlines the rules and procedure of open forum.

### **7. Community questions and submissions**

#### **7.1. Open Forum and Questions Of Council Time To Be Held**

- (1) The Council will hold Open Forum and Questions of Council Time for up to 30 minutes duration at the beginning of each Scheduled Meeting to allow public submissions and questions of Council. Extension of time may be granted by resolution of Council.
- (2) Open Forum is an opportunity for the general public to present to Council on a matter listed on the Agenda or any other matter.
- (3) Questions of Council are an opportunity for the general public to submit a question prior to the Scheduled Meeting and receive a response from Council in the Questions of Council time.
- (4) Council meetings are recorded and broadcasted to the public; this includes community questions and submissions.

#### **Open forum and questions of council guidelines**

**7.2.** Questions of Council time and Open Forum will not apply during any period when the Council has resolved to close the meeting in respect of a matter under section 66 (1) of the Act.

**7.3.** Submissions as part of Open Forum and Questions of Council may be on any matter except if it:

- (a) is considered malicious, defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial, or objectionable in language or substance;
- (b) relates to confidential information as defined under the Act;
- (c) relates to the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer; or
- (d) relates to any other matter which the Council considers would prejudice the Council or any person;
- (e) If a person has submitted more than 2 questions to a meeting, the third and further questions may, at the discretion of the Chairperson be deferred until all other person who have asked a question have had their questions asked and answered and not be asked if the time allotted for public question time has expired.

**7.4.** Where the Mayor does not accept a question, the submitter is to be informed of the reason or reasons for which their question was not accepted.

**7.5.** The Mayor reserves the right to cease a submission as part of Open Forum if they deem the submission inappropriate.

**7.6.** Where possible Copies of all questions allowed by the Mayor will be provided in writing to all Councillors.

- 7.7. A submission or question submitted in writing by a member of the public, which has been disallowed by the Mayor will be provided to any Councillor on request.

#### **Open forum**

- 7.8. For any member of the public who wishes to be heard at Open Forum they must give prior notice:
- (a) in written form;
  - (b) contain the name, address and email or contact telephone number of the person to be heard;
  - (c) by online request <https://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/>;
  - (d) in a letter to the Chief Executive Office, 45 Splatt Street, Swan Hill, Vic 3585; or
  - (e) in an email [council@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@swanhill.vic.gov.au); or
  - (f) hand delivery to the Council's Office, 45 Splatt Street, Swan Hill or 72 Herbert Street, Robinvale.
- 7.9. It is preferable for any group or association that wishes to be heard at Open Forum to nominate a spokesperson for an issue upon which the group or association may wish to be heard.

#### **Open Forum Procedure**

##### **7.10. Public addressing the Meeting**

- (1) Any member of the public addressing Council must extend due courtesy and respect to Council and the processes under which it operates and must take direction from the Chairperson whenever called on to do so.
- (2) Council may suspend standing orders to hear from a community member or representative of an organisation, on matters of significance to the Council, only if prior arrangements have been made by written request to the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.

- 7.11. The Chair will allocate a maximum of 3 minutes to each person who wishes to address Council.

- 7.12. The Chair will first invite any person who has given prior notice to present to Council.

- 7.13. The Chair will then invite members of the gallery who would like to present to Council.

- 7.14. The Chair has the discretion to alter the order of persons to be heard.

##### **7.15. The person in addressing the Council:**

- (a) must confine their address to the 3-minute allocation of time;
- (b) shall extend due courtesy and respect to the Council and the processes under which it operates; and
- (c) shall take direction from the Chair whenever called upon to do;
- (d) There will be no discussion or debate with the attendees to Open Forum however Councillors may ask questions of clarification of the attendee;
- (e) Standing Orders do not need to be suspended to allow discussion for the purposes of clarification.

## 2 Officer Reports for Decision

### 2.1 Declaration of a Special Rate for the Swan Hill Region

**Directorate:** Development and Planning

**File Number:** S 12-34-00

**Purpose:** For Decision

#### Council Plan Strategy Addressed

**1. Growth and Development** – Building a resilient local economy, supporting businesses, and attracting investment for a thriving future. Objective 1.2: Strengthen the visitor economy by showcasing the municipality’s unique places, culture, and experiences.

1.2.1 Grow the visitor economy.

1.2.2 Support a range of accommodation options to attract and retain overnight visitors.

**1. Growth and Development** – Building a resilient local economy, supporting businesses, and attracting investment for a thriving future. Objective 1.3: Grow local businesses and attract new investment into the municipality.

1.3.1 Be a business-friendly destination.

#### Current Strategic Documents

Council Plan

Swan Hill Region Economic Development Strategy 2024-2030

#### Declarations of Interest

Council Officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

#### Summary

The purpose of this report is to consider the extension of the Swan Hill Inc. Special Rate for a further period of time having completed the necessary statutory process including receiving submissions for and against the continuation of the special rate.

#### Discussion

As a result of a written request from Swan Hill Inc. to continue the current rate that is applied to tourism/hospitality, commercial and industrial businesses within Swan Hill and Lake Boga, Council at its December 2025 meeting determined to undertake the statutory process in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989.

The rate, first introduced in 2002, allows Swan Hill Inc. to undertake activities to support local businesses and attract visitors to the region. The current rate is due to expire on 30 June 2026, and Swan Hill Inc. requested the continuation of the rate for a further 10 year period commencing on 1 July 2026.

Council has now completed all the legislative requirements outlined in the Act for the declaration of a Special Rate.

Submissions received in relation to the Special Rate were as follows:

- Submissions in support of the Special Rate – 1
- Submissions against the Special Rate – 5
- One late submission – provided after the 6 March 2026 deadline for submissions.

One submitter presented to Council on the 31 March 2026.

In addition to the process that Council undertook, Swan Hill Inc. undertook its own separate process highlighting what Swan Hill Inc. had achieved during the life of the current agreement.

#### **Submission in Support of the Special Rate:**

The submission in supporting the continuation of the special rate highlighted the work of Swan Hill Inc. in bringing tens of thousands of visitors to the region. Without the marketing of Swan Hill Inc., the submission questioned what publicity Swan Hill region would receive.

Swan Hill Inc. needs to be able to continue its work as it is a highly competitive market for tourist dollars.

The amount of the special rate for the submitter was in their opinion excellent value, and their business would suffer if Swan Hill Inc did not exist.

#### **Submissions Objecting to the Special Rate:**

Details of the objections can be summarised as follows:

- **What are the benefits that the special rate has delivered, how effective has the programs been and how have the funds been distributed?**

Documents that have been provided to Council in the past such as budgets, marketing plans and strategic plans were provided to the business owner. There has been no further follow up action requested from the business owner.

- **We have a facility that stores aeroplanes and used for private use, not on a professional basis. We should not have to pay the levy.**

The property has been picked up in the valuation classifications as being an applicable property and is not exempt from the special rate. Council would need to

exclude the entire category rather than an individual property prior to the declaration of the rate which requires the process to be recommenced.

- **Our business receives no direct benefit from paying the Special Rate.**

No evidence supports this assertion. In accordance with how the rate is struck, if Council accepted this submission it would need to recommence the declaration process.

- **The Special Rate structure is no longer fair and equitable. There should be a review of the Special Rate and that if the Special Rate continues all ratepayers within the designated area should contribute to the scheme or that the boundaries be reviewed with a view to expanding the collection area. Council could consider the Special Rate as a part of its rating strategy.**

The process that the Council has been following in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989 is seen as an opportunity for the Special Rate and its operation to be reviewed.

If the Council were to consider making changes to the Special Rate to apply to all ratepayers in the designated area, or to expand the boundary it would need to abandon the current process and start again. This involves writing to all ratepayers with a determination of the rate to be applied, for what purpose and seeking new submissions.

The purpose of Swan Hill Inc. is to market and promote business activities and increase visitor numbers therefore requesting residential properties to pay the special rate would not appear to sit within the charter of Swan Hill Inc.

Council is required to review its rating strategy once every four years and the Special Rate. This occurred in 2025 and was adopted by Council.

- **If the Special Rate is a success the only way to prove this is to have a period of no levy (12 months) being applied to determine the success or failure of the levy.**

Swan Hill Inc. has presented to Council over the life of the Special Rate detailed reports about its activities, marketing, and business support. They have presented detailed information around visitor numbers which have been supported by key stakeholders within business and tourism sectors.

A hallmark of the Special Rate has been the certainty provided by having access to funding for marketing, promotion, business support, and events. A twelve month hiatus of the Special Rate may have a damaging impact on the ability to attract people to the region and would require a detailed assessment framework to be set up to monitor and capture impacts.

- **The levy only supports certain sectors**

The special rate has as its aim to provide for activities that support all the categories that it is applied to, and it could be argued that some categories benefit in more ways than others but it is not unrealistic to expect that the special rate provides both direct and indirect benefits to businesses.

- **Swan Hill Inc. activities such as market days are more disruptive than supportive and outsider trader's benefit.**

Whilst the opinion is noted the success of the market days with large numbers of the community and visitors alike supports staging of events like this as part of a broader suite of activities. Swan Hill Inc. only host two market days per year, and most businesses have supported these events.

- **The Special Rate should be voluntary.**

A voluntary contribution would make it difficult for Swan Hill Inc. to budget and plan activities. The success of Swan Hill Inc. has been around certainty of programs and events which would be impacted by a voluntary contribution scheme.

- **Only select few benefit from the Special Rate**

Whilst the opinion is noted, evidence gathered and presented to Council over an extended period would suggest otherwise and this is supported by key stakeholders within the business and tourism sectors.

- **Individual Properties should be exempted from paying the levy.**

Council are unable to exempt individual properties from the designated area but would have to exempt a category of properties prior to declaring the rate which would be cause for the process to be re-run.

- **There is a blurring of lines of responsibility between Swan Hill Inc. and Council's Economic Development Unit.**

Whilst the opinion is noted there are no blurring of lines as Swan Hill Inc. and the Council's Economic Development Unit have clear lines of responsibility. Both work co-operatively to avoid duplication of effort and resources to achieves positive outcomes.

Both support each other's efforts through information exchange and the relationship is strong, positive but independent.

- **Economic inconsistency on display. Council opposed a State Government Levy but wish to apply their own levy at a time of economic hardship and financial pressures.**

Whilst the opinion is noted, Council considers each issue on its merits in determining a course of action. In the case of the Special Rate if a property was experiencing difficulty in paying the amount, there are processes to provide relief which can be applied for.

The advocacy by the Council on the Emergency Services Levy indicating the pressure the farming community were under resulted in a change being made by the State Government, so Council did support its community.

The Emergency Services Levy does not contain the same level of scrutiny that Council apply to the Swan Hill Inc. Special Rate in that the money collected goes to the State Government and there is no reporting requirement to demonstrate local benefits or that funds collected are apportioned to local emergency service regions.

All monies collected under the Special Rate must be accounted for and Swan Hill Inc must provide a presentation to Council on the use of the funds and its budgets.

- **Swan Hill Inc have surplus of \$249,891.00 (late payment of \$ \$98,268.00 acknowledged).**

Swan Hill Inc must provide its audited accounts to Council which it has compiled this and for the 24/25 financial year the income was \$529,000 and expenses \$524,000. Swan Hill Inc reported the late payment of \$98,268 and the balance of its cash reserves indicating that some programs had not proceeded.

Swan Hill Inc. also reported the receipt of additional income through grants and sponsorships.

In their presentations to the Council, Swan Hill Inc have always provided explanations around its financial performance and reasons for holding money in reserve which is a requirement of the agreement Council has with Swan Hill Inc.

It is correct to say that the amount collected should be expended on the activities planned for, unless due to circumstances, this cannot occur and this must be reported to Council. Swan Hill Inc. have complied with this by reporting to Council variations.

- **Swan Hill Inc have accumulated excessive reserves of \$442,326.00 which is against the intent of the Special Levy.**

Swan Hill Inc have advised Council of the reasons behind the amount of funds they are holding due to issues such as COVID, programs not being able to proceed on time and they have also indicated that over the next three year period it intends to spend additional funds on programs over and above the adopted budget to reduce the accumulation of funds.

- **Marketing spending discrepancies with expenditure down to \$98,848.00 so therefore the levy is not being used as was intended.**

Across the total budget Swan Hill Inc. have expenditure for marketing and advertising with the figure nominated only one of a number of programs. Swan Hill Inc. advise that when all the items are added together the expenditure is over \$300,000.

- **Levy only covers Swan Hill and Lake Boga therefore it is not regional.**

Whilst Swan Hill Inc. does focus on Swan Hill and Lake Boga, it undertakes activities with other communities and have been working with Robinvale and Euston Business Association (REBA) and other small towns to promote events and businesses.

Swan Hill Inc. also works in cooperation with Murray River Tourism Association and Visit Victoria which highlights a capacity to work at a local, regional and state level to identify opportunities to promote the municipality.

- **Governance and Conflict interest with three members of the marketing Committee being employed Council.**

Swan Hill Inc appoints people to their committees on skills-based merit and the level of individuals interest in wanting to attract additional visitors and support business development.

The choice is made to not work in isolation and to not reject a person's willingness to be on committees due to who they work for.

- **Asset Shift – Council Visitor Information Centre whilst businesses must pay the levy.**

Council took the decision to relocate the Visitor information Centre to the Pioneer Settlement and in doing so effected a saving to the ratepayers whilst continuing to provide a vital service. The Visitor Information Centre continues to promote all businesses to the public and is not solely focused on the Pioneer Settlement.

- **Considering the financial situation of Swan Hill Inc it now should transition to a voluntary model.**

As per the explanation on the figures that have been presented in the submission there is no need to transition to a voluntary method as over time the financial position will be brought into line with the requirements of the agreement.

A voluntary model would bring about uncertainty and more than likely impact on the ability of Swan Hill Inc. to promote, support and conduct events.

- **Council provide an explanation around why marketing expenditure has dropped.**

This has been outlined earlier in the report.

- **Review the current arrangements with a view to merging marketing into the Economic Development Unit and do away with the levy.**

A review can certainly be undertaken as to the costs for the Council to undertake the role of Swan Hill Inc. however it should be noted that this could not be delivered at no extra costs to the organisation and the community.

Care is taken not to duplicate effort but to identify where it is appropriate to work together e.g. Melbourne Cup Promotion, Top Towns, River lights.

### **Consultation**

The process prescribed in the Local Government Act 1989 has been completed including the necessary consultation with affected property owner, the right to make a submission and consideration of the submissions received.

Total Rateable properties 698 and with a mix of owners and occupiers over 900 letters were sent out. Additionally, there was notice in the Guardian, it featured on our Let's Talk page.

Council heard from the one submitter who requested this opportunity.

### **Financial Implications**

The Special Rate amount to be collected in the first year will be \$400,677. and Council is entitled to recover its administrative costs for applying the Special Rate, collecting the contributions from property owners or occupiers, and forwarding the relevant amounts to Swan Hill Inc. In the attached notice to declare the Special Rate, the administrative costs have been nominated to be \$8,000 p.a.

Whilst this administration charge in the past has been declared on an annual basis, the Council of the day had chosen not to collect this amount each year. Council does incur costs on an annual basis and consideration needs to be given as to whether the charge will be collected or the status quo of non-collection is maintained.

### **Social Implications**

It is anticipated that the activities supported by the Special Rate will increase employment, stimulate business activity, and attract additional visitors to the Swan Hill Region.

### **Economic Implications**

It is expected that the activities undertaken by Swan Hill Inc. through funding received from the Special Rate will increase awareness and promotion of the Swan Hill Region, support local businesses, lead to higher visitor numbers, and potentially attract new residents.

### **Environmental Implications**

Nil

### **Risk Management Implications**

Failure to declare the Special Rate will lead to a reduction of funding available to promote the region and potentially a downturn in visitor numbers and business support.

- Attachments:**
1. Attachment 1 Intent to declare a Special Rates Nov (1)  
[2.1.1 - 3 pages]
  2. Australian Valuation Property Classification Codes 19.01.23  
[2.1.2 - 2 pages]
  3. Special Rate Map [2.1.3 - 1 page]

4. Swan Hill Council Submission Special Rate [2.1.4 - 2 pages]
5. Special Rate Objection 1 - Redacted [2.1.5 - 3 pages]
6. Special Rate Objection 2 - Redacted [2.1.6 - 2 pages]
7. Special Rate Objection 3 - Redacted [2.1.7 - 2 pages]
8. Special Rate Objection 4 - Redacted [2.1.8 - 1 page]
9. Special Rate Objection 5 - Redacted [2.1.9 - 1 page]
10. Special Rate Objection 6\_-\_ Redacted [2.1.10 - 1 page]

### Options

1. Declare the Special Rate for marketing and business development programs for the Swan Hill region in accordance with the notice of Intent to Declare a Special Rate (attached) and notify all owners and occupiers of properties affected.
2. Abandon the proposed Special Rate.
3. Vary the proposed Special Rate.

### Recommendation/s

#### That Council:

1. **Notes that it has completed the consultation process in accordance with Section 163 Local Government Act 1989.**
2. **Having considered the submissions received in relation to the Special Rate, resolve to declare the Special Rate in accordance with the attached Notice of Intention to declare the Special Rate – 1 July 2026 for a ten-year period.**
3. **Write to those people who made submissions and advise them of the decision to declare the Special Rate to be applied to Swan Hill Incorporated.**

---

## Declaration of a Special Rate for the Swan Hill Region

Under Section 163 of the Local Government Act 1989 (the "Act") Swan Hill Rural City Council (the "Council") hereby declares a Special Rate for marketing and business development of the Swan Hill region ("region").

Council specifies:

- (a) The purpose of the Special Rate is to defray the expenses in relation to the performance of functions within the Swan Hill region, which Council considers are necessary and appropriate for the encouragement of business development and commerce through the promotion and development of the region as a place to live, work, invest, shop and visit.
- (b) The area for which the Special Rate is declared is all the rateable properties used for commercial, industrial and tourism and hospitality purposes within the following parishes and localities within the Swan Hill Rural City (as detailed on Map in Attachment One):
- (c) Council considers that the performance of the functions, as outlined in paragraph (a), will assist it in fulfilling the following facilitating objectives of Council which are set out in Section 3C (2) of the Local Government Act:
  - to promote the social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of the municipal district.
  - to promote appropriate business and employment opportunities.
- (d) The total cost of the performance of the functions is:
  - (i) for the first year of the Special Rate –be \$400,677.00 this figure is inclusive of the Consumer Price Index (CPI\*) at June 2026. Council's administrative costs of \$8,000 have been factored into this figure);
  - (ii) for each of the subsequent nine years the Special Rate remains in force - the previous year's total amount of the Special Rate plus CPI\*.
- (e) The total amount of the Special Rate to be levied is:
  - (i) for the first year of the Special Rate - \$400,677.00
  - (ii) for each of the subsequent nine years the Special Rate remains in force - the previous year's total amount of the Special Rate plus CPI\*.
- (f) The land in relation to which the Special Rate is declared is all the rateable properties used for commercial, industrial and tourism and hospitality purposes in the parishes and localities within the Swan Hill Rural City listed in (b) above.
- (g) The manner in which the Special Rate is assessed (that is, the criteria to be used as the basis for levying the Special Rate) is:

For the first year of the Special Rate:

- for tourism and hospitality properties (based on Australian Valuation Property Classification Codes [AVPCC] as detailed in Attachment Two) a rate in the dollar of each property's Capital Improved Value (CIV), to raise a total of \$96,680.00 with a minimum rate per rateable property of \$50 and a maximum rate per rateable property of \$8,298.32
- for commercial properties (based on AVPCC as detailed in attachment

two) a rate in the dollar of each property's CIV, in order to raise \$260,053.00 after inclusion of providing a 50% write-off for properties in common occupancy with a residence, with a minimum rate per rateable property of \$50 and a maximum rate per rateable property of \$8,298.32

- for industrial properties (based on AVPCC as detailed in attachment two) a rate in the dollar of each property's CIV, to raise a total of \$43,944.00 with a minimum rate per rateable property of \$50 and a maximum rate per rateable property of \$414.90

For each of the subsequent nine years the Special Rate remains in force, the rates in the dollar will be adjusted to be in accordance with the previous year's total amount of the Special Rate plus CPI\* apportioned over the sectors as follows:

- for tourism and hospitality properties (based on assigned AVPCC) a rate in the dollar of each property's CIV, in order to raise the proportion of the Special Rate raised from the sector in the previous year adjusted for the relative movements in the proportion of the sector's CIV of the total CIV within the Special Rate area. A minimum rate per rateable property of \$50p.a. and a maximum rate per rateable property to increase each year by CPI from the maximum set for the prior year.
- for commercial properties (based on assigned AVPCC) a rate in the dollar of each property's CIV, in order to raise the proportion of the Special Rate raised from the sector in the previous year adjusted for the relative movements in the proportion of the sector's CIV of the total CIV within the Special Rate area. A minimum rate per rateable property of \$50 p.a. and a maximum rate per rateable property to increase each year by CPI from the maximum set for the prior year. A 50% write-off will apply to properties in common occupancy with a residence.
- for industrial properties (based on assigned AVPCC) a rate in the dollar of each property's CIV, in order to raise the proportion of the Special Rate raised from the sector in the previous year adjusted for the relative movements in the proportion of the sector's CIV of the total CIV within the Special Rate area. A minimum rate per rateable property of \$50 p.a. and a maximum rate per rateable property to increase each year by CPI from the maximum set for the prior year.

- (h) The Special Rate is levied by sending a notice in each year the Special Rate remains in force, to the persons liable to pay it, requiring that the Special Rate for that year be paid in four separate instalments, or by all four instalments together, by the dates which are specified in each respective notice.
- (i) The Special Rate commences on 1 July 2026 and remains in force for a period of ten years from that date, until 30 June 2036.
- (j) Should a property included in the Special Rate receive a supplementary valuation that changes its AVPCC to residential land or primary production that property will cease to be included in the Special Rate from the date the supplementary valuation for that property is returned to Council.
- (k) Should a property in the area covered by the Special Rate receive a supplementary or other valuation which includes it as a new or amended rateable property in the Special Rate, that property will be included in the appropriate AVPCC category of the Special Rate from the beginning of the financial year following the date the supplementary or other valuation for

---

that property is returned to Council.

- ① The Council considers that there will be a special benefit to persons required to pay the Special Rate in that there will be a special benefit over and above that available to persons not the subject of the Special Rate and directly and indirectly, the viability of the Swan Hill region as a commercial, industrial and tourism region will be enhanced through increased commerce and economic activity. Further, the value of the properties included in the scheme, their desirability as letting propositions (where applicable) and their general image and stature, both separately and severally in the context of the area generally, will be maintained or enhanced.
  
- (m) Council further considers, and formally determines for the purposes of sections 163(2)(a), (2A) and (2B) of the Act, that the estimated proportion of the total benefits of the Scheme to which the performance of the function and the exercise of the power relates (including all special benefits and community benefits) that will accrue as special benefits to all of the persons who are liable to pay the Special Rate is in a ratio of 1:1 (or 100%). This is on the basis that, in the opinion of Council, all of the services and activities to be provided from the expenditure of the proposed Special Rate are marketing, promotion and business development related and will accordingly only benefit the owners and occupiers of those properties and businesses included in the scheme.

Scott Barber  
Chief Executive Officer  
Swan Hill Rural City Council

\*Based upon the movement in the March quarter annual weighted average of the eight capital cities index as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics

**Attachment Two**

**Australian Valuation Property Classification Codes**

Tourism & Hospitality

<b><u>AVPCC</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>
202	Commercial Land (with buildings that add no value)
210	Retail Premises (single occupancy)
230	Residential Hotel/Motel/Apartment Hotel Complex
232	Serviced Apartments/Holiday Units
234	Tourist Park/Caravan Park/Camping Ground
240	Pub/Tavern/Licensed Club/Restaurant/Licensed Restaurant/Nightclub
241	Hotel-Gaming
243	Member Club Facility
245	National Company Restaurant
813	Outdoor Sports-Extended Areas/Cross Country

Commercial

<b><u>AVPCC</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>
100	Vacant Residential Site/Surveyed Lot
102	Vacant Inglobo Residential Subdivision Land
110	Detached Home
200	Commercial Development Site
202	Commercial Land (buildings add no value)
210	Retail Premises (single occupancy)
211	Retail Premises (multiple occupancies)
212	Mixed Use Occupation
214	National Company Retail
215	Fuel outlet/Garage/Service Station
217	Bottleshop/Liquor Licence Outlet
218	Licensed Retail Premises
220	Office Premises
221	Low Rise Office Building
222	Multi Level Office Building
235	Guest Lodge/Backpackers/Bunkhouse/Hostel
240	Pub/Tavern/Licensed Club/Restaurant/Licensed Restaurant/Nightclub
245	National Company Restaurant
246	Kiosk
270	Health Surgery
271	Health Clinic
273	Crematorium/Funeral Services
275	Veterinary Clinic
282	Individual Car Park Site
283	Car Wash
284	Vehicle Sales Centre

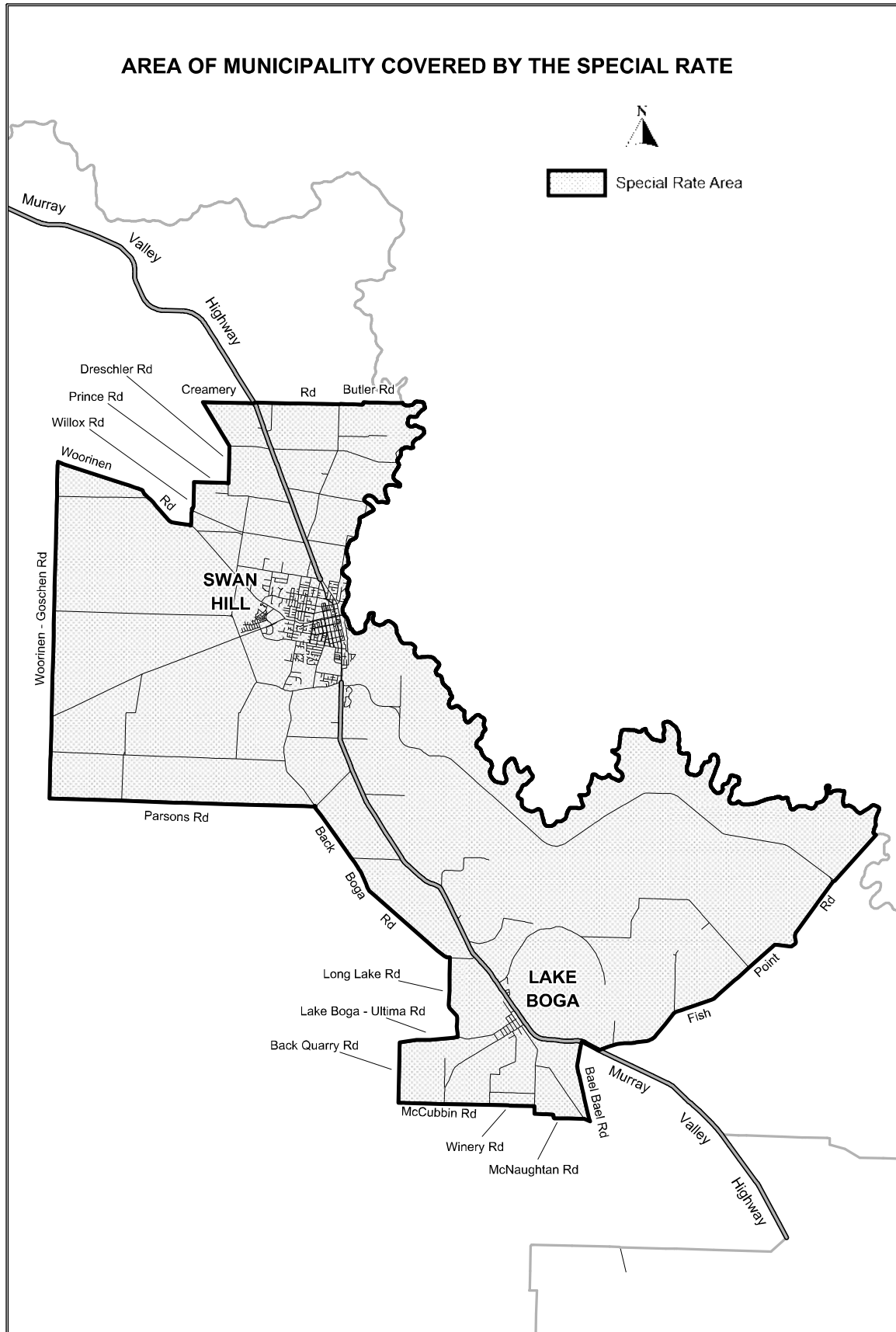
300	Industrial Development Site
303	Industrial Land with ancillary improvements only
310	General Purpose Factory
320	General Purpose Warehouse
561	Vineyard
562	Plant/Tree Nursery
572	Native Hardwood (standing timber)
690	Post Offices
696	Television/Radio Station – Purpose Built
698	Telephone Exchange – Purpose Built
715	Day Care Centre For Children
813	Outdoor Sports –Extended Areas/Cross Country
820	Indoor Sports Centre
830	Library/Archives

---

Industrial

<u>AVPCC</u>	<u>Description</u>
200	Commercial Development Site
202	Commercial Land (with buildings that add no value)
210	Retail Premises (single occupancy)
230	Residential Hotel/Motel/Apartment Hotel Complex
284	Vehicle Sales Centre
300	Industrial Development Site
301	Vacant Industrial Inglobo Land
303	Industrial Land with ancillary improvements only
310	General Purpose Factory
311	Food Processing Factory
320	General Purpose Warehouse
321	Open Storage Area
322	Bulk Grain Storage (structures)
325	Coolstore/Coldstore
331	Abattoirs
333	Rendering Plant
334	Oil Refinery
530	Mixed Farming & Grazing
562	Plant/Tree Nursery
623	Electricity Substation/Terminal
626	Solar Electricity Generation
673	Airport Hanger Building
694	Telecommunication Towers & Aerials
698	Telephone Exchange – Purpose Built

---



Mr Scott Barber  
Chief Executive Officer  
Swan Hill Rural City Council

### **Submission – Re Swan Hill Incorporated Special Rate**

Dear Mr Scott Barber, Mayor Stuart King and Councilor's

I write on behalf of Rate Assessment ID 10548 – 183-185 Campbell St, Swan Hill more commonly known as Clarks Gift Salon Pty Ltd.

I state that I am the owner and ratepayer for this property.

I write to you in full support of this Proposed Swan Hill Inc Special Rate

I advise that I have owned and operated Clarks Gifts Salon for 28 years and employ 16 local staff members.

I recall a time prior to 2002 when no Swan Hill Inc existed and the local retail committee had to chase up a few donations to advertise Market Day.

Back at that time a few local business people had the wisdom to get this special rate of the ground so that the Swan Hill District could collectively advertise and promote the region. In the early days we were the envy of other competing towns. Some of those towns requested information from Swan Hill to copy the formula for their own areas.

Today Swan Hill Inc is a slick well run organization responsible for tens of thousands of visitors coming to our region. Without Swan Hill Inc the only publicity Swan Hill would receive would be our temperature on the weather map and news stories when something bad happens. Channel 10 doesn't even show our temperature. We need more. There is lots of competition out there amongst the regions for the limited tourist dollars

My share of the rate is approx. \$900. I estimate that 15% to 20% of dollars through my till come from visitors to the region. That percentage is higher in busy holiday times. It doesn't take too many sales to pay off the \$900. In fact the marketing dollars I would have to spend to enhance turnover to match all those visitors spending doesn't bear thinking about. The \$900 is extremely good value for money !

A fall in sales for my business would definitely happen if the Swan Hill Inc Special Rate were to be axed. This would flow through to staff numbers required and lower profitability resulting in less spending circulating around Swan Hill and Region.

In another role I advise that I am the Chairman of Frontline Stores. We are a group of 500 independently owned stores all around regional Australia. In discussions with many of these stores they work hard in their local Chamber of Commerce Groups for little return. The load is unevenly spread particularly with regards to financing their operations with out of town chain stores piggy backing there endeavors'. This special rate will never be perfect but provides greater fairness for all business.

This Special Rate is about wisdom and vision for the future. We have to invest in the future in order to get a return. I urge all Swan Hill Council executive and Swan Hill Councilor's to support this Special Rate

Yours Sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

[Redacted title]

[Redacted address line 1]

[Redacted address line 2]


## Supporting Documents

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

17/02/2026

Chief Executive Officer and Councillor's  
Swan Hill Rural City Council

20 FEB 2026      529-08-02

Date Rec'd	ECDM	File #	512-04-02
Workflow	DDP	Doc #	
Codes		Security	
HW / Col			
Comments			

Cc: Swan Hill Incorporated Committee

Subject: Request to Review the Swan Hill Region Marketing Programs – Special Rate Scheme

Dear CEO and Councillor's,

I am writing as a long-time Swan Hill resident, business owner and landlord of both residential and commercial properties in the municipality since 1996. Over that time I have seen many changes in our local economy, and I am increasingly concerned that the current structure of the Swan Hill Region Marketing Programs – Special Rate Scheme is no longer fair or sustainable. I ask that Council and Swan Hill Incorporated support a review of the scheme so that the cost of regional marketing is shared more equitably.

As I understand it, the special rate is expected to raise in the order of \$400,000 this year for marketing and promotion of the Swan Hill region, with this entire burden falling on a relatively small group of commercial, tourism and industrial properties within the special rate area. In an era of significant disruption to traditional retail and main-street trading, particularly from online shopping and changing consumer behavior, it seems unreasonable that these businesses alone are required to fund a program that delivers benefits across the broader community.

From my perspective as both a local business operator and a landlord, it is clear that a strong, vibrant business centre benefits far more than just the ratepayers currently charged the special rate. Successful local businesses provide local jobs, attract visitors, activate the

CBD, increase demand for services and, very importantly, are often the first to be approached for sponsorships, donations and in-kind support for community groups, clubs and events. When business conditions are tough and margins are tight, these contributions are harder to sustain, which flows through to the wider community, including residential tenants and other property owners.

Given that the objectives of the Swan Hill Region Marketing Programs are to promote the region and support economic activity more generally, it is reasonable to view the benefits as shared by all property owners within the special rate area – residential, rural, commercial and industrial. On that basis, I believe a more equitable approach would be to spread the levy across all rateable properties within the special rate area, rather than concentrating it solely on selected business properties.

To be clear, I am not arguing against the existence of a dedicated marketing budget for Swan Hill. My concern is with how the cost is apportioned. Retaining the overall marketing funding but spreading it over a broader rating base would:

- Reduce the per-property impost on those businesses already under pressure from structural changes in retail and higher operating costs.
- Acknowledge that the benefits of marketing and a stronger local economy extend to households and non-retail property owners, including residential landlords such as myself.
- Support the long-term sustainability of the CBD and business community, which in turn supports employment, sponsorship and investment that benefit the whole region.

I therefore respectfully request that:

1. Council undertakes a review of the Swan Hill Region Marketing Programs – Special Rate Scheme at the next appropriate opportunity (for example as part of the rating strategy or special rate renewal process), with specific consideration of options to apply the levy across all rateable properties within the defined special rate area, or at least to a significantly broader base than at present; and

2. Swan Hill Incorporated works collaboratively with Council to explore and support a fairer funding model that recognises the shared benefits of regional marketing and does not unduly burden a relatively small group of commercial ratepayers.

I would appreciate a written response outlining how and when Council intends to review the structure of the special rate, and I would welcome the opportunity to speak further with councillors or officers about this matter, including at a future briefing or council meeting if that would be helpful.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing work on behalf of the Swan Hill community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. L. ...', written over a solid black rectangular redaction box.

# RESIDENTS & RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION INC - A0057050E

COMMUNITY ADVOCACY | PRESERVING DEMOCRACY | PROMOTING COMMUNITY AND OPEN COUNCIL DEBATE

**All Correspondence:** 75 McCallum Street, SWAN HILL VIC 3585

26-5

24 March, 2026

**Councillors and Scott Barber, CEO**  
Swan Hill Rural City Council  
45 Splatt Street  
SWAN HILL VIC 3585

**Subject: A Formal Objection to the Proposed 10-Year Special Rate Levy**

Dear Councillors and Scott,

I am writing on behalf of the Residents and Ratepayers Association to formally address the proposed 10-year declaration of the Special Rate for the Swan Hill Region. This submission builds upon concerns raised in 2019 regarding the "blurring of lines" between the Economic Development Unit (EDU) and Swan Hill Incorporated, now supported by undeniable evidence from recent audited financial reports and shifting boundary policies.

## 1. Economic Inconsistency: "Hardship" for State, but not for Local?

Council famously and publicly opposed the State Government's Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund Levy, citing the financial hardship it would impose on our community. It is a staggering piece of hypocrisy for Council to now support a mandatory 10-year levy on select ratepayers during a period of even greater instability. With local businesses facing soaring fuel, electricity, and insurance prices, along with other inflationary pressures like increased rates and taxes—driven by international conflicts and blatant fiscal mismanagement by government—this non-discretionary tax is both tone-deaf and fiscally irresponsible.

## 2. Financial Evidence: A Quarter-Million Dollar Surplus

The 2024-2025 Audited Financial Statements for Swan Hill Incorporated reveal that the organization is consistently over-funded:

- **Sustained Over-Collection:** While Council may point to a \$98,268 late payment from the prior year as a reason for this year's \$220,620 operating surplus, the aggregate reality is that Swan Hill Inc. has generated a combined surplus of nearly a quarter of a million dollars (\$249,891) over the last two financial years alone.
- **Excessive Reserves:** As of June 30, 2025, the organization holds \$442,326 in cash and cash equivalents—roughly equal to an entire year's levy revenue. A "Special Rate" is legally intended to meet a specific, unfulfilled need; it is not intended to help a Council-adjacent entity build a massive bank reserve.
- **Spending Discrepancy:** While collecting nearly half a million dollars via the levy, direct "Advertising & Marketing" expenses plummeted to just \$95,848 this past year. The levy is no longer being used as intended.

## 3. Geographical Inequity and Boundary Narrowing

We note that the geographical reach of this levy has been narrowed over time, now specifically targeting commercial and industrial properties in Swan Hill and Lake Boga. By excluding other townships in the municipality, Council is "cherry-picking" a small group of ratepayers to fund a strategy that claims to be "regional." If the benefit is truly regional, the funding should come from the general rate base. If it is only for Swan Hill and Lake Boga, then the organization cannot and should not claim to represent the wider region.

## 4. Governance and the Conflict of Interest

The independence of the Swan Hill Inc. Marketing Committee is a fiction. With 60% of the committee (3 out of 5 members) being direct employees of the Council or representatives of Council-run assets like the Pioneer Settlement, this body functions as a subsidiary of the Council.

Page 1 of 2

- **Asset Shifts:** We note the Swan Hill Information Centre is now housed within the Pioneer Settlement entrance. This further consolidates marketing efforts under Council-controlled roofs while private businesses are forced to pay for the privilege.

**The Residents and Ratepayers Association Formal Request**

In light of the \$220,000 surplus and the \$442,000 in cash reserves, we demand that:

1. The Special Rate be immediately transitioned from a mandatory rate burden to a voluntary membership model.
2. Council provides a public explanation as to why a \$488,000 levy (indexed to CPI) is required when direct marketing spend has dropped below \$100,000.
3. A formal review be conducted to merge regional marketing into the EDU to eliminate what appears to be redundant administrative overhead and in so doing, provide relief to struggling businesses.

Local businesses are not a bottomless pit of funding for Council organisations, in the same way that they aren't bottomless pits for State and Federal Government largess, especially those that cannot justify their own spending. We look forward to your response on how the Council intends to rectify this clear case of over-taxation.

Sincerely,




RE: SWAN HILL REGION MARKETING PROGRAMS – SPECIAL RATE SCHEME.

Attention,

3 March 2026

Mr. Scott Barber,  
 Chief Executive Officer,  
 Swan Hill Rural City Council.

05 MAR 2026

Date Rec'd	File #	529-08-02
Workflow:	Doc #	512-04-02
Copies:	Security:	
BW / Col:		
Comments		

As we have been business proprietors and property owners in the Swan Hill region for forty years we strongly protest the proposed continuation of a special rate (levy) to support the entity, Swan Hill Incorporated.

At the conception of compulsorily contribution to the scheme we voiced our disapproval to council, but council could not understand that such a levy was a another financial burden on some struggling businesses. I fear that to this day, nothing has changed.

We continue to hear claims from Council and Swan Hill Incorporated that the marketing levy is an outstanding success, with proven results. We do not agree, these claims are unsubstantiated. The only way you can claim such results is to have a comparison with a Swan Hill with no marketing levy. i.e. stop the levy for 12 months.

This levy is designed to benefit and prop up the tourism and hospitality sector, with spin tossed in to say that all businesses will benefit. Our business does not sell booze, fuel, meals, cups of coffee, accommodation and we are not a tourism provider. One of our commercial tenants trades in the electrical and hvac industry. Another one is involved in the engine reconditioning industry. None of us benefit from, desire to participate in, or contribute to the marketing levy.

What about the market day's, how wonderful they are we continue to be told! Market days do nothing for our retail business in Campbell Street, Swan Hill. Street closures are an inconvenience to our customers and generally keep them away. Trade is noticeably quieter in the days preceding, during and immediately following a market day. (This is a fact as we have always kept records of our daily trade). It is very annoying to see businesses who have taken big personal risks and invested large amounts of their own money in a business, pay rates and taxes, have to watch outside traders take the cream on those days.

Not all businesses in the levy zone may feel the same as us, some may have positive outcomes, and good luck to them. However it is not right that this levy relies on compulsory

contribution. It is our opinion, along with many others that contributions to the Swan Hill Incorporated marketing scheme should be by voluntary contribution only. If a business believes that the marketing scheme is worthy to them, then they can contribute to it. Like wise if a business does not believe the scheme is beneficial to them then they need not contribute. Generally industry levies, for example an agriculture sector may impose a levy based on productivity that will benefit all participant's in that industry, e.g. Veroa mite control in the bee industry.

Swan Hill Incorporated's levy imposed by council has more of a scatter gun effect, only benefiting a select few.

We suggest that Council conduct a poll of the businesses in the applicable levy zone to gauge participant approval / disapproval of either a voluntary or non voluntary contribution to the scheme.

It is worth noting ofcourse that opposition to such a poll will come from people who may be afraid that a majority result in favour of a non compulsory levy may prevail. If the levy is as popular as we are led to believe then they have nothing to fear. Therefore conducting a poll is the fairest way of determining the future direction of the levy.

I have two requests.

1/ That our three currently levy applicable properties located in Swan Hill be exempted from any future compulsory marketing levy. The properties are located at.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

2/ I request to be able to speak at the Town Hall public hearing on 25<sup>th</sup> of March, preferably at the 6.00pm session.

A copy of this letter has been sent to all Councillors as we have experienced letters going astray within council offices, including councillor voting forms disappearing.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Rec'd	10 MAR 2026	529-08-02
By	DENNIS	512-04-02
To	MICHELLE	Security: 
For	SCOTT	



March 6, 2026

Mr Scott Barber  
Chief Executive Officer  
Swan Hill Rural City Council

Dear Sir,

I wish to strongly object to the extension of the Special Rate Scheme as proposed by the council.

This rate has no real effect on the profitability of our business and therefore there is no requirement for this rate to be levied upon us.

One issue within our field that has direct impact on tourists is the issue of feral cats. Some 2 decades ago, council gave an estimate of one quarter million feral cats in the shire. Are these undergoing natural population growth? Has council actively reduced this population? Is council waiting for disease outbreaks to reduce this population for them?

Feral cats cause an health risk to both visitors and rate-paying residents (yes, some people do tour the countryside with their cats). Examples for each species are toxoplasmosis in humans (by contact with cat faeces) and Cat Scratch Fever; or for cats Feline Leukaemia spread as easily as shared drinking water and Feline AIDS spread by bites. Other issues are things like scent marking around caravans, stirring up dogs in said vans or general annoyances such as scrounging in bins.

We have been told by council and clients that there is a very long waiting list for council cat traps. Money spent on this will reduce the number of ferals exposed to tourists and will be of great benefit to all rate payers.

Yours Sincerely





23 FEB 2026	529-08-02
DEWIS	512-04-02
	Security:



17th February 2026

**RE: Swan Hill Region Marketing Programs - Special Rate Scheme**

Dear Mr. Barber,

I am writing to formally object to the Special Rate fee outlined in the recent communication. My business operates within the education sector, and there is **no mention of education or tutoring services** anywhere in the list of industries intended to benefit from this special rate. The categories identified—tourism, retail, hospitality and related sectors—do not include, relate to, or support my line of work in any meaningful way.

Because of this, the proposed special rate provides **no commercial, promotional, or strategic benefit** to my business. I do not rely on tourism traffic, retail visibility, or visitor-based marketing. As such, it is unreasonable and inappropriate for my business to be charged a fee for an initiative that is entirely irrelevant to my operations.

I must also express my concern regarding the broader contradiction in Council's expectations. In addition to my education business, I also run **Macer Test and Tagging**, a local test and tagging service provider. Despite my continued investment in this community—running two businesses, sponsoring local sporting clubs and schools through both time and financial support—Council awards the testing and tagging contract to an **out-of-town business**.

Council is asking local businesses to contribute additional funds through this special rate, yet it does not extend the same support back to the very businesses that actively contribute to the local community. It is a bitter pill to swallow to be asked for more money while simultaneously watching Council choose external providers over committed local operators who employ locally, spend locally, and give locally.

In light of all this, I request that my business be excluded from this special rate on the following grounds:

- The education sector is **not identified** as a beneficiary.
- The activities funded by the special rate **do not align** with my business model.
- The fee delivers **no measurable or practical benefit** to my organisation.
- Council's procurement decisions demonstrate **a lack of support for my businesses**, further reinforcing that I receive no advantage from this special rate.

I request written confirmation that my objection has been received and will be properly considered.

Kind regards,



Message details

Timestamp: 03-04-2026 15:55:10  
From: [REDACTED]  
To: SWANHILL.VIC.GOV.AU\council  
CC:  
Subject: FW: Special Rate Scheme

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2026 2:47 PM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Fwd: Special Rate Scheme

Sent from my iPad

Attention Chief Executive Officer  
Mr Scott Barber

Dear Sir

I am replying to your letter dated 6 Feb 2026 in regard to the special rate for the Swan Hill region.  
Regarding my leased hangar site at the airport.  
I have aircraft hangered at the Swan Hill airport 190 Back Boga Road.  
Stated in section (b) of the declaration it specifies that the rate is for comercial, industrial and tourism.  
As I only use the hangars to store my private aircraft that we use for pleasure only and do not run a busines or aircraft hire in any form I not believe that this rate applies to me.  
Please acknowledge receipt of email  
Regards  
[REDACTED]

## 2.2 Resource Ready Strategy

**Directorate:** Development and Planning

**File Number:** .

**Purpose:** For Discussion

### Council Plan Strategy Addressed

**1. Growth and Development** – Building a resilient local economy, supporting businesses and attracting investment for a thriving future. Objective 1.3: Grow local businesses and attract new investment into the municipality.

1.3.2 Observe and monitor development in the renewable energy, transmission and mining sectors.

### Current Strategic Documents

Council Plan

### Declarations of Interest

Council Officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

### Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the Resource Ready: North-Western Victoria Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Strategy.

The Resource Ready Strategy (RRS) provides an independent analysis of the potential impacts from \$27.7 billion in planned transmission, renewable energy, and mining projects across nine north-western Victorian councils.

The Strategy proposes 44 evidence-based actions across 9 priority themes to ensure regional readiness, maximise community benefits, and mitigate negative impacts should these major projects proceed following State and Federal government approval processes.

Council endorsement of the Strategy would not constitute support for or opposition to any specific project. Rather, endorsement reflects Council's commitment to fulfilling its statutory obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020* to plan strategically for the community's economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

The Strategy equips Council with the evidence base necessary to assess projects comprehensively, advocate effectively for State and Federal funding to address readiness gaps, coordinate with regional partners, and engage meaningfully with the community about potential changes.

Critically, implementation requires substantial external funding beyond Council's existing resources, endorsement establishes the framework for securing this support from higher levels of government and project proponents, it does not commit Council to fund all recommended actions.

## Discussion

### Background/Rationale

Nine councils (Buloke, Gannawarra, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Loddon, Northern Grampians, Swan Hill, West Wimmera, and Yarriambiack) commissioned an independent Strategy to assess the impacts of:

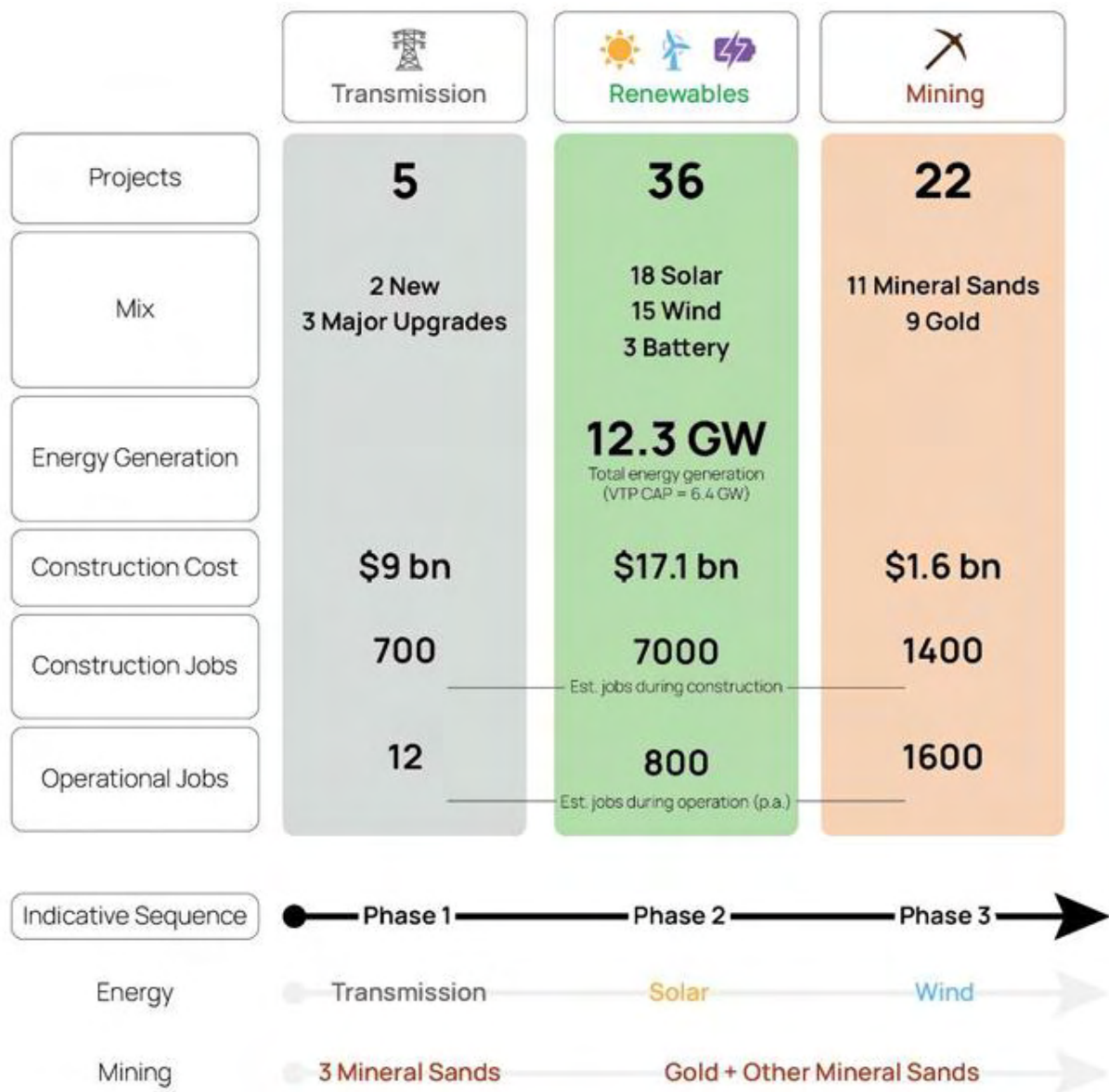
- VNI West transmission project (\$7.1bn) and transmission upgrades (\$3.37bn)
- 33 renewable energy projects (13GW+ generation capacity)
- 22 mining projects (mineral sands, gold, rare earth elements)

The study area covers 58,503 km<sup>2</sup> (26% of Victoria) with a population of approximately 93,100 and 42,300 jobs.

The Strategy does not advocate for or against the energy transition, specific technologies, or individual project approvals. Rather, it provides objective analysis of the potential scale of regional change (\$27.7 billion in identified projects), quantifies likely economic impacts (up to 9,100 construction jobs and 2,400 ongoing operational jobs), and identifies the actions necessary to ensure that if these transformations occur, they do so in a manner that protects existing community wellbeing, supports affected industries like agriculture, and delivers lasting regional benefits rather than temporary disruption. It highlights critical challenges such as severe housing shortages, labour market constraints, infrastructure pressures, and potential impacts on the region's agricultural sector.

## Key Findings

The following image illustrates the economic impact summary outlined in the strategy.



### Economic Impacts:

- Total capital expenditure: \$27.7 billion (\$2.8bn expected locally)
- Construction phase: 9,100 FTE jobs over time, peaking at ~4,000 workers (10% increase in regional employment)
- Operational phase: 2,400 ongoing jobs (80% expected locally)
- Annual operational expenditure: \$888 million (67% locally captured)

### Critical Challenges:

- Labour shortages: Very high workforce participation (92-97% for ages 25-54) and low unemployment (<4.5%) limit local capacity
- Housing crisis: extremely low rental vacancy (0-1.2%), declining rental stock, and low development feasibility

- Infrastructure pressure: local roads, telecommunications, water supply, and electricity networks under strain
- Agricultural impacts: competition for labour, water, and land from major projects threatens the region's primary economic driver
- Community readiness: growing uncertainty and opposition to projects affecting social cohesion
- Council capacity: low rate bases and resource constraints limit ability to assess and respond to major projects

The Strategy proposes 44 actions across 9 themes. High priority actions include:

- Community readiness
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Labour
- Local Government resources
- Agriculture
- Community benefits
- Economic development

Implementation requires significant State and Federal government funding.

### **Council Obligations under the Local Government Act 2020**

Council's endorsement of the Resource Ready: North-Western Victoria Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Strategy (the 'Strategy') represents a pragmatic and responsible approach to governance in a period of potential significant regional transformation.

It is important to clarify that endorsement of this Strategy does not constitute Council's support for any specific energy or mining project. Rather, endorsement reflects Council's commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020* to

*"provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community"*

Council has no statutory authority over renewable energy project approvals, these decisions rest with State and Federal Governments through processes such as Environmental Effects Statements, planning ministerial approvals, and mining license determinations.

However, Council has clear responsibilities to assess project referrals, provide informed comment on local impacts, engage with affected communities, plan for service delivery and infrastructure needs, and advocate for regional interests. The Resource Ready Strategy enables Council to meet its obligations by offering an evidence-based framework for assessing potential regional impacts, identifying gaps in readiness, and effectively advocating for the resources and support required to facilitate a smooth transition and in the case of renewable energy, maintain reliable service provision across the State.

Council's endorsement of the Resource Ready Strategy acknowledges that, should major projects receive the necessary State and Federal approvals and proceed to construction and operation, the region must be prepared to manage impacts and capture benefits for current and future generations. This preparedness approach is prudent governance irrespective of Council's views on individual projects and is required of Council under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Endorsement of the Strategy enables Council to:

- Incorporate evidence-based scenarios into strategic and financial planning documents that account for potential major project impacts alongside business-as-usual trends.
- Advocate from an informed position for State and Federal funding to address regional readiness gaps, armed with rigorous analysis of infrastructure, housing, and service needs.
- Fulfil assessment obligations for major project referrals with comprehensive understanding of cumulative regional impacts rather than assessing each project in isolation.
- Engage meaningfully with communities about potential changes, impacts, and opportunities using credible regional analysis rather than speculation.
- Coordinate regionally with the eight other Study Area councils facing similar challenges, achieving efficiencies and greater advocacy influence through alignment.
- Demonstrate prudent governance by planning proactively for potential futures rather than responding reactively to circumstances as they develop.

Critically, the Strategy identifies that implementation of recommended actions requires *"substantial external funding and regional coordination beyond Council's existing resources."* Endorsement does not commit Council to fund or deliver all 44 actions from existing budgets. Rather, it establishes the strategic framework and evidence base for advocating that State and Federal governments, and project proponents through community benefit schemes and provide the necessary resources for regional readiness.

Council's role is to identify what is needed, coordinate with regional partners, and advocate for appropriate resourcing, not to absorb all costs of preparing for State and Federal government-approved major projects.

Council's endorsement of the Strategy represents a commitment to working constructively with all levels of government and industry to ensure that, should major projects proceed following State and Federal approval processes, the region is positioned to minimise these risks and maximise benefits.

This pragmatic approach recognises that:

- Approval authority rests elsewhere: Council cannot prevent or approve major transmission, renewable energy, or mining projects, which are determined through State and Federal processes
- Impacts will be regional: Individual project assessments often miss cumulative impacts across multiple concurrent developments affecting shared infrastructure, labour markets, and housing

- Preparation is essential: Whether Council supports or opposes particular projects, if they proceed without adequate regional readiness the community will experience negative impacts
- Advocacy requires evidence: The Strategy provides the rigorous analysis necessary to advocate effectively for community interests in State and Federal decision-making processes
- Statutory obligations continue: Council must fulfill Local Government Act 2020 duties to plan for community needs, provide services and infrastructure, and ensure financial viability regardless of its position on individual projects.

By endorsing the Strategy, Council demonstrates responsible stewardship, acknowledging that the region faces a period of potential significant change, taking steps to understand and prepare for possible futures, and advocating for the resources necessary to protect and advance community wellbeing through whatever circumstances ultimately eventuate. This is the essence of good governance under the Local Government Act 2020: planning for the needs of the community, pursuing the best outcomes for current and future generations, and ensuring Council's capacity to fulfil its statutory obligations across a range of potential scenarios.

### **Consultation**

The Strategy demonstrates innovation through a nine-council regional collaboration that significantly strengthens advocacy and decision-making.

It supports continuous improvement by providing a robust evidence base for State and Federal advocacy, strengthening statutory project assessments through regional context, and embedding scenario-based analysis into Council's strategic planning. The Strategy also establishes a credible foundation for informed, transparent community engagement, aligned with Local Government Act 2020 obligations.

Effective implementation depends on sustained collaboration with State agencies and regional stakeholders, supported by significant external funding and coordination beyond the capacity of any single council. This approach reflects the reality that major project approvals sit with State and Federal governments, and that pressures on labour supply, housing, and infrastructure can only be addressed through coordinated, cross-boundary action. This report has been a joint initiative of 9 Councils working with Regional Development Victoria (RDV).

The Strategy was developed through:

- desktop research and data analysis
- nine council workshops
- stakeholder consultation with proponents, Regional Development Victoria, Wimmera Mallee Development, and VicGrid, and
- review of existing strategies and plans.

A media campaign will be launched to ensure our community is aware of this Strategy once it is adopted by all Councils.

### **Financial Implications**

Council contributed \$20,000 towards the development of this Strategy. RDV has advised Council that VicGrid will contribute \$16,500 to cover most of the costs.

### **Social Implications**

The transition to renewable energy, mineral sands mining and transmission is having impacts on local communities. This strategy provides a region wide approach on how to best support our communities.

It is acknowledged that social licence for the scale of change happening is important and needs to be considered by Council, other levels of government and project proponents.

### **Economic Implications**

The report outlines key economic factors emerging as a result of this land use change.

### **Environmental Implications**

Environmental risks to water, land, flora and fauna are all subject to expert reports. Rehabilitation and decommissioning plans are also major elements of concern with these large-scale projects. This report provides guidance and seeks support to assist Councils and communities to understand the implications and risks associated with land use change.

### **Risk Management Implications**

The Strategy maintains a neutral, analytical position focused on readiness and impact management rather than advocating for or against the energy and mining transition, specific technologies, or individual project approvals.

The RRS has a disclaimer namely that endorsing it does not provide support or opposition for any specific project.

**Attachments:** 1. Resource Ready - Final Report March 2026 SH [2.2.1 - 99 pages]

### **Options**

1. Endorses the Resource Ready: North-Western Victoria Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Strategy.
2. Does not endorse the Resource Ready: North-Western Victoria Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Strategy.

### **Recommendation/s**

**That Council endorses the Resource Ready: North-Western Victoria Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Strategy.**



# Resource Ready

North-Western Victoria Energy & Mining Impact & Readiness Strategy

**urban  
enterprise**

**Resource Ready: North-Western Victoria Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Strategy**

Cover Image Source: Edify Energy. *Solar Farm Gannawarra*. September 2018.

<b>Issued:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Version notes:</b>
30 March 2026	Final Report (Swan Hill)	The content of this version is identical to the content of the version dated 16 February 2026 except for minor additions made to reflect input provided by Swan Hill Rural City Council.

**Acknowledgment of Country:**

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which our work is based and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to all First Nations people.

**Disclaimer:**

Neither Urban Enterprise Pty. Ltd. nor any member or employee of Urban Enterprise Pty. Ltd. takes responsibility in any way whatsoever to any person or organisation (other than that for which this report has been prepared) in respect of the information set out in this report, including any errors or omissions therein. In the course of our preparation of this report, projections have been prepared on the basis of assumptions and methodology which have been described in the report. It is possible that some of the assumptions underlying the projections may change. Nevertheless, the professional judgement of the members and employees of Urban Enterprise Pty. Ltd. have been applied in making these assumptions, such that they constitute an understandable basis for estimates and projections. Beyond this, to the extent that the assumptions do not materialise, the estimates and projections of achievable results may vary.

**© Copyright Urban Enterprise Pty Ltd 2026**

This work is copyright. Apart from any uses permitted under Copyright Act 1963, no part may be reproduced without written permission of Urban Enterprise Pty Ltd.



<b>Contents</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Part A. Background</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1. Background	13
1.2. Engagement	13
1.3. Role of Local Government	13
1.4. Scope	14
1.5. Study Area	15
<b>Part B. Project Descriptions</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2. Transmission Projects</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1. Introduction	17
2.2. Network Planning	17
2.3. VNI West	21
2.4. Key Points	25
<b>3. Renewable Energy Projects</b>	<b>26</b>
3.1. Introduction	26
3.2. Location and Status of Projects	26
3.3. Number and Scale of Projects	27
3.4. Locations and Concentrations	27
3.5. Timing and Relationship with Transmission Projects	27
3.6. Projects in Adjacent Areas	29
3.7. Key Points	31
<b>4. Mining Projects</b>	<b>32</b>
4.1. Introduction	32
4.2. Opportunity Context	32
4.3. Projects	34
4.4. Timing and Approvals Process	37
4.5. Key Points	38
<b>Part C. Existing Conditions &amp; Impacts</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>5. Existing Conditions</b>	<b>40</b>
5.1. Introduction	40
5.2. Economy	40
5.3. Labour & Skills	44
5.4. Housing	47
5.5. Infrastructure	56
5.6. Local Government	57

5.7. Key Points	58
<b>6. Economic Impacts and Opportunities</b>	<b>59</b>
6.1. Introduction	59
6.2. Economic Impacts	59
6.3. Jobs & Skills	61
6.4. Supply Chain	67
6.5. Other Economic Effects	73
6.6. Key Points	75
<b>7. Local Government and Community Impacts</b>	<b>77</b>
7.1. Introduction	77
7.2. Community Impacts and Social Value	77
7.3. Community Benefits	77
7.4. Potential Local Government Impacts	80
7.5. Key Points	81
<b>Part D. Local Government Readiness</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>8. Readiness Issues, Objectives and Actions</b>	<b>83</b>
8.1. Introduction	83
8.2. Issues and Objectives	83
8.3. Actions	84
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>88</b>
Appendix A: Renewables Audit	89
Appendix B: Mining Projects Audit	90
Appendix C: Impact Assessment Detail	91

**Figures**

Figure S1	Project and Economic Impact Summary	6
Figure S2	Readiness Themes, Issues and Objectives	8
Figure 1.	Study Area Map	15
Figure 2.	Map of Planned Transmission Projects	18
Figure 3.	Proposed Renewable Energy Zones, Victoria	19
Figure 4.	Proposed Transmission Projects, Victoria	20
Figure 5.	Location of Preferred Easement, VNI West	21
Figure 6.	VNI West Timeline	22
Figure 7.	Diagram of Key Construction Phases for New Transmission Infrastructure	24
Figure 8.	Map of Renewable Energy Projects	26
Figure 9.	Renewable Energy Planned Projects (MW capacity) & REZ Planned Generation	29
Figure 10.	South West REZ, New South Wales	30
Figure 11.	Location of Mineral Resource Opportunities in North-West Victoria	33
Figure 12.	Map of Mining Projects Proposed in the Study Area	36
Figure 13.	Mining Process Flow Chart	37
Figure 14.	Relative Economic Importance by Industry, Study Area, 2024	41
Figure 15.	Summary of economic strengths and priority industries	42
Figure 16.	Average Annual Participation & Unemployment Rate Trend, North West SA4, 2014-2024	44
Figure 17.	Workforce Participation by Age, North West SA4, 2015-2025	44
Figure 18.	Average Annual Unemployment Rate by LGA, 2014-2024	45
Figure 19.	Settlements Map, Study Area and Surrounds	47
Figure 20.	SEIFA, Study Area by SA2s, 2021	49
Figure 21.	Median House Prices by LGA, 2013-2023	50
Figure 22.	Rental Vacancy Rate, Regional Victoria & Metropolitan Melbourne, 2014-2024	51
Figure 23.	Rental Vacancy Rates by Key Towns, August 2025	51
Figure 24.	Active Bonds and Median Rent, Study Area, 2014-2024	52
Figure 25.	Tourism Regions Map	52
Figure 26.	Estimated Resident Population, Study Area, 2014-2036	54
Figure 27.	Forecast Population Change by LGA, 2024-2036	54
Figure 28.	Projected Change in Age Profile, Study Area, 2021 – 2036	55
Figure 29.	Existing Major Freight Networks, Study Area and Key Export Locations	56
Figure 30.	Least Sustainable Councils	57
Figure 31.	Careers in Large Scale Renewable Energy	62
Figure 32.	Renewable Energy Current Employment Breakdown by Phase	62
Figure 33.	Renewable Energy Occupational Composition (2020-2035 average under Step Change Scenario)	63
Figure 34.	Top 20 ANZSCO Occupations by Workforce Numbers	66
Figure 35.	Employment Projections by ANZSCO Occupations	66
Figure 36.	Agricultural Land Compatibility with Renewable Energy	73
Figure 37.	Agricultural Land Use within Study Area	74
Figure 38.	Agricultural Compatibility Map	75
Figure 39.	Proposed community benefits, transmission & renewable energy projects	79
Figure 40.	Themes, Issues and Objectives	83

**Tables**

Table S1 Action Plan 9

Table 1. North West Strengthening Program 20

Table 2. Transmission Impacts Expected to Accrue in Local Areas 25

Table 3. Existing and Planned Renewable Energy Projects (MW) 27

Table 4. Modelled Renewable Energy in Study Area REZs – New Wind & Solar by 2040 (GW) 28

Table 5. Projects Granted Access Rights in the South West REZ 30

Table 6. Existing & Planned Mining Projects 34

Table 7. Key Mineral Sands Project Profiles 34

Table 8. Economic Profile by Industry, Study Area, 2024 40

Table 9. Industry Strengths and Opportunities 42

Table 10. Settlement Hierarchy, Wimmera Southern Mallee and Surrounds 48

Table 11. Housing & Household Snapshot, Study Area 48

Table 12. Accommodation Summary, FY23 52

Table 13. Total Construction Phase Capital Expenditure (\$M) 59

Table 14. Capital Expenditure (\$M) and Employment, Construction Phase 60

Table 15. Operational Phase Expenditure and Employment 61

Table 16. Critical Occupations 63

Table 17. Regional Job Profile 64

Table 18. Mining Lifecycle & Key Occupations 65

Table 19. Local Supply Chain Summary 72

Table 20. Summary of Existing Benefit Arrangements, Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects 78

Table 21. Action Plan 84

**Key Terms and Initialisations used in this report**

Abbreviation	Term
AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator
ISP	Integrated System Plan
GW	Gigawatt
kv	Kilovolt
kw	Kilowatt
MW	Megawatt
NEM	National Energy Market
PACR	Project Assessment Conclusions Report
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
RIT-T	Regulatory Investment Test
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
TCV	Transmission Company Victoria
VNI West	Victoria – New South Wales Interconnector (West)
VTP	Victorian Transmission Plan
WMD	Wimmera Mallee Development
WRL	Western Renewables Link

## Executive Summary

### Introduction and Overview

Nine Councils in north-western Victoria (Buloke Shire, Gannawarra Shire, Hindmarsh Shire, Horsham Rural City, Loddon Shire, Northern Grampians Shire, Swan Hill Rural City, West Wimmera Shire and Yarriambiack Shire, collectively referred to in this report as the '**study Councils**') engaged Urban Enterprise to prepare this Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Strategy.

The Study Area for this Strategy comprises the study Council areas and extends from the Murray River and Victorian / New South Wales border in the north east to the South Australian border in the west and the Grampians in the south. The Study Area covers an area of 58,503 sq km, comprising approximately 26% of Victoria.

The scope of this project is to:

- Identify the potential impacts and opportunities of renewable energy and mining projects in the region, including VNI West;
- Understand the type and nature of economic impacts that could result; and
- Identify actions and levers that local governments can apply to ensure 'readiness', capture economic opportunities, mitigate issues, and maximise benefits that flow to the community.

The scope is primarily focused on economic issues, however, a broad range of issues are identified throughout the Strategy which extend into related aspects including community readiness, local government resources and the role of settlements and infrastructure.

It is not in scope to undertake a full assessment of the potential impacts of projects on individual industries, properties or locations – this is within the remit of individual approvals processes. This Strategy considers the longer term, regional scale and overarching issues at play. It is also not in scope to consider environmental impacts, social impacts or the costs and benefits of projects.

### Transmission Projects

Australia's transmission network requires significant investment and extension to facilitate the ongoing transition to renewable energy generation.

Affecting the Study Area, a total of \$3.37bn of construction costs are proposed to upgrade three existing transmission lines, as well as the proposed construction of the new VNI West line between Victoria and New South Wales at a cost of \$7.1bn.

Two of Victoria's six Renewable Energy Zones are within the Study Area (the North-west and Western REZs). VNI West will unlock significant transmission transfer capacity for these areas.

The construction of major transmission infrastructure will generate a range of economic, environmental and other impacts, both positive and negative. The process to date of assessing these impacts does not take into account local effects. Although this may occur for the VNI West EES process, there is a current absence of consideration of the potential impacts of transmission on local communities and economies in the Study Area.

### Renewable Energy Projects

There are 33 renewable energy projects planned in the Study Area with the potential to generate more than 12GW of energy through solar and wind. Three planned battery storage projects also have approximately 2GW of storage capacity.

The main spatial concentrations are in Gannawarra Shire (especially near Kerang), Horsham Rural City (especially in the northern part of the municipality) and Northern Grampians Shire (near Stawell). Major wind projects are also being planned across the central parts of the Study Area within Yarriambiack, Buloke and Gannawarra Shire.

The larger towns that are most proximate and therefore most likely to be impacted in terms of demand for labour and services are expected to be Horsham, Kerang, Stawell and Swan Hill.

Other renewable energy projects are also proposed in southern New South Wales which will contribute to impacts and opportunities in the northern parts of the Study Area.

The ultimate scale of renewable energy investment in the region could vary significantly, and not all projects identified will proceed to construction and operation. Based on the Victorian Transmission Plan targets, a total of up to 6.4GW may

ultimately be required to be generated within the Study Area REZs. This is approximately half of the amount of generation that is currently proposed in the region.

VNI West and other transmission infrastructure augmentation is important to enable the development of renewable energy projects in the region. The first phase of impacts from projects identified in this Strategy will generally relate to transmission projects and the small number of renewable energy projects that can commence without additional transmission capacity.

The second phase of impacts is expected to primarily relate to construction phase impacts and solar projects, while several major wind farm proposals are expected to create longer term impacts.

### Mining Projects

Australia is home to the largest mineral sands deposits in the world, and the Study Area has globally significant quantities of titanium, zirconium, and associated rare-earth elements in mineral sand deposits. Critical minerals are a collection of metal and nonmetal resources considered essential for renewable energy infrastructure, modern computing, emerging technologies and sustainable economic development.

Mineral sands and other mineral occurrences are present across a broad band within the Study Area extending from the Horsham area through Yarriambiack, Buloke and Gannawarra to Swan Hill. Mineral Sands and rare earth occurrences also extend into South Australia to the west, into the Southern Grampians area to the south and into the southern New South Wales Riverina councils to the north.

Gold occurrences are wide spread near Stawell and across much of Loddon Shire in the east of the Study Area, and exploration and investment into gold mining is increasing strongly across the region.

A total of 22 mining projects are planned in the area, including 11 mineral sands projects and 9 gold projects. The projects expected to generate short term impacts are located near Swan Hill (Goschen), Horsham (Avonbank and Wimmera) and the Donald Project (between Minyip and Donald).

Mineral sands projects are expected to have relatively long mine lives of 25-40 years. Localised impacts and benefits will occur during the construction and operation phases during which activities are relatively labour intensive. Mineral sand resources are planned to be exported for processing via the Port of Portland and Port of Melbourne.

### Existing Conditions

The Study Area contributes approximately 6% of Regional Victoria's annual output and value-added, and 18% of export-value. An estimated 42,300 jobs are located in the Study Area.

Agriculture is the main driver of the regional economy, and is critically important to economic output, employment, value-add and export value. Key activities include broadacre cropping (grain, cereal and pulse), livestock farming, dairy farming and horticulture. Existing local and regional economic strengths and priorities are weighted to agriculture, manufacturing, health care and social assistance and construction.

There is a relative lack of diversification in the economy, highlighted by the reliance on agriculture and supply-chain sectors such as food manufacturing, construction and transport.

There are significant existing workforce capacity challenges, labour shortages and skills gaps in the Study Area that are a result of long-term low unemployment, very high labour participation rates, an ageing workforce and areas of overall population decline. These conditions create challenges for a range of existing industries across the region, a key issue raised in consultation with stakeholders for this Strategy.

The Study Area has experienced population decline in some areas, however some communities have remained stable or increased in population. State government projections are for population to decline in the majority of Local Government Areas over the coming years (with the exception of Horsham and Loddon), however official projections are unlikely to have taken into account the population growth needed to service proposed major projects in the region.

Within the context of a changing and ageing population and very limited capacity in the labour force, the opportunity to meet the labour requirements for renewable energy and mining projects from within the Study Area is very limited. Therefore, to support the delivery and operation of projects, the following will be needed:

- Diversion of workers from other sectors of the economy; and/or
- Workers to be sourced from outside of the Study Area, which will have flow-on implications for housing, accommodation and services.

The housing and accommodation markets in the Study Area are characterised by low prices, a lack of diversity of housing types and sizes, extremely low rental vacancy rates, rapid rent price growth, and a low quantity of commercial accommodation. This presents challenges to existing communities as well as limitations for development feasibility, accommodating temporary workers and accommodating an ageing population in the future. The lack of housing availability is already a major constraint to economic activity and service provision across the Study Area.

Several settlements in the Study Area service cross-border catchments including parts of southern NSW and eastern South Australia which should be considered as part of readiness and impact planning.

Existing infrastructure networks are extensive but under pressure, especially local roads, telecommunications, water, wastewater treatment and in some parts of the area, electricity. In addition, existing rail infrastructure requires investment to take pressure off roads and move produce more efficiently across the region.

Local governments in the Study Area generally have very low rates bases and financial sustainability challenges which limit the availability of resources to undertake existing responsibilities.

**Economic Impacts and Opportunities**

Figure S1 shows a summary of the key scale and employment impact of the proposed projects, with further details provided in Section 6 of the Strategy.

**Figure S1 Project and Economic Impact Summary**



Source: Urban Enterprise.

Proposed projects in the region have a total capital expenditure estimated at \$27.7 billion of which approximately \$2.8 billion may be spent locally.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These estimates exclude proposed renewable energy projects beyond the total energy generation potentially required from the region of 6.4GW.

A total of at least 9,000 full time equivalent jobs would be supported by the proposed projects, with each job lasting an average of 2.5 years (based on the typical construction period of the projects). This employment impact would be phased over a relatively long period.

If projects were to occur within the three phases indicatively used for this Strategy, then:

- Phase 1 would support 1,700 FTE workers for construction activity;
- Phase 2 would support 3,800 FTE workers for construction activity; and
- Phase 3 would support 3,700 FTE workers for construction activity.

If the number of workers in the region peaks at around 3,800 during construction phases, this would represent an approximately 9% increase in employment across the Study Area, a significant increase over a sustained period.

Labour will need to include a combination of local and imported workers, highlighting both the significant opportunity for local labour participation as well as the potentially significant impact of existing labour being redirected from current employment in other industries to the major projects. To the extent that labour is imported to service the construction phases of projects, this will have significant impact on local housing and commercial accommodation markets, all else being equal.

Annual operational expenditure associated with the various project types is estimated at \$888 million across all phases, with an indicative \$590 million (67%) expected to be captured locally. Operational employment across all projects is estimated at 2,300 ongoing jobs, with around 1,900 positions (80%) expected to occur locally. Peak employment will depend on the ultimate timing of the operational phase of projects.

Major renewable energy, transmission, and mining developments generate significant employment and supply chain opportunities within their host regions. The majority of employment demand is concentrated in skilled trades and technical roles, with electricians the single largest occupation group for renewable energy projects. More broadly across transmission and energy projects, key sectors of demand include labourers, drivers, construction and project managers and a range of engineering disciplines.

The ability of local workers to be involved in the development and operation of renewable energy projects is highly dependent on the alignment of workforce skills, training pathways, and industry demand within regional areas. Further, the relatively small size of most businesses in the Study Area creates a challenge for existing businesses to confidently and proficiently participate in the supply chains of major projects.

For mining projects, local workers are well placed to participate in key roles, particularly in trades, machinery operation, transport and logistics, and site administration. However, given very high existing workforce participation and low population growth, there is a clear risk that workers are redirected from current roles to obtain higher paid roles in mining.

There is an opportunity for the north-western region of Victoria to add value to mineral sands extracted in the region through processing and manufacturing activities.

Given the high economic importance of agriculture to the economies of the Study Area and the lack of detailed and localised analysis of the potential impact on the sector, it is critical to more closely understand the specific impacts of mining, transmission and energy projects on agriculture in the Study Area, including:

- Considering the potential cumulative impact of these projects on the value and specialisation advantages of key sub-sectors of the agricultural industry in the area; and
- Planning for the expected increase in competition for labour, equipment, materials and water arising from the proposed major projects.

Overall competition for labour is likely to directly impact the agricultural sector and other parts of the economy – competition for labour and resources is the key potential economic disbenefit to mitigate for the region.

#### **Community and Local Government Impacts**

Community uncertainty, and in some cases, strong opposition, to proposed transmission infrastructure in the region (as well as some mining and renewables projects) is growing and identified by stakeholders as detrimentally impacting community cohesion. Progressively developing and maintaining social value will be central to achieving positive outcomes for the Study Area.

In addition to strategic investment in infrastructure and housing, community benefit schemes present a key opportunity to achieve legacy outcomes for the region, however schemes can be inconsistent in their application and in some cases fail to achieve meaningful benefits. There is an overall opportunity to improve the consistency, co-ordination and legacy impact of energy project schemes for broader benefit.

Mining projects are presently not required to provide local community benefits or rate payments, with royalties paid only to the State. There is a clear opportunity to increase the local share of benefits from mining projects and to consider cross-border opportunities and impacts of mining projects.

Although local government has limited influence over most key issues and decisions associated with transmission, energy and mining projects, Councils are often the first point of contact for communities, especially in periods of change and uncertainty.

Most local governments in the region are ill-equipped to adequately assess and respond to major project proposals, and any redirection of Council resources to address major project requirements can come at the cost of delivery of existing community services, generating a negative impact for the community overall. Local governments will require assistance well above 'business as usual' to ensure readiness and to adequately fulfil all legislative responsibilities.

**Readiness Priorities and Actions**

The scale of investment in energy and mining projects in the Study Area and its adjacent areas is significant and can bring substantial economic opportunities to the region which can assist with overall economic wellbeing in the Study Area, however potential conflicts with existing industries and cumulative impacts need to be considered.

Figure S2 summarises the eight key readiness themes and issues identified, and the strategic objectives of the Strategy relating to each theme. The recommended actions to further the objectives are shown in Table S1.

The actions are designed to identify the next steps that would best assist local governments and communities in the Study Area to mitigate the impacts of proposed projects and to benefit from the opportunities for current and future generations.

Implementation of the recommended actions will be subject to the availability of funding, especially from State and Federal governments, and partnerships and contributions from various agencies, proponents and institutions. Given local government constraints, regional co-ordination and state government leadership will be critical to supporting, funding and implementing this Strategy.

**Figure S2 Readiness Themes, Issues and Objectives**

THEMES	OBJECTIVES
<b>A</b> <b>Community readiness</b> , including balanced information available to communities, community leadership and lasting community benefits.	Actively support local communities during a period of change and uncertainty and optimise community benefits.
<b>B</b> <b>Transport</b> network improvements, especially key road and rail freight network upgrades and investment.	Invest in strategic road and rail upgrades
<b>C</b> <b>Housing</b> development, including an increase in permanent housing, diversity and enabling infrastructure.	Increase the diversity and availability of housing and other accommodation in key areas near major projects.
<b>D</b> <b>Labour force</b> attraction and retention, including training programs and labour for settlement services.	Attract, retain and train labour with skills relevant to existing strengths, opportunities in energy and mining, and supporting settlement services.
<b>E</b> <b>Local government</b> resources, capacity to plan for impacts, and financial sustainability.	Adequately resource local government to facilitate major projects concurrent to existing responsibilities.
<b>F</b> <b>Agricultural</b> sector support and ongoing productivity alongside proposed project construction and operation.	Ensure local agricultural impacts are understood, avoided and mitigated.
<b>G</b> <b>Capturing economic benefits</b> for region (business attraction, diversification, circular economy, power security).	Capitalise on economic opportunities for the region presented by the upcoming period of major investment in energy and mining.
<b>H</b> <b>Managing competition for resources</b> , including water, quarry materials and telecommunications.	Actively manage competition for resources and infrastructure that are critical to both existing activities and major projects.

Source: Urban Enterprise.

**Table S1 Action Plan**

ID	Action	Priority	Responsibility
	<b>General</b>		
	Study Councils acknowledge and endorse the objectives of the Strategy and commit to partner with all levels of government on implementation. (See Note 1)	High	Study Councils
<b>A</b>	<b>Supporting Local Communities</b>		
1	Funded roles (such as the Resources Victoria NW Communications expert) and funded community education training programs are needed to raise awareness.	High	DEECA and VicGrid
2	Preparation of place-based communications and explanatory materials for a community audience regarding the context for why major projects are being situated in the north-west region.	High	DEECA and VicGrid
3	Fund a publicly available map and dashboard showing projects, commitments, project status and a centralised portal for government, proponents and community to link and alert public engagement activities in each Critical Minerals Priority Development Zone and REZ area similar to Engage Vic.	High	State government to fund an independent body
4	Fund the delivery of Leadership Training in the region to ensure there is the ability for active and informed community participation in the land use transition.	Medium	VicGrid
5	Establish an annual Resource Ready event co-funded by State government and proponents to bring together government, proponents, business and community members to share research, experiences and opportunities.	Low	Independent body
6	Formalise and standardise community benefit schemes across the transmission, energy and mining project types in the study area to avoid duplication for community, maximise benefit and legacy for the hosting region and reduce administration overheads.	High	DEECA and VicGrid with proponent, community and local government assistance
7	Encourage any overarching benefits schemes to prioritise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consolidation of benefit scheme processes, structure and implementation across the region;</li> <li>Establishment of an overarching body that manages and administers the community benefit fund in collaboration with and/or on behalf of the proponents consistent with existing strategic regional and local readiness priorities with strong Local Government representation.</li> <li>Pooling community benefits contributions towards larger capital works projects, including co contributing schemes to enable Councils to access a proportion of the benefit fund for projects planned or underway.</li> </ul>	High	Independent body
<b>B</b>	<b>Strategic Road and Rail Upgrades</b>		
1	Prioritise and implement a Northwest Rail Freight Plan to enable more agriculture, energy generation & transmission infrastructure, and mining product to be transported by rail.	High	DTP and Local Government
2	Building on assessments undertaken for individual energy and mining project approvals processes, drawing on local government intelligence and having regard to agricultural needs, identify key strategic roads affected by transport demands to enable prioritisation.	High	DTP, DEECA, VicGrid and Local Government
3	Identify key intermodal support, port intake and export capacity, and railway line capital works.	Medium	DTP and Local Government (RCV, RFA and MAV)
<b>C</b>	<b>Housing and Accommodation</b>		
1	Prioritise and implement a regional Worker Housing Plan which brings together existing housing studies from the Study Area to identify key locations and forms of housing across the region to service the expected construction periods. The plan should also identify opportunities for legacy in housing in response to the need for a more diverse and age-appropriate housing mix.	High	DTP, DEECA, DJSIR, Vicgrid and Local Government
2	Plan and prioritise worker accommodation modular work camps that transition to housing estates post construction.	High	DTP, DEECA, DJSIR Vicgrid, Proponents and Local Government

ID	Action	Priority	Responsibility
3	Co-ordinate and resource a regular housing development forum for the region to bring together developers, major project proponents and government representatives to identify priority issues in delivering housing in the region.	Medium	State Government, DTP, DEECA, RDV, VicGrid, Proponents and Local Government
4	Identify and have State government fund and prioritise key strategic planning work and enabling infrastructure required by Councils to facilitate major project accommodation requirements.	Medium	DTP with Local Government support
5	Identify towns and growth fronts for potential housing that are constrained by enabling infrastructure issues and advocate for dedicated funding to unlock housing potential, especially in areas proximate to projects.	Medium	DTP, RDV with Local Government support
6	Recognise the Northwest Study area as a region of major growth with incoming industry in State planning policy.	Medium	State Government, DTP with Local Government support
<b>D</b>	<b>Labour Force Development and Settlement Services</b>		
1	Prioritise vocational training opportunities in the region in occupations and skills required to support energy and mining projects by underwriting courses, regardless of student numbers.	High	DJSIR and Proponents with Training Organisations
2	Encourage partnerships between major project proponents and education providers to create a direct training and employment pathway for critical skills.	Medium	Proponents with Training Organisations
3	Prioritise and subsidise Apprenticeships and Traineeships in north-west Victoria in priority sectors supporting existing and emerging needs, including manufacturing, mining, energy, construction and care for small and medium enterprises to grow the local supply chain.	High	DJSIR, Federal Government, Proponents with Training Organisations
4	Investigate opportunities for targeted skilled migration to address labour needs including liveability and settlement services.	Medium	DJSIR, Federal Government, DEWR and Department of Home Affairs (Immigration), Proponents, Local Government
5	Investigate innovative ways to deliver vocational training to increase the volume of participants including mapping of existing skills to new skills and retraining.	Medium	DJSIR
6	Work closely with schools and Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) to demonstrate the demand for vocation training in the Resource Region through funded programs.	Medium	DET with LLENs and Proponents
7	Fund Federation and SuniTAFE to ensure their subject matter is fit for industry needs, through consultation and contextualisation.	Medium	DJSIR and DEECA, VicGrid and Proponents
8	Provide funding to prepare a Childcare Labour Attraction Strategy for the region in partnership with Local Government and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) providers and other relevant co ordinating bodies, with the aim of addressing existing shortages and an ability to respond to future pressures and demand peaks.	Medium	State and Federal DET and Local Government agents
9	Identify and provide services for new migrants to the region to assist with attraction, retention and community cohesion, similar to the NSW Orana Welcome Program.	Medium	DJSIR and Proponents
10	At the Northwest regional level, investigate how to address the potential skills impact to Councils efficiently maintaining local roads during the peak demand for civil workers and road crews with multiple projects.	Medium	Department of Government Services (LGV) and Local Government
<b>E</b>	<b>Local Government Resources</b>		
1	Establish a dedicated funding and technical resource stream, with a panel of independent providers, including shared labour resources across the Councils, to support in assessing major project applications concurrent to business-as-usual operations and responsibilities.	High	DEECA and VicGrid
2	Develop a suite of standardised and templated documents setting out and explaining the types of information required by Councils from proponents and State government agencies to adequately, efficiently and accurately assess proposals and referrals for comment at each stage of proponent project development.	Medium	DEECA and VicGrid

ID	Action	Priority	Responsibility
3	Advocate for State Government leadership, with well supported Local government representative bodies, to communicate with local communities regarding the role of local governments relevant to major projects and how they can participate in key decision and approvals processes.	Medium	DEECA and VicGrid
4	Provide dedicated funding for Local Governments to employ FTE commensurate to the requirements imposed by the land use change occurring.	High	DEECA and VicGrid
<b>F</b>	<b>Agricultural Impacts</b>		
1	Prepare an agricultural impact assessment of mining and renewable energy projects bespoke to north-west Victoria, taking into account the advantages and specialisations of the region and the potential for any cumulative impacts of major projects.	High	DEECA incorporating Agriculture Victoria, Resources Victoria and VicGrid
2	Identify key skills and occupations that most directly overlap between agriculture, mining and construction of energy projects and prepare a targeted strategy to increase the local supply of this labour.	High	DJSIR
3	Prioritise and implement the Critical Minerals Roadmap Land Use Co-existence Policy, ensuring the agricultural value and opportunities of the area are protected.	Medium	DEECA
<b>G</b>	<b>Economic Opportunities</b>		
1	Embed economic development objectives for the energy and mining sector in relevant statutory approvals to facilitate businesses growth and development which capitalises on local opportunities, or enter voluntary codes of commitment to demonstrate place based, fit for purpose responses.	High	DEECA and DJSIR
2	Establish a database of businesses providing goods and services relevant to the transmission, energy and mining supply chains as identified in this report and establish a grants program to enable businesses to access funding to expand or invest to participate in major projects or related downstream activities.	Medium	DJSIR with Proponents
3	Contribute to, prioritise and implement work undertaken at the State government level regarding opportunities for mineral sands value-adding in the north-west region.	Medium	DEECA and DJSIR
4	Prepare information, training and support services to enable existing businesses in the region to participate in the supply chain of major projects.	High	DEECA, DJSIR and Local Government with Proponents
<b>H</b>	<b>Competition for Resources</b>		
1	Advocate for investment in telecommunications infrastructure to withstand surges in demand expected during construction phases of major projects.	Medium	DJSIR and Proponents
2	Liaise with relevant government agencies to ensure continued availability of water to agricultural and recreation users within the Northwest concurrent to supply being made available for major project requirements.	High	DEECA
3	Liaise with gypsum and quarry operators and owners in the region and Resources Victoria to identify issues and opportunities regarding the ability to increase supply in response to increased demand.	High	DEECA
4	Prepare an energy security plan for towns and businesses in the study area that currently experience supply issues, including consideration of opportunities presented by the construction of new transmission infrastructure and renewable energy generation in the area.	Medium	DEECA
5	Identify and prioritise investments needed to stabilise and increase energy security and fund a business case and construction projects which prioritise outcomes in the host region.	Medium	Independent Body
6	Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the Emergency Service settings required during the construction and operation of energy and mining projects to ensure community safety levels remain or increase.	Medium	DEECA, VicGrid and proponents

Source: Urban Enterprise with input from project partners.

Note 1: The endorsement of this Strategy by Councils does not mean that any Council supports any transmission, renewable energy or mining proposal in the region.



# Part A

## Background

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

Federal and Victorian State Government policy supports the transition to renewable energy sources, including legislated targets for renewable energy generation and greenhouse emissions reductions. Renewable energy targets, incentives and investments are driving major shifts in the way energy is produced both globally and locally. New sources of energy and forms of production are planned to complement or replace traditional equivalents.

Western Victoria and North-West Victoria are two of six Renewable Energy Zones (**REZ**) in Victoria. The REZs are priority areas with the greatest potential for renewable energy generation. Consistent with global trends, the Western Victoria and North-West Victoria Renewable Energy Zones and surrounding areas are currently the focus of several major renewable energy proposals, including onshore wind farms, solar farms and large-scale battery.

It is within this context that additional transmission infrastructure is needed. The proposed Victoria – New South Wales Interconnector project (known as **VNI West**) is planned to transmit renewable power from REZs in New South Wales and Victoria to the Australian energy grid, enabling new renewable generation in region; additional electricity export capacity from Victoria to New South Wales; and additional electricity import capacity from New South Wales to Victoria. VNI West has the potential to facilitate the delivery of a substantial pipeline of renewable energy investment across the region, which would have a range of economic impacts and benefits for communities and Councils.

Northern and western Victoria is also the focus of several major mining projects, particularly mineral sands, rare earth and gold projects, which have potential to extract globally significant resources and also generate significant economic and other impacts and benefits.

The sheer scale and number of major projects proposed in north-western Victoria and adjacent areas, including cross-border developments, must be considered in the context of a region that has existing strengths and challenges, particularly a strong reliance on agriculture, low population levels and existing shortages of housing, labour and some services and infrastructure.

Local Councils in the region are aware of the wide range of issues and opportunities that the proposed major projects could generate and have partnered to commission an independent strategy to identify and respond to expected impact and readiness considerations.

## 1.2. Engagement

Urban Enterprise was engaged by the group of nine Councils located in north-western Victoria to prepare this Impact and Readiness Strategy.

The Councils are Buloke Shire, Gannawarra Shire, Hindmarsh Shire, Horsham Rural City, Loddon Shire, Northern Grampians Shire, Swan Hill Rural City, West Wimmera Shire and Yarriambiack Shire. The Councils are collectively referred to in this report as the '**study Councils**'.

The project is co-sponsored by VicGrid and has been delivered in conjunction with representatives of Regional Development Victoria (**RDV**) and Wimmera Mallee Development (**WMD**).

## 1.3. Role of Local Government

In Victoria, local government is established by an Act of state parliament – the Local Government Act 2020 – which specifies council powers, duties and functions. The role of a Council under the Act is "to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community."

Local government enables the economic, social and cultural development of the municipal area it represents; supports individuals and groups; and provides a wide range of services for the wellbeing of the local community. The primary functions of local Councils commonly include the provision of services and facilities (including community and recreation, early childhood and elderly services and waste collection); administering and enforcing State and local laws (such as planning, building, environmental protection, public health, traffic and animal management); and maintaining a range of assets (including roads, open spaces and others).

The role of local governments has evolved and expanded significantly over time beyond their traditional purview of rates, roads, and rubbish. Local governments are increasingly relied upon to provide services and manage complex infrastructure assets.<sup>2</sup>

Councils do not deliver or regulate major projects such as renewable energy, transmission and mining projects. These projects are generally initiated by the private sector or government agencies, with approval responsibilities normally at the State and Federal government levels. Although Councils have a role to play in contributing to the various permissions required for the projects to proceed, overall, Local Government is not a key decision maker in the approval or otherwise of the major projects that are the subject of this Strategy.

Therefore, it is important to consider that the study Councils are undertaking this project as a means of identifying the potential impacts and opportunities at the local level and advocating for action to ensure overall benefits for the wellbeing of the communities.

A Council's main opportunities to influence local 'readiness' relate to community engagement and communications, strategic land use planning, economic development initiatives, advocacy to State and Federal government and regional co-ordination and partnerships.

#### 1.4. Scope

The scope of this project is to:

- Identify the potential impacts and opportunities of renewable energy and mining projects in the region, including VNI West;
- Understand the type and nature of economic impacts that could result; and
- Identify actions and levers that local governments can apply to ensure 'readiness', capture economic opportunities, mitigate issues, and maximise benefits that flow to the community.

The scope is primarily focused on economic issues, however a broad range of issues are identified throughout the Strategy which extend into related aspects including community readiness, local government resources and the role of settlements and infrastructure.

It is not in scope to undertake a full assessment of the potential impacts of projects on individual industries, properties or locations – this is within the remit of individual approvals processes. This Strategy considers the longer term, regional scale and overarching issues at play. It is also not in scope to consider environmental impacts, social impacts or the costs and benefits of projects.

---

<sup>2</sup> Interim report into local government sustainability, Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport, February 2025.

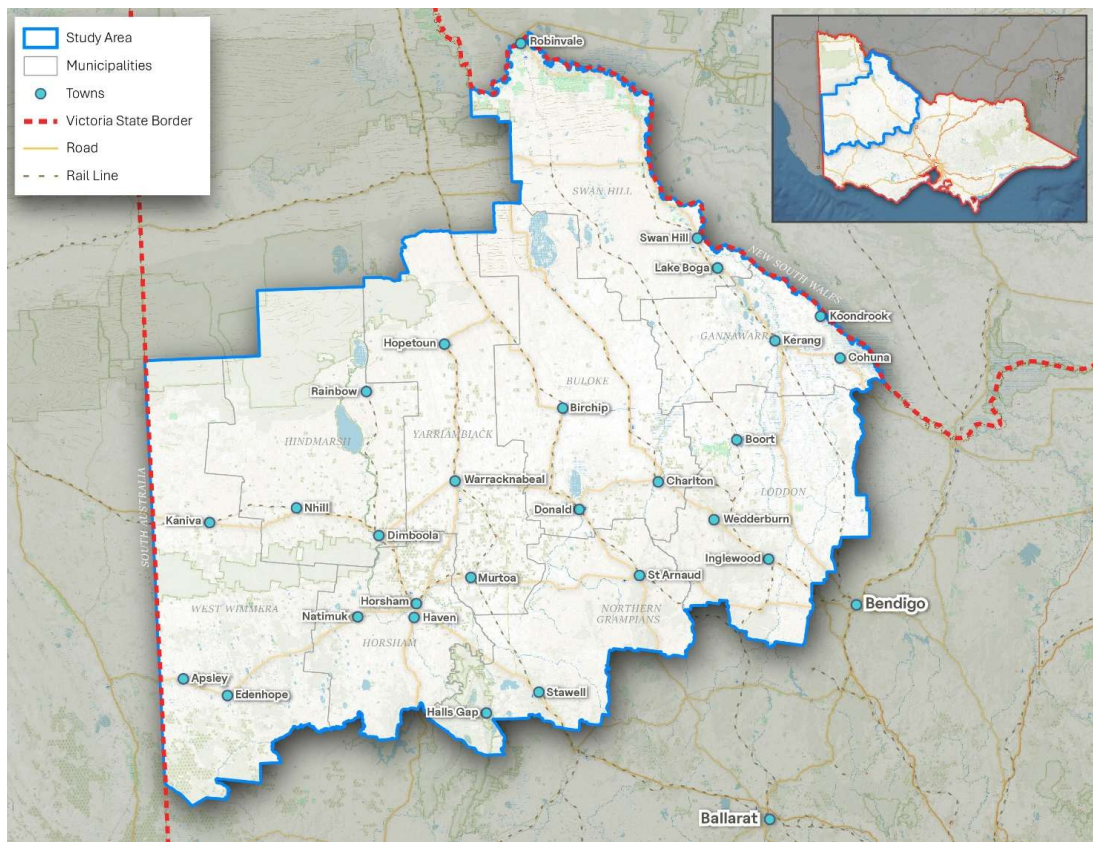
### 1.5. Study Area

The Study Area is the contiguous area covered by the study Councils as shown in Figure 1.

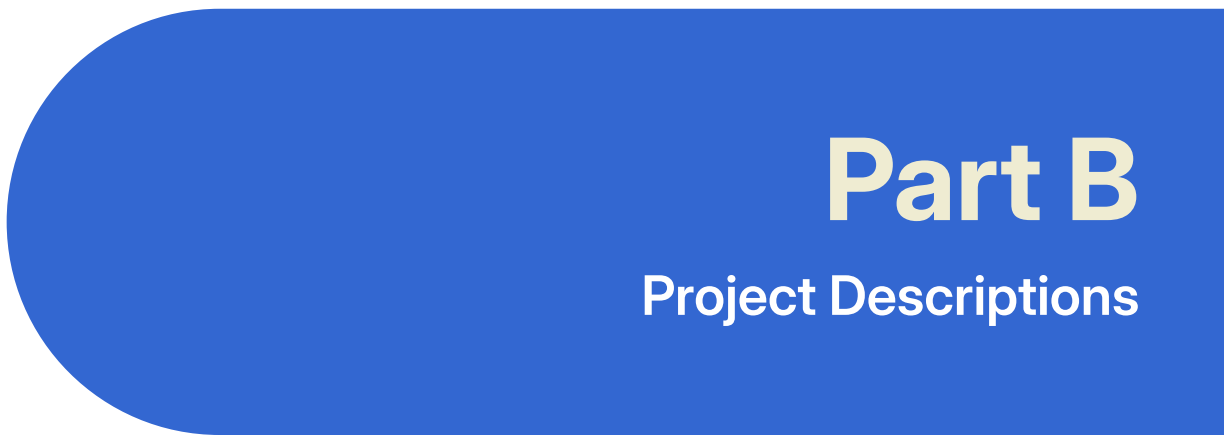
The Study Area extends from the Murray River and Victorian / New South Wales border in the north-east to the South Australian border in the west and the Grampians to the south. The Study Area covers an area of 58,503 sq km, comprising approximately 26% of Victoria.

Although the Strategy is focused on activity and impacts within this Study Area, it is noted that the area does not function in isolation. Other projects outside the Study Area will also influence the Councils and settlements within the Study Area, and the impacts and benefits of projects located within the Study Area will also flow to other areas across Victoria, Australia and throughout the global supply chain.

Figure 1. Study Area Map



Source: Urban Enterprise. Note: the largest three towns within each Study Council by population are shown on the map.

A large blue rounded rectangular graphic with a white border, containing the text 'Part B' and 'Project Descriptions'.

# Part B

## Project Descriptions

## 2. Transmission Projects

### 2.1. Introduction

This section provides an overview of proposed transmission projects in the Study Area.

### 2.2. Network Planning

#### 2.2.1. National Energy Market

Australia's National Energy Market (**NEM**) includes a network of connected transmission infrastructure across the eastern states of Australia managed by the Australian Energy Market Operator (**AEMO**).

AEMO's Integrated System Plan (**ISP**<sup>3</sup>) is a roadmap for the transition of the NEM power system, enabling a shift from coal to renewables and low emissions sources, as well as trebling the capacity of the network to meet future demand, and facilitate a two-way flow of electricity across the networks.

The ISP identifies several new transmission projects that are planned across the network as shown in Figure 2. In Victoria, these include:

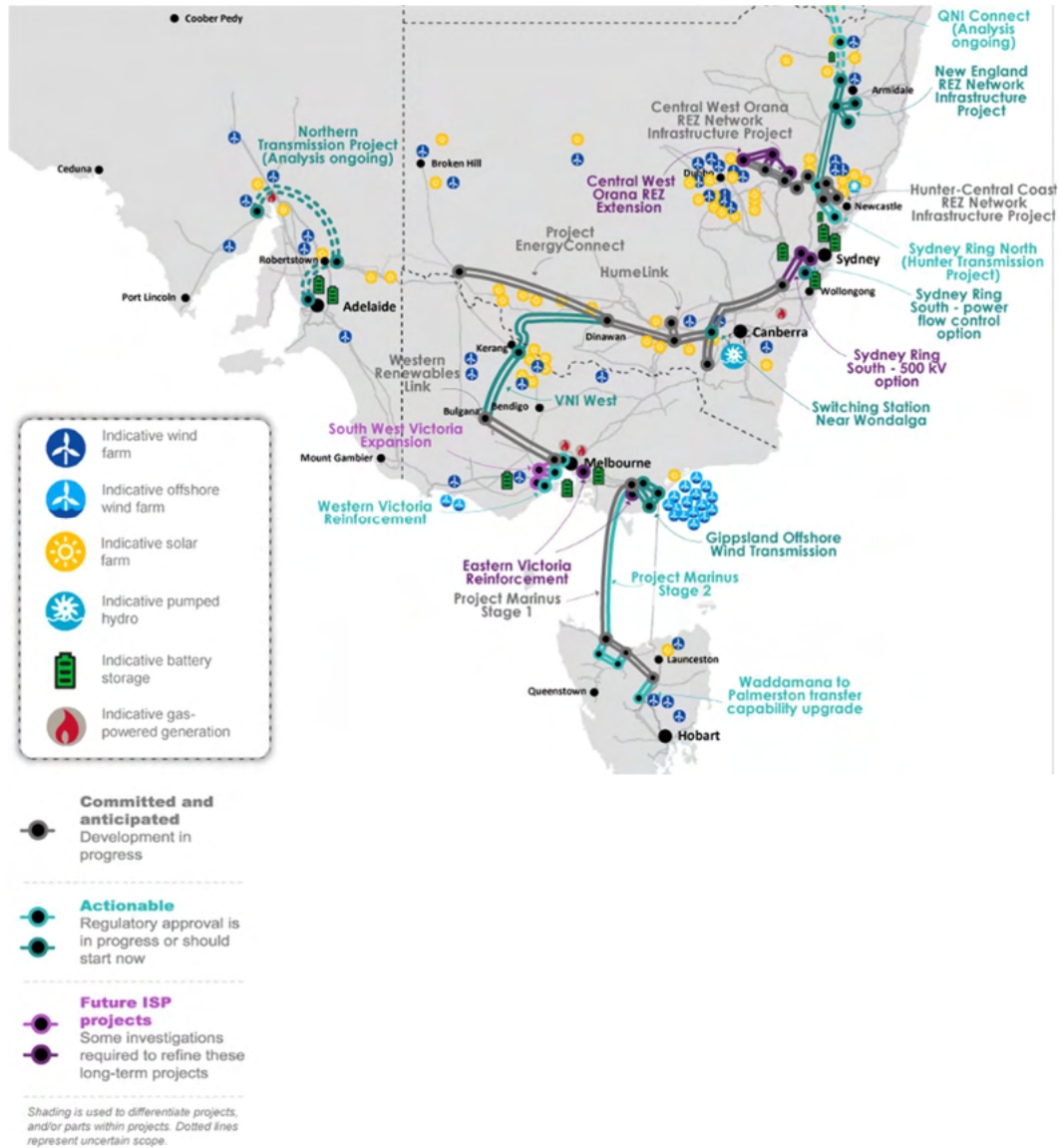
- VNI West, categorised as "Actionable" with full capacity expected by November 2031;
- Western Renewables Link (**WRL**), categorised as "committed and anticipated", with full capacity expected by November 2029; and
- Projects classified as "newly actionable" or "future ISP projects", being:
  - Western Victoria Reinforcement; and
  - Gippsland Offshore Wind Transmission.

Of greatest relevance to the Study Area is VNI West, along with Western Renewables Link. It is also relevant that the 'EnergyConnect' transmission project is under development and will enable new renewable projects to connect to the network in southern New South Wales near the northern border of the Study Area.

---

<sup>3</sup> The ISP is updated every two years. The latest published version is the 2024 ISP, while the draft 2026 ISP was released for consultation in December 2025. The material in this section is based on the 2024 ISP, with proposed changes from the draft 2026 ISP noted where relevant.

Figure 2. Map of Planned Transmission Projects



Source: AEMO ISP 2026 (Draft), cropped and adapted by Urban Enterprise for relevance to project.

**2.2.2. Victorian Transmission Plan**

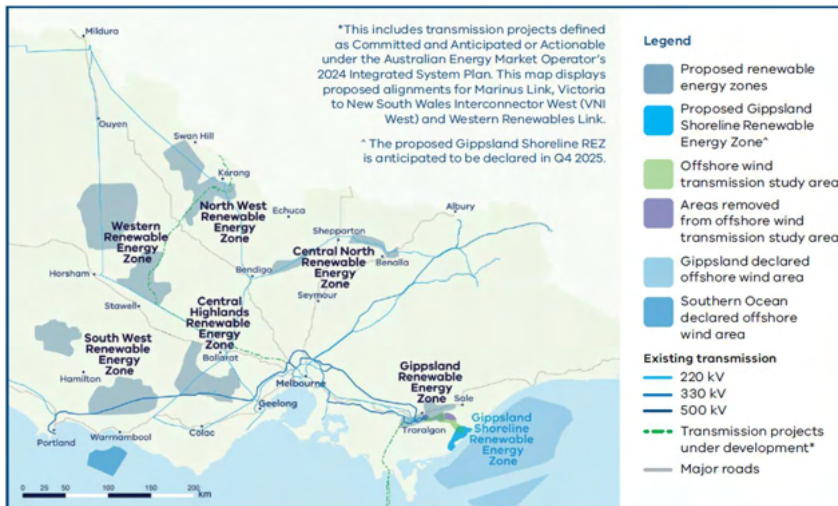
The Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP, August 2025) is a long-term plan prepared by the Victorian State government for renewable energy zones and transmission designed "to ensure we have the right infrastructure in the right place at the right time to support the transition to renewables."

The VTP identifies:

- **Proposed renewable energy zones**, which are areas identified as most suitable to host new onshore renewable generation and storage;
- **Proposed new transmission** investments required in the next 15 years to support renewable energy zone development and deliver network security and reliability; and
- **A proposed renewable energy zone on Gippsland’s shoreline**, which is needed to support offshore wind connection assets.

The VTP identifies 6 proposed renewable energy zones for Victoria: Central Highlands, Central North, Gippsland, the North West, the South West and the Western. The North-west and Western REZs are within the Study Area and are shown in Figure 3. A consultation period will inform the preparation of Draft and final (Declared) REZ areas.

**Figure 3. Proposed Renewable Energy Zones, Victoria**



Source: VTP, p.16.

The VTP identifies 7 priority programs of transmission infrastructure investments to be implemented by 2040 to enable the development of renewable energy zones and offshore wind. The priority programs are as follows (Study Area projects in bold):

1. Western Victoria reinforcement program: A collection of network augmentations and upgrades of existing infrastructure.
2. Eastern Victoria reinforcement program: A suite of network augmentations and upgrades of existing infrastructure, as well as an additional line between Hazelwood and Yallourn.
3. **North West strengthening program: Replacement of sections of the existing single circuit transmission with a new high capacity double circuit line.**
4. South West expansion program: a new double circuit 500 kV line and associated works in South West Victoria.
5. Gippsland offshore wind transmission stage 2 program: a new transmission loop to support offshore wind.
6. Latrobe Valley strengthening program: new power flow controllers and dynamic load rating devices in the Latrobe Valley.
7. Offshore wind upgrade: Uprating of existing lines from Heywood to Portland.

These projects are in addition to the major new transmission projects which form part of the NEM, including VNI West and WRL. The overall program of transmission works is shown in Figure 4.

The elements of the North West Strengthening program relevant to the Study Area are shown in Table 1. A total of \$3.37bn of construction costs are proposed to upgrade three existing transmission lines in the area.

**Table 1. North West Strengthening Program**

ID	Program Element	Cost	Timeframe
3.1	Rebuild the existing transmission line between Murra Warra, Horsham and Ballarat into a high-capacity double circuit line	\$1.35bn	In service 2034-2035
3.2	Rebuild the existing transmission line between Red Cliffs and New Kerang into a high-capacity double circuit line	\$1.27bn	In service 2034*
3.3	Rebuild the single circuit line between New Kerang and Bendigo into a high-capacity double circuit line	\$750M	In service 2034 - 2035
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$3.37bn</b>	

Source: VTP, Appendix A. Note: some sections of the projects are located outside the Study Area (connections to Ballarat, Bendigo and Red Cliffs (Mildura)). \* 3.2 is only required under candidate pathway 2, which relates to Scenario 2 of the VTP and the associated higher renewable energy requirement.

**Figure 4. Proposed Transmission Projects, Victoria**



Source: VTP, p.20.

## 2.3. VNI West

### 2.3.1. Overview

VNI West is a proposed new transmission line between Victoria and New South Wales. The proposed new overhead 500 kV double circuit transmission line will run from the Dinawan substation in New South Wales to Bulgana in Victoria (Northern Grampians Shire), where it will connect to Western Renewables Link via a new terminal station.

The proposed project comprises:

- Development, construction and operation of approximately 240 km of new 500 kV overhead double circuit transmission line with steel lattice towers of between 60 m to 80 m in height.
- Construction of a terminal station at Tragowel, including both 500 kV and 220 kV equipment.
- Modifications to the existing 220 kV transmission line that runs between Kerang and Bendigo at the proposed Tragowel Terminal Station.
- A transmission corridor within the Option 5A area of interest which has been identified as having the potential to accommodate the project infrastructure.

The location of the preferred easement within the corridor for the project is shown in Figure 5.

Transmission Company Victoria (TCV) is responsible for developing the Victorian component of the Project.

Figure 5. Location of Preferred Easement, VNI West



Source: Transmission Company Victoria, 2025.

**2.3.2. Why is VNI West Needed?**

The context and need for the proposed VNI West project is set out as follows:

- Australia’s coal-fired generators are planned to exit over time, and the lowest cost and cleanest replacement for coal generation is renewable energy.
- Due to the changing geographic locations of generation, existing transmission cannot be relied upon. The project is planned to transmit renewable electricity generated in wind and solar rich energy zones in Victoria and New South Wales and improve the reliability and security of electricity supply.
- The project will help to provide strategic protection against the risk of early coal retirement and gas supply scarcity.
- The project will unlock significant transmission capacity within the Murray River (now North-West) and Western Victoria REZs and allow transmission to occur between Victoria and New South Wales in the region (both import and export of electricity between the two states).
- The project will assist in achieving legislated emissions reduction targets for Australia of 43% below 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050.

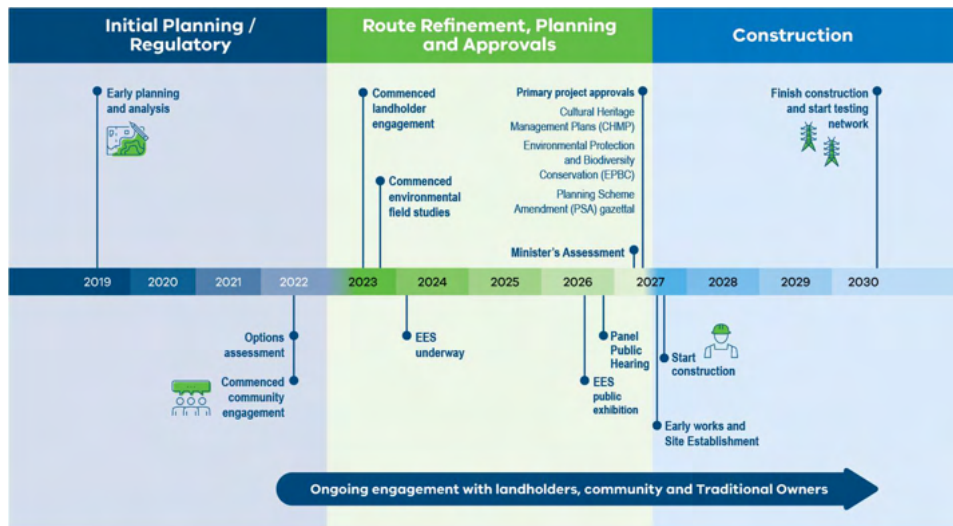
In relation to the Study Area, the project is stated to enable upwards of 3.4 GW of new renewable generation in the Murray River (now North-West) and the Western Victorian REZs; add 1.93 GW of electricity export capacity from Victoria to New South Wales, and 1.67 GW of electricity import capacity from New South Wales to Victoria.

**2.3.3. Timeline**

Initial planning for the project commenced in 2019. The Victorian component of the project is currently undergoing an Environmental Effect Statement Process (EES), which was determined by the Minister for Planning under the Environment Effects Act 1978. The EES will provide a detailed description of the project, assess its potential effects on the environment, and assess alternative project layouts, designs and approaches to avoid and mitigate potential adverse effects.

The indicative timeline for the project is shown in Figure 6. The project is expected to commence construction in 2027, be completed in late 2030 and fully operational in 2031. Ultimately, the project and its timing will depend on the outcomes of the EES and subsequent State and Commonwealth approvals.

**Figure 6. VNI West Timeline**



*The above dates are indicative only and subject to change.*

Source: Transmission Company Victoria, 2026.

#### 2.3.4. Cost and Broader Benefits

The initial estimated capital cost of the project (Option 5A) was approximately \$3.499bn (June 2021 values), which comprised of \$1.755bn within Victoria and \$1.744bn within New South Wales. In 2025, an update prepared by AEMO estimated a total capital cost of \$7.070bn, approximately twice the original estimate.<sup>4</sup>

Annual routine operating and maintenance costs are assumed to be 1% of capital costs for transmission assets.

In addition to outlining reasons why the project is needed, the RIT-T prepared for the project<sup>5</sup> estimated that the preferred option will deliver approximately \$1.4 billion in expected net market benefits to consumers and producers of electricity.<sup>6</sup> The net market benefits broadly consist of:

- Reduced generation and storage investment costs;
- Reductions in total dispatch costs, by enabling lower cost renewable generation to displace higher cost fossil fuel generation; and
- Lower or avoided costs associated with intra-regional transmission investment across the REZs.

The RIT-T states that the preferred option will unlock significant transmission transfer capacity for the Murray River (now North-West) REZ and Western Victoria REZ. By 2050, modelling<sup>7</sup> estimated that the preferred option would enable:

- Between 2.3 GW and 2.9 GW in renewable energy (solar) generation in the Murray River (now North-West) REZ; and
- Between 1.1 GW and 1.3 GW in renewable energy (wind) generation in the Western Victoria REZ.

#### 2.3.5. Impacts and Readiness Considerations

The construction of major transmission infrastructure will generate a range of economic, environmental and other impacts. The RIT-T for VNI West does not assess local and indirect benefits, such as those relating to the impact of the project on existing land uses, settlements and economies. Closer assessment of the economic impacts of the project will form part of the Victorian EES process which is currently underway.<sup>8</sup>

In terms of the construction phase and inputs to the delivery of new transmission infrastructure, Figure 7 summarises the process for construction of new transmission infrastructure.

<sup>4</sup> 2025 Electricity Network Options Report, July 2025, AEMO (Initial Version, 31 July 2025).

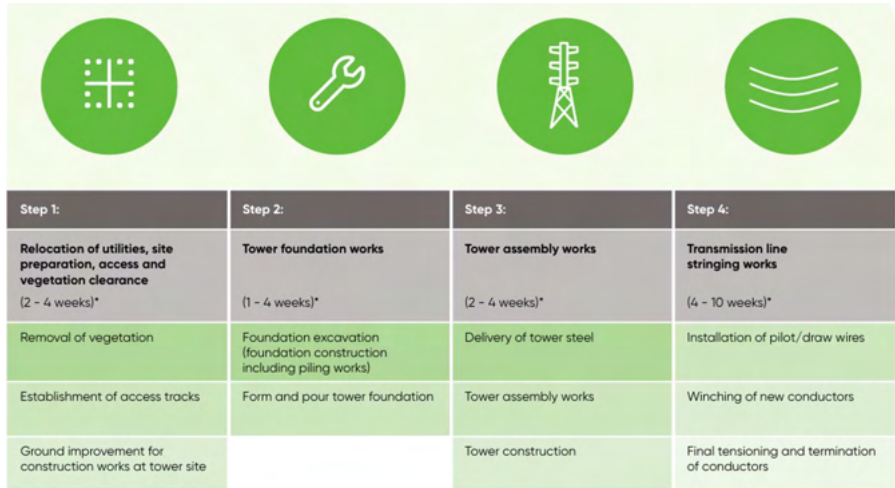
<sup>5</sup> VNI West Project Assessment Conclusions Report (PACR), AEMO, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> It is noted that the RIT-T was prepared based on the initial cost estimate of \$3.499bn which has since materially increased.

<sup>7</sup> PACR, p.83.

<sup>8</sup> Among other effects, the scoping requirements for the EES (February 2025) require an assessment of the "Potential adverse economic effects, including both direct and indirect effects on employment, farming and agriculture, other businesses, housing and local and regional economy".

Figure 7. Diagram of Key Construction Phases for New Transmission Infrastructure



Typically a period of 1 week to several months could be expected between these stages  
 \*Timing is indicative and subject to change

Source: Western Renewables Link, 2024.

The construction of transmission infrastructure has nine key cost components:<sup>9</sup>

- **Plant** (supply of primary material assets such as steel towers, equipment, conductors, switchgear, cables etc.)
- **Civil and structural works** (supply of civil infrastructure assets and installation works such as earthworks, buildings, foundation, busbar, gantry, clearing, access tracks etc);
- **Electrical works** (supply of electrical installation works such as stringing, fitting, termination, jointing, lighting etc.);
- **Secondary systems** (supply of secondary system material assets such as relays, control panels, protection panels, SCADA, station batteries etc.);
- **Design & survey** (supply of engineering and environmental design and survey works towards the front end of the project life cycle phase);
- **Testing & commissioning** (supply of electrical, civil and structural assurance works towards the back end of the project life cycle prior to operational approval of the constructed assets);
- **Contractor project management & overheads** (supply of the site supervision, resource mobilisation, site set-up, project management and related expenses by the hired contractors);
- **Easement and property acquisition costs** (procurement of easement right of way and land acquisition by the project proponents); and
- **Environmental offset costs** (costs to compensate for unavoidable environmental and biodiversity impacts due to the project works).

<sup>9</sup> As identified in the Transmission Cost Database, 20215 GHD for AEMO.

Table 2 summarises the potential impacts and readiness considerations associated with transmission projects that are relevant to the Study Area. These are derived from the EES Scoping Requirements for VNI West, a review of literature regarding likely impacts, and our experience in undertaking economic impact assessments.

The implications of these impacts are considered in more detail in Section 6 of this report.

Cumulative impacts of transmission infrastructure construction occurring in southern New South Wales at similar scheduled timing are also important considerations from a cross-border settlement and resources perspective.

**Table 2. Transmission Impacts Expected to Accrue in Local Areas**

No.	Expected impact
1	Direct construction activity generating employment and demand for goods and services.
2	Construction phase generating demand for housing, population services and infrastructure.
3	Initial and ongoing landowner impacts such as reduced land use productivity (negative), land value impacts (negative) and compensation (positive).
4	Operational phase employment and associated impacts.
5	Broader impacts on areas of economic specialisation, such as loss of productive land and a reduction in the agglomeration value of a specialised sector.
6	Broader impacts such as landscape, visual amenity and tourism role.

Source: Urban Enterprise.

## 2.4. Key Points

- Australia's transmission network requires significant investment and extension to facilitate the ongoing transition to renewable energy generation.
- Affecting the Study Area, a total of \$3.37bn of construction costs are proposed to upgrade three existing transmission lines, as well as the proposed construction of the new VNI West line between Victoria and New South Wales at a cost of \$7.1bn.
- Two of Victoria's six Renewable Energy Zones are within the Study Area (the North-west and Western REZs). VNI West will unlock significant transmission transfer capacity for these areas.
- The construction of major transmission infrastructure will generate a range of economic, environmental and other impacts, both positive and negative. The process to date of assessing these impacts does not take into account local effects. Although this may occur for the VNI West EES process, there is a current absence of consideration of the potential impacts of transmission on local communities and economies in the Study Area.

### 3. Renewable Energy Projects

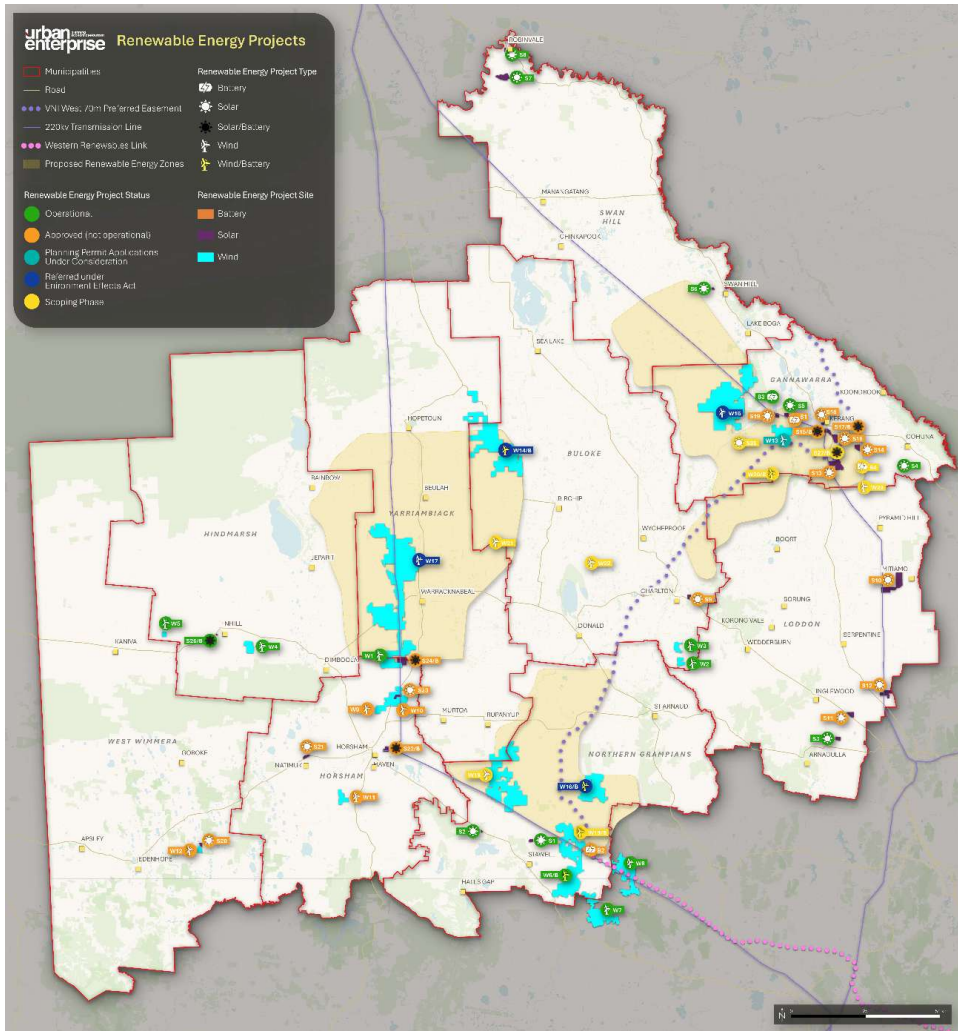
#### 3.1. Introduction

This section provides a description of the various renewable energy projects planned across the Study Area.

#### 3.2. Location and Status of Projects

Figure 8 shows the location, status and energy type of renewable energy projects planned in the Study Area, as well as those already operating. There are substantial concentrations of projects proposed in Gannawarra and near Horsham and Stawell.

Figure 8. Map of Renewable Energy Projects



Source: Urban Enterprise, based on Victorian Government data and consultation with project proponents and Study Area councils.

### 3.3. Number and Scale of Projects

A full list of planned renewable energy projects in the Study Area is provided in Appendix A, including status, location and scale.

The Study Area is expected to accommodate a substantial pipeline of renewable energy projects, with over 13 GW of planned capacity identified across solar and wind projects across 33 projects. Three planned battery storage projects also have approximately 2GW of storage capacity.

**Table 3. Existing and Planned Renewable Energy Projects (MW)**

Status	Solar Generation	Wind Generation	Solar and Wind Generation	Battery*	Total
Operational	245	1,015	1,260	233	1,492
Planned	2,752	9,592	12,344	1,990	14,333
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,997</b>	<b>10,606</b>	<b>13,603</b>	<b>2,223</b>	<b>15,825</b>

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2025 \*Note battery capacity relates to storage rather than energy generation.

#### Priority Projects

The Australian Government has created the National Renewable Energy Priority List, which will provide coordinated support for regulatory planning and environmental approval processes for identified priority renewable energy projects across Australia.

There are 32 generation and storage projects on the Priority List, including 5 in Victoria and 1 in the Study Area (Cannie Wind Farm in Gannawarra Shire).

### 3.4. Locations and Concentrations

The main spatial concentrations of proposed solar projects are in Gannawarra Shire (especially near Kerang) and Horsham Rural City (especially in the northern part of the municipality). Two solar projects are also proposed in the southern part of Loddon Shire (near Inglewood).

The main spatial concentrations of proposed wind projects are within Northern Grampians Shire (near Stawell), north of Horsham (including Yarriambiack Shire, near Warracknabeal, and Buloke, near Birchip), and Gannawarra Shire (west of Kerang).

When the combined projects across transmission and renewable energy are considered together, the larger towns that are most proximate and therefore most likely to be impacted in terms of demand for labour and services are expected to be **Horsham, Stawell and Kerang**.

### 3.5. Timing and Relationship with Transmission Projects

Although there are existing transmission lines in the Study Area, the network is mostly at capacity and new and upgraded transmission is required to enable the planned projects to connect to the network. This will influence the number, type, location and timing of projects that will ultimately be able to proceed.

The VTP provides an indication of the amount of energy generation that is planned to occur in each REZ in addition to current levels – these are shown in Table 4. For the REZs in the Study Area, the planned generation is 0.8GW -4.5GW of new wind and solar in the Western REZ and between 0.4GW -1.9GW of new wind and solar in the North-Western REZ.

It is noted that the amount of renewable energy generated in the Study Area REZs by 2040 (as modelled in the VTP) would be materially higher under Scenario 2<sup>10</sup> at 6.4GW when compared with Scenario 1, primarily driven by the Western REZ generating significantly more energy than under Scenario 1. Although not stated in the plan, this may reflect the significant

<sup>10</sup> Scenario 2 "considers a potential future where new energy-intensive industries are established in regional and central Victoria at scale, such as data centres, hydrogen production and green aluminium. Demand in this scenario is based on AEMO's national green energy export trends forecast, which models a rapid decarbonisation pathway and the development of low emission energy exports." (VTP, p.32)

additional generation potential of the large number and scale of proposed wind projects in Northern Grampians, Horsham, Yarriambiack and Buloke and also respond to delays in the progress of offshore wind opportunities elsewhere in the State.

**Table 4. Modelled Renewable Energy in Study Area REZs – New Wind & Solar by 2040 (GW)**

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Western	0.8	4.5	0.8
North West	0.4	1.9	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>1.5</b>

Source: VTP, Table 8.

In terms of access limits, the VTP notes that:

- "A cap on the new generation that can connect within each REZ – called an access limit – will be released in the REZ declaration and access scheme associated with each REZ."
- Access limits are proposed to be set "at the maximum amount of generation capacity that can be connected within the REZ without violating technical constraints or surpassing efficient levels of network curtailment forecast for the REZ." (p.122).
- "Projects located inside declared renewable energy zones will have the opportunity to participate in a competitive application process for allocating access to the grid"; and
- "Projects located outside of declared renewable energy zones will be subject to a Grid Impact Assessment and will need to demonstrate that their project would not result in generators located within renewable energy zones being 'excessively curtailed.'"

**Implications for this Strategy**

The main implications of the preceding information are:

- The ultimate scale of renewable energy investment in the region could vary significantly.
- Not all projects identified will proceed to construction and operation.
- VNI West and other transmission infrastructure augmentation is important to enabling the development of renewable energy projects in the region, meaning that first phase of impacts will generally relate to transmission projects and the small number of renewable energy projects that can commence without additional transmission.
- The ultimate generation within the Study Area is likely to be capped by VicGrid, however the level of the cap is not yet known.

In order to provide an indication of the potential phasing of the renewable energy projects in the region, we have categorised the renewable energy projects into three phases:

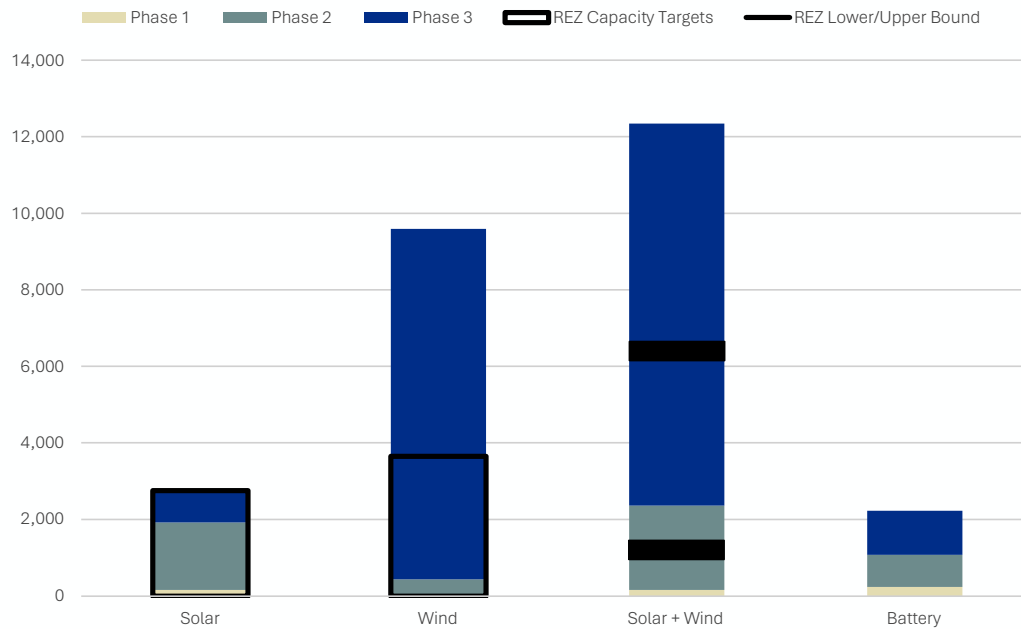
- **Phase 1:** Short-term (indicatively 2025-2030, however timing remains uncertain). These projects are either under construction or expected to commence imminently.
- **Phase 2:** Medium term (indicatively 2031-2035, however timing remains uncertain). These are projects that are approved but still require additional design and development work and/or are likely to require connection to VNI West or other upgraded transmission capacity.
- **Phase 3:** Long term. These are projects that have not been approved and still require substantial planning, design and development work.

This phasing is provided as a guide to the potential timeframes over which construction and operational impacts may occur, however the actual timing and phasing of projects subject to ongoing changes and will depend on the approval and timing of transmission projects and broader market and policy conditions.

In order to assess the potential impact of the proposed projects, we have adopted the overall energy generation levels shown in the VTP for the two REZs in the Study Area of 6.4GW as the upper bound. As shown in Figure 9, this is approximately half of the amount of generation that is currently proposed in the region, but is considerably higher than the Scenario 1 generation levels shown in the VTP.

It is noted that 13 of the proposed projects are located outside the current REZ boundaries with a total generation capacity of 2.4GW. This includes 0.67GW of solar in Horsham, Loddon, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh and Buloke Shires, and 1.77GW of wind, primarily in two major proposals in Buloke and Yarriambiack (Wilkur and Curyo).

**Figure 9. Renewable Energy Planned Projects (MW capacity) & REZ Planned Generation**



Source: Urban Enterprise, based on Victorian Government data and consultation with project proponents and Study Area councils.

### 3.6. Projects in Adjacent Areas

In addition to the projects within the Study Area, other renewable energy proposals in adjacent areas are likely to create impacts and opportunities in parts of the Study Area.

The main area of relevance to the Study Area is the New South Wales South West REZ which is located to the immediate north of the Study Area.

#### New South Wales South West REZ

The South West REZ is located across the Victoria-New South Wales border as shown in Figure 10. The closest major towns on the Victorian side of the border near the REZ (from west to east) are Mildura, Robinvale, Swan Hill, Kerang, Cohuna and Echuca.

Figure 10 also highlights the two proposed transmission projects which pass through the REZ, including the New South Wales section of VNI West as well as Project EnergyConnect. Project EnergyConnect is a proposed interconnector stretching between Wagga Wagga (New South Wales) and Robertstown (South Australia), with an added connection to Red Cliffs (Victoria, near Mildura). Release of power is expected in mid-2026.

There are two existing operational solar farms within the South West REZ:

- The Sunraysia Solar Farm (John Laing, Maoneng) is located 17km south of Balranald and around 70km north of Swan Hill. The farm has a total capacity of 255 MW and construction of the farm was completed in 2019 after a 13-month construction period.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> John Laing, 2025, available at: <https://www.laing.com/portfolio/sunraysia-solar-farm-australia/>  
Decmil, 2025, available at: <https://decmil.com/project/sunraysia-solar-farm/>

- The Limondale Solar Farm (RWE Renewables) is one of Australia’s largest solar farms and is located approximately 14km south of Balranald. The project has an installed capacity of 314 MW and began commercial operations in 2021. RWE is building Australia’s first eight-hour battery on the project site.<sup>12</sup>

In 2025, four projects were granted access rights to connect to the new transmission infrastructure in the South West REZ – these projects are summarised in Table 5 with indicative locations shown in Figure 10. These projects are at the eastern end of the REZ. The projects are expected to:

- Generate a maximum capacity of 3.56 GW along with over 700 MW of battery energy storage;
- Support 2,800 jobs at peak construction; and
- Commence operation between 2027 and 2030.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 5. Projects Granted Access Rights in the South West REZ**

Project	Developer	Project Types(s)	Max. Capacity (MW)
Yanco Delta Wind Farm	Origin Energy	Wind	1,640
Dinawan Energy Hub	Spark Renewables	Wind, solar, battery	1,007
Pottinger Energy Park	Someva/AGL Energy Hubs	Wind, battery	831.2
Bullawah Wind Farm	Baywa r.e.	Wind	262.3

Source: EnergyCo, 2025.

**Figure 10. South West REZ, New South Wales**



Source: EnergyCo, 2025.

<sup>12</sup> RWE Renewables, 2025, available at: <https://au.rwe.com/projects/limondale-solar-farm/>

<sup>13</sup> South West Renewable Energy Zone powers up, EnergyCo, 2025, available at: <https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/news/south-west-rez-access-rights-holders-announced>

### 3.7. Key Points

- There are 33 renewable energy projects planned in the Study Area with the potential to generate more than 12GW of energy through solar and wind. Three planned battery storage projects also have approximately 2GW of storage capacity.
- The main spatial concentrations are in Gannawarra Shire (especially near Kerang), Horsham Rural City (especially in the northern part of the municipality) and Northern Grampians Shire (near Stawell). Major wind projects are in planning across the central parts of the Study Area within Yarriambiack, Buloke and Gannawarra Shire.
- The larger towns that are most proximate and therefore most likely to be impacted in terms of demand for labour and services are expected to be Horsham, Stawell and Kerang.
- Other renewable energy projects are also proposed in southern New South Wales which will contribute to impacts and opportunities in the northern parts of the Study Area.
- The ultimate scale of renewable energy investment in the region could vary significantly, and not all projects identified will proceed to construction and operation. Based on the Victorian Transmission Plan targets, a total of up to 6.4GW may ultimately be required to be generated within the Study Area REZ. This is approximately half of the amount of generation that is currently proposed in the region.
- VNI West and other transmission infrastructure augmentation is important to enabling the development of renewable energy projects in the region. The first phase of impacts will generally relate to transmission projects and the small number of renewable energy projects that can commence without additional transmission.
- The second phase of impacts is expected to primarily relate to construction phase impacts and solar projects, while several major wind farm proposals are expected to create longer term impacts.

## 4. Mining Projects

### 4.1. Introduction

This section provides an overview of the mining projects proposed within the Study Area and the context for the opportunity to undertake ongoing mining activity in the area.

### 4.2. Opportunity Context

The Minerals Council of Australia<sup>14</sup> has identified that Australia is home to the largest mineral sands deposits in the world, with 32% of the world's share of ilmenite resources and 62% of rutile resources. As noted in Victorian Critical Minerals Roadmap (Victorian Government, 2024), Victoria's critical mineral resources include globally significant quantities of titanium, zirconium, and associated rare-earth elements in mineral sand deposits in the northwest of the state.

The Roadmap notes that critical minerals are a collection of metal and nonmetal resources considered essential for renewable energy infrastructure, modern computing, emerging technologies and sustainable economic development. They are described as critical due to their vulnerability to future supply risks because of geological scarcity or geopolitical factors.

The following key facts are provided in the Roadmap:

- Victoria has 39% of Australia's zircon and approximately 27% of world reserves, with an estimated 33 million tonnes (Mt) of economic reserves.
- Victoria has 51% of Australia's rutile and 22% of its ilmenite – key titanium bearing minerals – estimated at over 19 Mt and 63 Mt, or approximately 32% and 7% of world reserves respectively.

In addition to these critical minerals, Victoria has a long history of gold mining. Resources Victoria notes that Victoria has 13 goldfields that have each produced more than 1 Moz of gold, including one field of 22 Moz (Bendigo) and another of 12 Moz (Ballarat). Many of these old goldfields offer opportunities to reopen mines or find totally new deposits through modern exploration techniques, with Victoria described as a "world class gold production province".<sup>15</sup>

Exploration and investment in gold mining is increasing, including within the Study Area near Stawell where significant deposits exist.

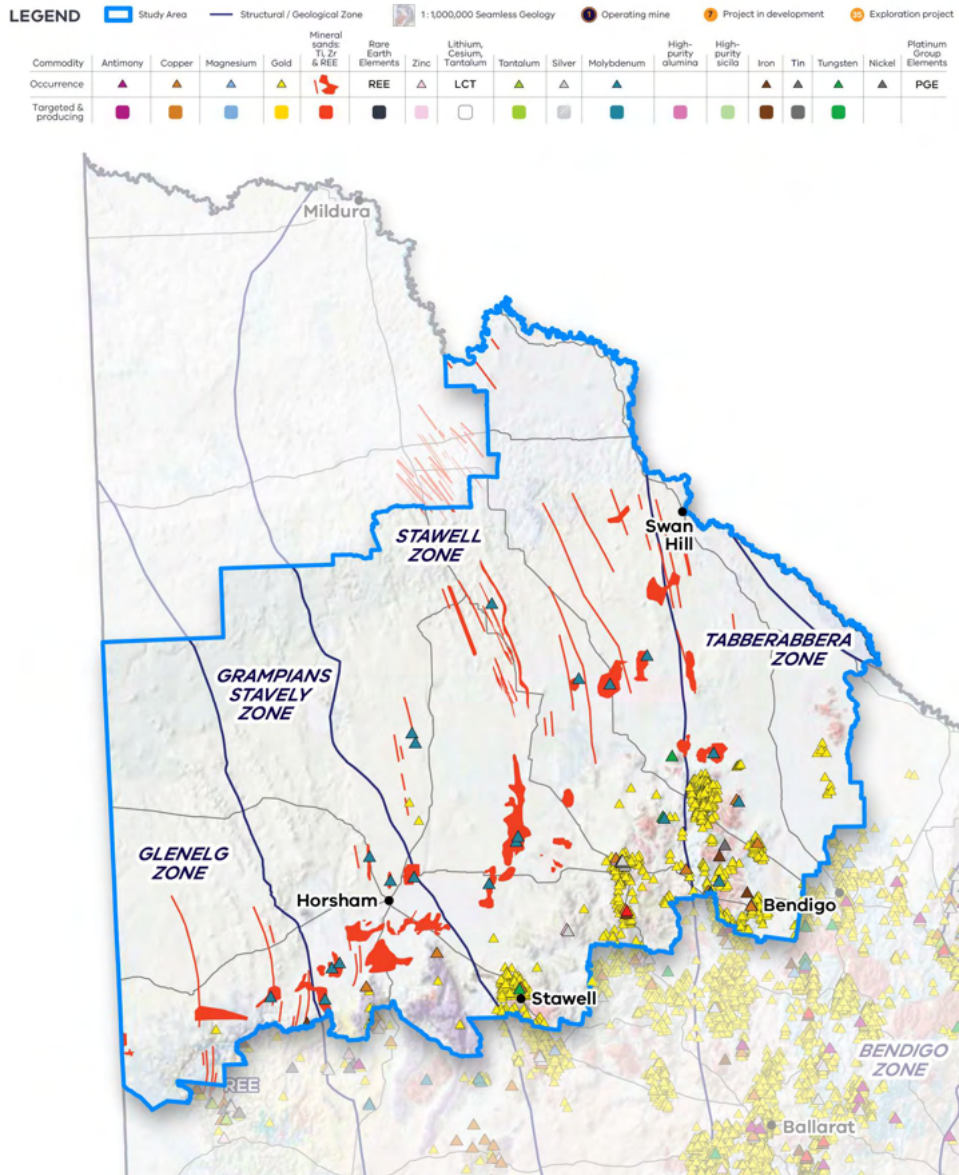
Figure 11 shows the location of key resources and minerals across the Study Area. Gold occurrences are widespread near Stawell and across much of Loddon Shire in the east of the Study Area, while mineral sands and other mineral occurrences are present across a broad band covering the central areas of the Study Area, including around Horsham, through Yarriambiack, Buloke and Gannawarra to Swan Hill.

It is noted that Mineral Sands and rare earth occurrences extend into South Australia to the west, into other parts of Victoria to the south (particularly into Southern Grampians Shire) and into southern New South Wales to the north.

<sup>14</sup> Mineral Sands, May 2020, Minerals Council of Australia.

<sup>15</sup> <https://resources.vic.gov.au/geology-exploration/industry-investment>

Figure 11. Location of Mineral Resource Opportunities in North-West Victoria



Source: Resources Victoria, 17 July 2025, adapted and annotated by Urban Enterprise.

### 4.3. Projects

Existing and planned mining projects identified in the Study Area are summarised in Table 6.

A total of 22 projects have been identified. Half of these projects (11) are mineral sands, highlighting the region’s major opportunity. Gold (9) and rare earths (2) projects are also present, although though these are primarily longer-term opportunities.

In terms of timing, three major mineral sands projects are approved or have received an acceptable Ministers Assessment for the Environment Effects Statement process. These projects (Donald, Avonbank and Goschen) have the potential to be operational in the short term (i.e. Phase 1). Subject to the EES process outcomes, Wimmera also has potential to generate short term impacts. A brief profile of each of these projects is shown in Table 7.

The location of all known mining projects is shown in Figure 12. Mining projects are primarily concentrated near Horsham and Stawell, as well as in the rural areas of Gannawarra, Loddon and West Wimmera Shires. The major shorter-term projects are located near Swan Hill (Goschen) and Horsham (Avonbank and Wimmera), while the Donald Project is proximate to other rural service centres including St Arnaud and Warracknabeal.

Two significant mineral sands mines are operating in the New South Wales south-west region: Tronox Atlas Campaspe (approximately 85km north-east of Robinvale) and Iluka Balranald (approximately 65km east of Robinvale and 100km north of Swan Hill). These projects impact cross-border settlements in the northern part of the Study Area and utilise key infrastructure in the region, including the Ultima Intermodal.

**Table 6. Existing & Planned Mining Projects**

	Mineral Sands	Gold	Rare Earth	Total
Operational	0	1	0	1
Phase 1	3	0	0	3
Phase 2	2	0	0	2
Phase 3	6	8	2	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22</b>

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2025.

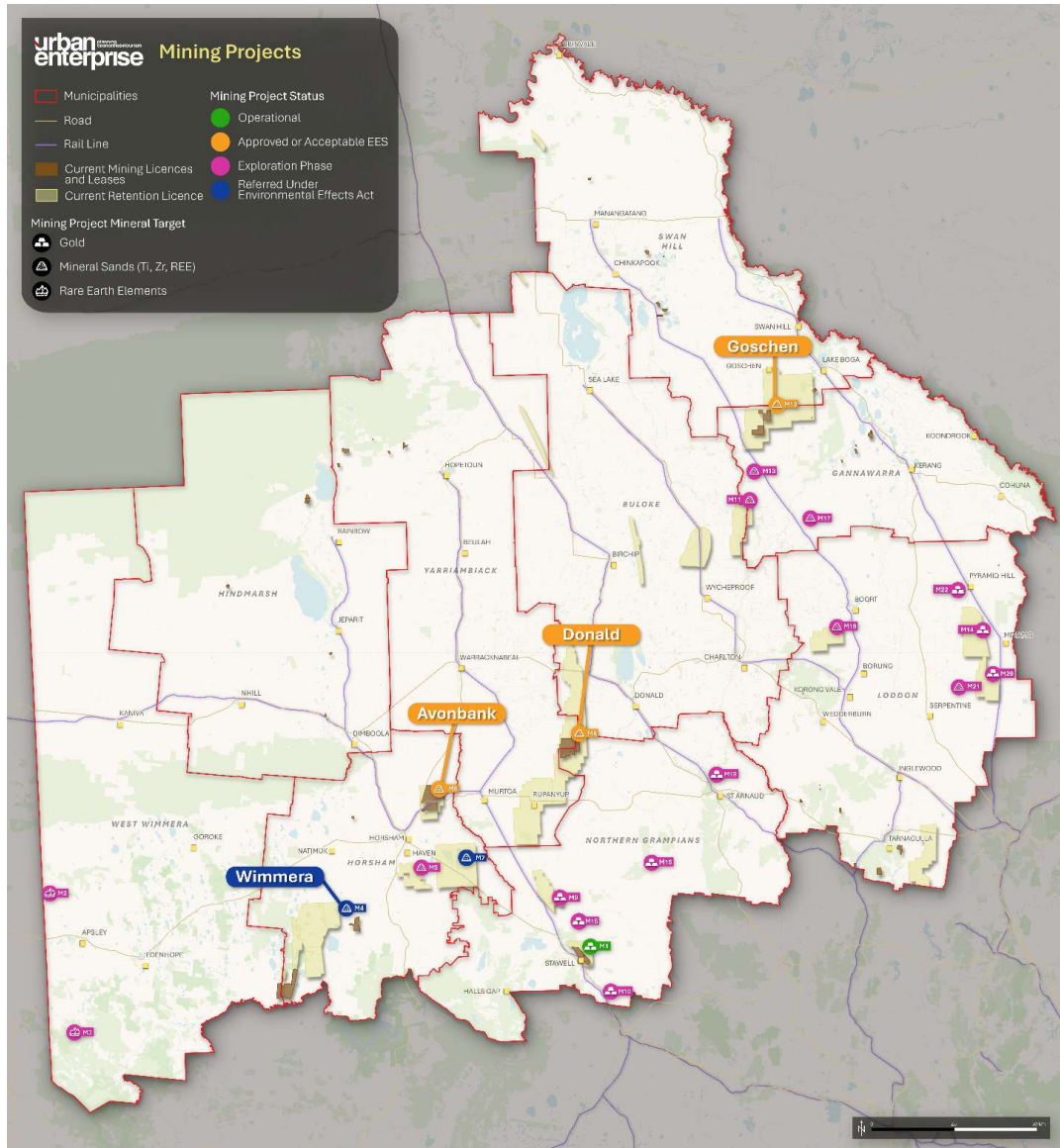
**Table 7. Key Mineral Sands Project Profiles**

Project	Location	Expected Timing and Mine Life	Description	Indicative Scale of Capital and Operating Expenditure
Avonbank	15km north of Horsham, 5km northeast of Dooen.	EES received acceptable Ministers Assessment. Mining application lodged and decision pending.  36 year project life (1 year construction, 30 year operation, 6 years decommission).	The deposit contains approximately 300 million tonnes of ore and is proposed to produce a heavy mineral concentrate containing zircon, titanium-rich mineral concentrate and minor amounts of rare earth products.  The proposed mining methods involve open-pit mining to extract approximately 11 million tonnes of ore per year over a projected mine life of 30 years to produce approximately 12.75 million tonnes of heavy mineral concentrate over the life of mine.	\$183m construction phase investment, \$210m in OPEX per annum.

Project	Location	Expected Timing and Mine Life	Description	Indicative Scale of Capital and Operating Expenditure
<b>Donald</b>	15 km east of Minyip and 50km from Horsham.	All required approvals from Federal, State and local government have been received.  Phase 1 will support an operational life of approximately 35 years. Construction is planned for late 2025, with operations planned for late 2027.	The total Donald deposit contains approximately 2.4 billion tonnes of ore, hosting commercial quantities of zircon, titanium and associated rare earth elements.  Under the approved work plan, the mine will process 7.5 million tonnes of mineral sands annually over 19 years. Mine products will be transported to the Port of Portland for export overseas.	\$480m CAPEX \$165m per annum OPEX Estimated total of \$4.3bn in OPEX and sustaining CAPEX to operate the mine.
<b>Goschen</b>	35 km southwest of Swan Hill.  Largest settlements in proximity are Swan Hill and Kerang.	EES received acceptable Ministers Assessment. Mining License application has been approved and work plan approval lodged and a decision is pending.  Stage 1 construction 2025-2026. Stage 2 construction 2028-29. 20-25 year mine life.	The Project will involve mining and processing heavy mineral sands and rare earths into mixed heavy mineral concentrate (HMC), zircon concentrate, rutile product, leucosene products, ilmenite product and rare earth mineral products.  The products generated from processing the ore will be transported in sealed sea containers via road to the Ultima intermodal terminal and railed to the Port of Melbourne for overseas export.	Stage 1: \$160m Stage 2: \$85-\$90m CAPEX. Stage 1: \$77m p.a. OPEX Stage 2 \$175m p.a. OPEX. \$2.8bn operational and sustaining capital expenditure overall.
<b>Wimmera (Iluka WIM100)</b>	35km south-west of Horsham	Referred under Environment Effects Act.  Iluka expects to submit the EES to the Victorian Government in 2026. Subject to government and internal approvals, pre-construction activities are planned to commence in early 2028 and mining would take place from early 2030.  Expected mine life of 23 years.	The WIM100 deposit contains approximately 200 million tonnes (Mt) of heavy mineral sands ore which is proposed to be extracted and refined onsite to produce zircon, titanium oxide and rare earth products.	Not currently available.

Source: Urban Enterprise, compiled based on information provided by proponents and accompanying planning approvals processes. Project status current as at October 2025.

Figure 12. Map of Mining Projects Proposed in the Study Area



Source: Urban Enterprise, based on mining licence data published by DEECA.

Note 1: Retention Licence areas shown are not indicative of the ultimate area of proposed resource extraction activity. Investigations within these licence areas result in the identification of considerably smaller spatial areas that are then subject to mining licences.

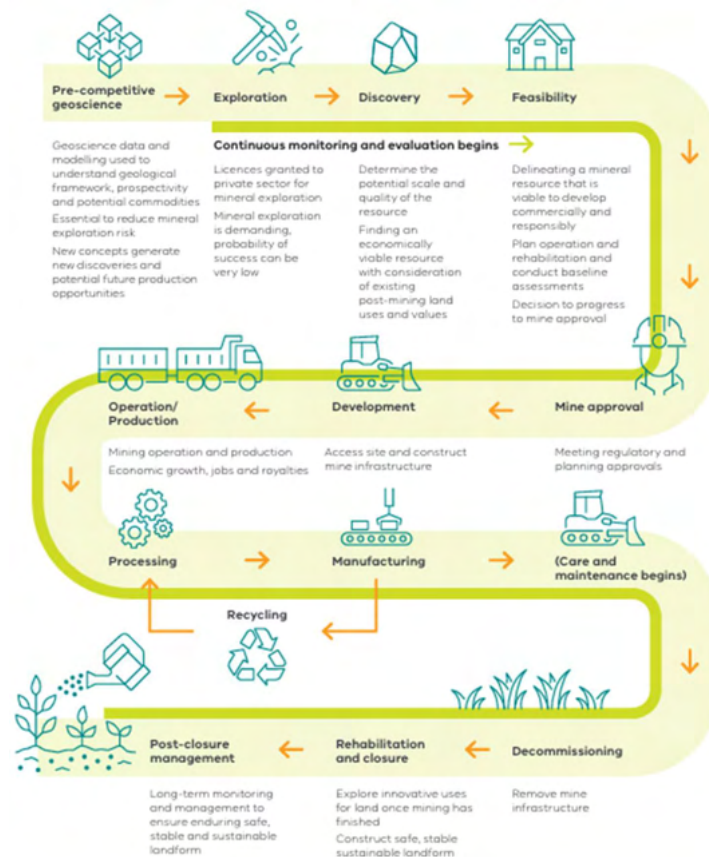
#### 4.4. Timing and Approvals Process

Mining projects generally have extensive timeframes involved with exploration, planning and approvals before commencing construction and operation. Mine lives can then vary widely and conclude with a decommissioning and rehabilitation period.

Figure 13 shows an overview of the mining process. The implications for this project are that:

- Projects are often in planning and feasibility stages for many years before commencing an often lengthy approvals process. This means that the projects that have not yet commenced an approvals process are unlikely to begin generating economic impacts and benefits until the medium to long term. This means that the main projects expected to impact the region in the foreseeable future are the three mineral sands projects with acceptable Ministers Assessments for their EES (Goschen, Avonbank and the Donald Project) and one project currently preparing an EES (Wimmera Mineral Sands).
- Localised impacts and benefits will mostly occur during the construction and operation phases. In the case of the mining projects proposed in the Study Area, this period is generally expected to last between 25 and 40 years. Mining activity is fundamentally different from transmission and renewable energy projects in that operations are relatively labour intensive, generating ongoing demand for services and creating localised impacts and benefits throughout the operating periods.
- Land used for mining, especially minerals sands mining, can be rehabilitated and reused for agricultural purposes, limiting the long-term impact on land productivity.

Figure 13. Mining Process Flow Chart



Source: Critical Minerals Roadmap, 2024.

#### 4.5. Key Points

- Australia is home to the largest mineral sands deposits in the world, and the Study Area has globally significant quantities of titanium, zirconium, and associated rare-earth elements in mineral sand deposits.
- Critical minerals are a collection of metal and nonmetal resources considered essential for renewable energy infrastructure, modern computing, emerging technologies and sustainable economic development.
- Mineral sands and other mineral occurrences are present across a broad band within the Study Area extending from the Horsham area through Yarriambiack, Buloke and Gannawarra to Swan Hill. Mineral Sands and rare earth occurrences also extend into South Australia to the west and into the Southern Grampians area to the south.
- Gold occurrences are wide spread near Stawell and across much of Loddon Shire in the east of the Study Area, and exploration and investment into gold mining is increasing strongly across the region.
- A total of 22 mining projects are planned in the area, including 11 mineral sands projects and 9 gold projects. The projects expected to generate short term impacts are located near Swan Hill (Goschen) and Horsham (Avonbank and Wimmera) and the Donald Project (between Minyip and Donald).
- Mineral sands projects are expected to have relatively long mine lives of 25-40 years. Localised impacts and benefits will mostly occur during the construction and operation phases during which activities are relatively labour intensive.
- Mineral sand resources are planned to be exported for processing via the Port of Portland and Port of Melbourne.

# Part C

## Existing Conditions & Impacts

## 5. Existing Conditions

### 5.1. Introduction

This section provides a profile of the economy, labour force, housing and demographics within the Study Area; independent of proposed renewable energy and mining projects and investment. The analysis is compiled from existing data and Strategies and complemented by consultation with Councils and State government agencies.

The analysis and findings in this section provide further evaluation of some of the existing issues, challenges and opportunities that will influence regional readiness relevant to transmission, renewable energy and mining projects.

### 5.2. Economy

In 2024, it is estimated that the Study Area generated approximately \$16.8 billion in economic output, \$7.4 billion in export value, \$7.7 billion in value-add. The Study Area contributes approximately 6% of Regional Victoria’s annual output and value-added, and 18% of export-value.

An estimated 42,300 jobs are located in the Study Area. Agriculture, forestry & fishing is the most economically important industry sector, directly representing 28% of output, 22% of jobs, 52% of export-value and 28% of value-added. This does not include the indirect impact of this primary sector, such as the flows to other sectors including retail, services and other related industries.

Other industry sectors that drive the economy of the Study Area include manufacturing, construction, health care and social assistance.

**Table 8. Economic Profile by Industry, Study Area, 2024**

Industry	Output	Employment	Exports	Value Added
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	\$4.6B	9,504	\$3.7B	\$2.1B
Manufacturing	\$2.2B	2,628	\$1.3B	\$378.9M
Construction	\$1.9B	3,183	\$353.3M	\$524.8M
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	\$1.2B	210	\$42.0M	\$970.6M
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$1.1B	6,792	\$169.8M	\$769.6M
Public Administration & Safety	\$761.7M	2,368	\$120.2M	\$426.6M
Mining	\$630.0M	447	\$579.3M	\$214.0M
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	\$609.8M	1,631	\$141.0M	\$260.8M
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	\$591.6M	511	\$297.4M	\$257.7M
Retail Trade	\$534.5M	3,708	\$39.1M	\$315.8M
Education & Training	\$519.0M	3,380	\$92.5M	\$376.7M
Wholesale Trade	\$440.3M	1,221	\$92.8M	\$236.7M
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	\$358.8M	1,075	\$11.7M	\$179.6M
Financial & Insurance Services	\$336.4M	467	\$57.2M	\$212.0M
Accommodation & Food Services	\$309.9M	2,159	\$82.3M	\$134.0M
Other Services	\$273.2M	1,441	\$82.9M	\$112.1M
Information Media & Telecommunications	\$159.0M	172	\$44.6M	\$53.1M
Administrative & Support Services	\$144.1M	994	\$19.3M	\$76.6M
Arts & Recreation Services	\$91.7M	431	\$21.7M	\$34.9M
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16.8B</b>	<b>42,322</b>	<b>\$7.3B</b>	<b>\$7.7B</b>

Source: REMPLAN, 2025.

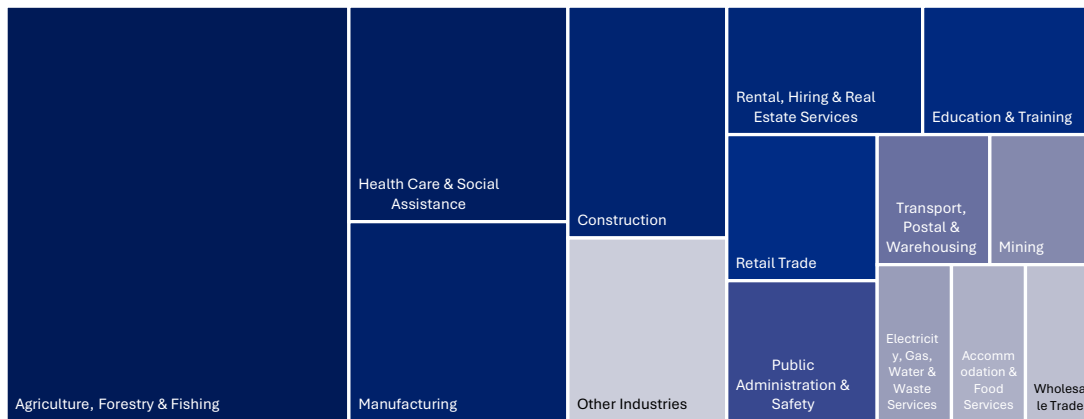
**Economic Importance: Industry Sectors**

The relative importance of each industry to the Study Area’s economy is illustrated in Figure 14. Each cell represents the relative contribution of each industry according to a composite index prepared by Urban Enterprise. The index compares output, employment, exports and value-added of all industries against each other in relative terms.<sup>16</sup> A larger cell indicates a larger contribution to economy across all metrics, and thus has a higher relative importance to the regional economy.

The top five industry sectors that are of the highest importance to the Study Area’s economy, and underpin the role and productivity of the economy are:

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing;
- Health Care and Social Assistance;
- Manufacturing;
- Construction; and
- Education and Training.

**Figure 14. Relative Economic Importance by Industry, Study Area, 2024**



Source: REMPLAN, 2025. Analysed by Urban Enterprise, 2025.

Note: Other Industries includes Other Services; Professional, Scientific & Technical Services; Financial & Insurance Services; Administrative & Support Services; Information, Media & Telecommunications; and Arts & Recreation Services.

A review of local and regional economic development strategies was undertaken to identify economic strengths and priority industries for growth.

Figure 15 provides a summary of strengths and priorities across key economic activities and industry sectors, noting whether they are primary, secondary and emerging/growth sectors.

Strategic directions for the local and regional economies confirms that strengths and priorities are weighted to agriculture, manufacturing, health care and social assistance and construction. Importantly, there are several emerging and growth industry sectors that are prioritised across different parts of the Study Area, including renewable energy, mining, tourism, transport and logistics.

Many of these priority sectors seek to leverage identified advantages in agriculture, nature-based and rural areas, as well as respond to policy and macroeconomic opportunities (e.g. energy transition).

Agricultural activities that are economic specialisations and economically important to the Study Area include broadacre cropping (grain, cereal and pulse production), livestock farming, dairy farming and horticulture. The agriculture sector is embedded in the regional economy, with well-established supply chains that have developed to support agricultural production, processing and exports. These include food manufacturing and rural service industries such as construction, storage and warehousing, transport, logistics and retail.

<sup>16</sup> The composite index was calculated by normalising the four metrics of interest such that each industry’s output, employment, exports and value added figure can be scaled to a value between 0 and 1. The composite index was then assigned by calculating the average across the four normalised scores for each industry.

Table 9 summarises the localised industry strengths and opportunities identified in each Council and Regional Economic Development Strategy. These have been used to compile the summary in Figure 15.

**Figure 15. Summary of economic strengths and priority industries**

Industry	Economic Strength	Priority Industry Sector
Agriculture		
Manufacturing		
Health Care & Social Assistance		
Construction		
Education & training		
Transport & Logistics		
Retail Trade		
Renewable Energy		
Mining		
Tourism		
<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Emerging / Growth</b>

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2025, derived from Economic and Regional Economic Development Strategies.

**Table 9. Industry Strengths and Opportunities**

Strategy	Existing Strengths	Priority Industries
<b>Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS)</b>		
<b>Wimmera Southern Mallee REDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Healthcare</li> <li>- Manufacturing (food products)</li> <li>- Construction</li> <li>- Retail</li> <li>- Motion Picture and Sound Recording</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Manufacturing (food products)</li> <li>- Tourism</li> <li>- Health and Social Services</li> <li>- Renewable Energy</li> <li>- Mineral Sands Mining</li> </ul>
<b>Mallee REDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Manufacturing (food products)</li> <li>- Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Manufacturing (food products)</li> <li>- Renewable Energy</li> <li>- Mineral Sands Mining</li> <li>- Tourism</li> </ul>
<b>Loddon Campaspe REDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mining (metal ore)</li> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Manufacturing (food products)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Manufacturing (food products)</li> <li>- Tourism</li> <li>- Food &amp; Beverage Services</li> <li>- Finance</li> </ul>
<b>Council Economic Development Strategies</b>		
<b>Buloke Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2022-2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</li> <li>- Education and Training</li> <li>- Retail Trade</li> <li>- Construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accommodation &amp; Food Services</li> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Energy</li> <li>- Tourism</li> <li>- Circular Economy</li> </ul>
<b>Gannawarra Economic Development Strategy 2019-2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</li> <li>- Retail Trade</li> <li>- Manufacturing</li> <li>- Government Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Renewable Energy</li> <li>- Tourism</li> </ul>

Strategy	Existing Strengths	Priority Industries
<b>Hindmarsh Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Manufacturing</li> <li>- Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Renewable Energy</li> <li>- Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</li> <li>- Tourism</li> <li>- Education and Training</li> </ul>
<b>Horsham Horsham Economic Development Strategy 2017-2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Manufacturing</li> <li>- Construction</li> <li>- Public Sector and Community (including healthcare, education, public administration &amp; safety)</li> <li>- Retail Trade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Manufacturing</li> <li>- Renewable Energy</li> <li>- Mineral Sands Mining</li> <li>- Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</li> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Tourism</li> <li>- Transport and Logistics</li> </ul>
<b>Loddon Loddon Shire Economic Development Strategy 2025-2029</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Renewable Energy</li> <li>- Telecommunications</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Grampians Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2031</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Mining</li> <li>- Transport &amp; Logistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Mining</li> <li>- Manufacturing</li> <li>- Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</li> <li>- Sectors association with tourism</li> <li>- Renewable energy</li> <li>- Professional, Scientific &amp; Technical Services (associated with Stawell Underground Physics Lab)</li> </ul>
<b>Swan Hill Economic Development Strategy 2024-2030</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Manufacturing</li> <li>- Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</li> <li>- Retail Trade</li> <li>- Construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Renewable Energy</li> <li>- Mineral Sands Mining</li> <li>- Transport and Logistics</li> <li>- Education and Training</li> </ul>
<b>West Wimmera West Wimmera Economic Development Strategy 2024-2029</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Tourism</li> <li>- Renewable Energy</li> <li>- Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</li> <li>- Public Administration &amp; Safety</li> </ul>
<b>Yarriambiack Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Renewable Energy</li> <li>- Mineral Sands Mining</li> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</li> <li>- Professional, Scientific &amp; Technical Services</li> <li>- Information, Media &amp; Telecommunications</li> <li>- Accommodation &amp; Food Services</li> </ul>

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2025, based on review and synthesis of documents sourced in the table.

### 5.3. Labour & Skills

This section provides an assessment of the labour force across the Study Area, including participation and unemployment rate, labour shortages, skills gaps and employment projections.

Some datasets presented in this section are unavailable at the municipal level, and therefore the North West SA4 is referenced, which generally aligns with the Study Area but excludes Loddon Shire and includes Mildura and Ararat.

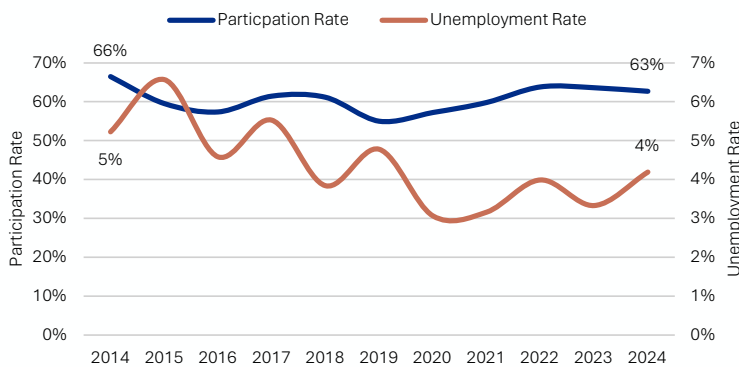
#### Labour Force Participation & Unemployment Rate

As at 2024, labour force participation across the region was approximately 63%, and a fluctuating but generally decreasing trend is evident (66% in 2014). The labour force participation rate in the region is now materially lower than for Victoria overall (68%).

Importantly, as shown in Figure 17 the labour force participation of adults in the region aged between 25 and 54 has been increasing and is now at very high levels (92% - 97%), indicating no capacity for participation increase. Although youth and older adult participation is lower, the nature of work in the region (with many occupations being labour intensive) means that many jobs are not suited to older workers, leaving increasing youth participation and the remaining participation opportunity within the existing labour force.

The Study Area is also characterised by persistently low unemployment. As shown in Figure 18, unemployment rates in 2024 across the nine LGAs were all below 4.5%, with six out of nine LGAs recording an unemployment rate below 3%. Seven out of nine LGAs observed a general decreasing trend in unemployment from 2014 to 2024.

**Figure 16. Average Annual Participation & Unemployment Rate Trend, North West SA4, 2014-2024**



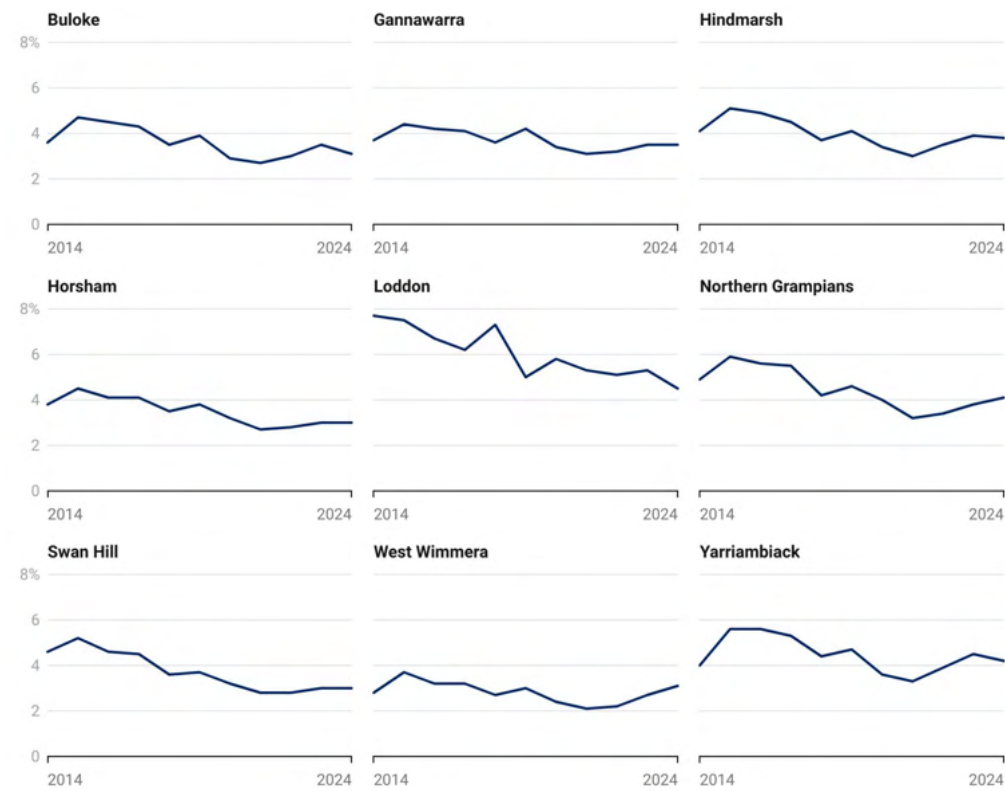
Source: ABS Labour Force Survey (Detailed), 2025; Urban Enterprise.

**Figure 17. Workforce Participation by Age, North West SA4, 2015-2025**

	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65+ years
2015	66%	78%	81%	66%	77%	15%
2016	69%	64%	60%	84%	75%	14%
2017	67%	75%	66%	83%	64%	22%
2018	61%	80%	79%	79%	69%	22%
2019	64%	82%	74%	85%	63%	7%
2020	70%	81%	83%	78%	64%	18%
2021	65%	82%	81%	81%	70%	22%
2022	66%	87%	81%	83%	75%	22%
2023	68%	89%	85%	80%	68%	14%
2024	67%	82%	87%	82%	75%	20%
2025	60%	97%	95%	92%	66%	17%

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey, 2025. Compiled and analysed by Urban Enterprise.

Figure 18. Average Annual Unemployment Rate by LGA, 2014-2024



Source: Small Area Labour Markets, Department of Employee and Workplace Relations, 2024.

**Regional Labour and Skills Challenges**

The Wimmera Mallee Employment Region Local Jobs Plan (2024) summarises the employment challenges and priorities for the region, along with strategies to address these challenges.

The following labour market challenges are relevant to the Study Area:

- There are labour shortages in industries such as construction, transport and logistics, manufacturing and processing, mining and agriculture.
- Occupations such as technicians and trades workers, labourers, machinery operators and drivers are in high demand.
- Workforce shortages for skilled workers including managers and professionals in various occupations also remains high for the region.
- Youth unemployment remains high compared with the overall unemployment rate for the region.<sup>17</sup>
- Mature age workers experience multiple challenges to securing and retaining employment opportunities in a competitive market and are more likely to experience long-term unemployment if challenges are not addressed. Challenges include low digital literacy, identifying and promoting transferrable skills, difficulty accessing training and arranging flexible work opportunities compatible with individual’s needs and family dynamics.
- There is a lack of employees entering or remaining in vital roles such as early childhood education and care, aged care, personal care and disability services.

<sup>17</sup> It is noted that the consultation undertaken for this project identified that youth over-employment is actually observed in the region. This is supported by reference to youth unemployment in Wimmera Mallee in 2025 (7.4%) being materially lower than the average across Victoria (10.6%) (Wimmera Mallee Employment Region Labour Market Dashboard, Jobs and Skills Australia, 2025).

- Rural towns in the region are disproportionately affected compared with the rest of the state.
- A portion of principal carers are unable to return to work due to the shortages of childcare placements.

The Regional Skills Demand Profiles published by the Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) also notes the following challenges that are relevant to the Study Area:<sup>18</sup>

- Labour supply and growth is constrained by low unemployment, high participation rates for persons of working age, an ageing workforce, and historically low population growth.
- Labour supply considered inadequate to meet the projected growth in workforce demand.
- Workforce attraction and retention is a challenge given a lack of available and affordable housing, inaccessibility of childcare and insufficient digital and physical infrastructure.

### 5.3.1. Consultation Findings on Economy, Labour and Skills

Consultation identified the following key issues relating to existing conditions and economy, labour and skills:

- A range of comments regarding economic strengths and weaknesses were made across the region. Several councils identified that existing economies could benefit from greater diversification, while others noted the significant levels of innovation, export value and opportunity to increase production, especially in agricultural research and development, grains, horticulture and intensive agriculture.
- Agricultural land use is generally becoming more intensive, resulting in some cases in excess land that can be used for other purposes, including energy production. More intensive agricultural practices can be more water efficient which is beneficial given strong competition for water.
- Drought across much of the region is causing challenging agricultural conditions and is highlighting the exposure of many parts of the economy and communities to agricultural sector performance, including associated mental health consequences.
- Some parts of the region have been affected by major floods in recent years, impacting agricultural businesses through loss of livestock and infrastructure, weakening resilience to further challenges.
- Most Councils identified persistent workforce shortages in construction, childcare, health and education and agriculture. Government representatives noted that actual job vacancies in the region are generally considerably higher than advertised vacancies (up to 8 times). It was noted that workforce competition is also influenced by activity in other states, especially in the northern parts of the Study Area and cross-border settlements.
- Childcare labour shortages were particularly frequently mentioned, along with the flow on economic effects caused by a lack of available childcare staff and places.
- The seasonality of the required workforce was identified as a challenge, especially for agriculture. Many agricultural businesses are facing difficult changing labour conditions, whereby the salaries demanded by farm hands and other workers are increasing substantially, impacting overall business costs.
- The existing labour force in most parts of the region is ageing, resulting in challenges sustaining existing positions and labour levels. A high proportion of jobs undertaken in the region are vocational, meaning that it is difficult to remain working into older age due to physical requirements.
- Persistently low unemployment was referred to as a challenge in supporting existing business activity and growth, let alone responding to any additional demand. Over-employment is evident in many parts of the labour force, including youth.
- Councils and government representatives identified that there is a relative lack of higher education and training options in the region, limiting the potential to upskill or reskill the existing population base. Councils noted that this contributes to outmigration, particularly among youth.
- Other projects are proposed in the area which will generate activity and the need for labour and suppliers, including:
  - Farm Frites plant, a proposed 24-hour production facility at the Wimmera Agriculture and Logistics (WAL) Hub in Doon near Horsham. The project is a \$452 million investment which targets the creation of 250 local jobs and has recently received Ministerial approval.
  - An expansion to the Thomas Foods Abattoir in Stawell to double lamb production and increase employment by 250 FTE.
  - Quality Australian (QA) Hay establishing a new plant in Warracknabeal which will create over 75 FTE.

<sup>18</sup> Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Skills Demand Profile, VSA 2023.

## 5.4. Housing

### 5.4.1. Settlement Hierarchy

The Study Area includes a broad network of settlements across a large geographic area; ranging from rural settlements, small towns, regional service centres, regional cities and major regional cities. The existing settlement hierarchy within and surrounding the Study Area is shown in Figure 19, with further detail provided in Table 10. Existing settlements have been categorised according to a combination of Plan for Victoria designations and population thresholds.

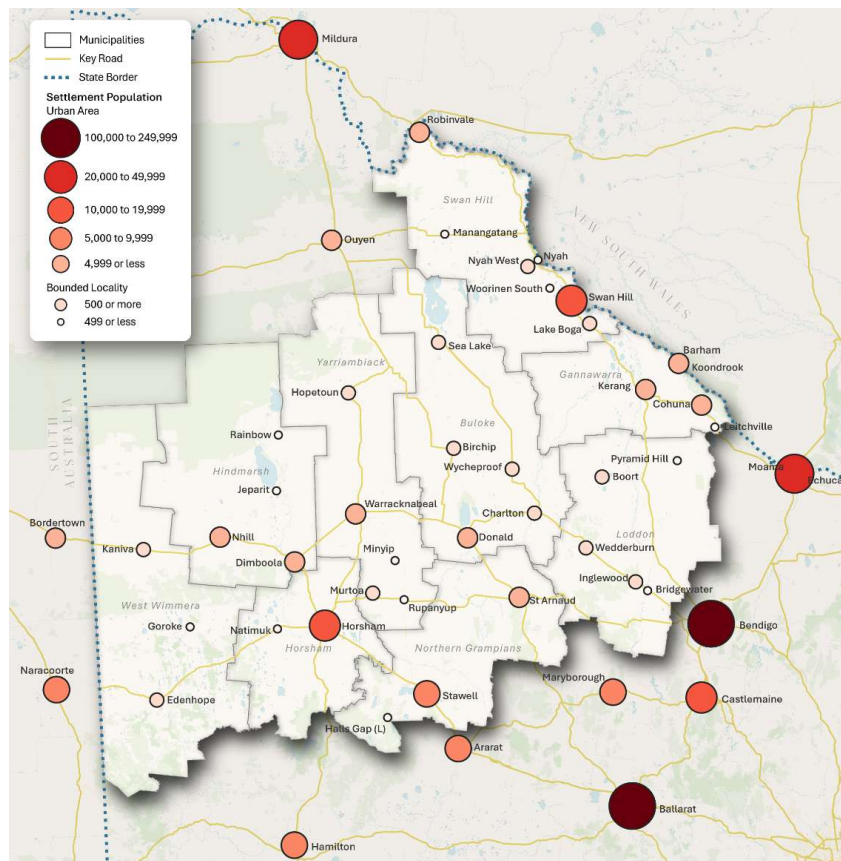
The settlement hierarchy in the Study Area includes one Regional City (Horsham) and one Regional Service Centre (Swan Hill), along with a network of Small Towns (including Dimboola, Donald, Kerang, St Arnaud, Stawell and others) and Rural Settlements (e.g. Koondrook, Hopetoun, Wedderburn and others).

Horsham and Swan Hill are the only towns in the Study Area with a population of exceeding 10,000 residents in 2024 (based on the SA2 area). The Study Area is also surrounded by a mix of settlements that may be drawn on to assist with supply-chain, housing and labour needs to support transmission, renewable energy and mining readiness, most notably:

- Bendigo (Major Regional City) that is located on the south eastern boundary of Loddon Shire.
- Echuca (Regional City) situated in Campaspe Shire, adjoining Gannawarra and Loddon Shires.

Mildura and Ballarat are also substantial regional cities that are proximate to the Study Area.

Figure 19. Settlements Map, Study Area and Surrounds



Source: Urban Enterprise, 2025. Population as at 2021 based on ABS township definitions.

**Table 10. Settlement Hierarchy, Wimmera Southern Mallee and Surrounds**

Hierarchy	Role	Study Area	Key Towns and Cities Servicing Study Area (located outside)
<b>Major Regional City (100,000+ population)</b>	A regional city with more than 100,000 people.	(None)	Bendigo, Ballarat
<b>Regional City (15,000+)</b>	A city other than a major regional city that serves as a hub for its region. Locations for homes, employment, economic activity and investment, delivering public transport, facilities and services to residents of the city and surrounding areas.	Horsham	Mildura
<b>Regional Service Centre (6,000 -14,999)</b>	A pivotal town in Victoria's regional development, fostering economic activity and providing a key network of service hubs. Provide a service role for rural hinterland, smaller towns and settlements.	Swan Hill	Echuca, Castlemaine, Hamilton, Maryborough, Ararat, Moama
<b>Small Town (1,000-5,999)</b>	Service centres for rural communities. Provide community services, employment and recreation services. Can include specialist functions such as tourism-centred retailing.	Stawell, Kerang, Robinvale, Warracknabeal, St Arnaud, Nhill, Cohuna, Donald, Dimboola	Naracoorte, Ouyen
<b>Rural Settlement (&lt;1,000)</b>	Minor rural settlements and service centres.	Charlton, Koondrook, Boort, Murtoa, Inglewood, Lake Boga, Edenhope, Kaniva, Birchip, Wedderburn, Sea Lake, Wycheproof, Nyah West, Hopetoun, Rainbow, Pyramid Hill, Minyip, Natimuk, Rupanyup, Bridgewater, Jeparit, Woorinen South, Nyah, Leitchville, Goroke, Manangatang.	Not included

Source: ABS Census, 2021; Department of Transport and Planning, 2025. Compiled and analysed by Urban Enterprise.

**5.4.2. Housing and Demographic Profile**

A snapshot of the housing and household profile in the Study Area is shown in Table 11.

- The Study Area includes more than 47,450 dwellings at an occupancy rate of 86%.
- The housing stock is relatively homogenous with limited diversity of housing typologies. Separate houses are the most prevalent dwelling typology (91%).
- Owner occupiers are the most common type of housing tenure. 69% of households own their property, and 20% rent.
- The Study Area has an older demographic and smaller household sizes, evidenced by a high proportion of lone person and couple households, and a high proportion of semi-retirees, retirees and seniors.

**Table 11. Housing & Household Snapshot, Study Area**

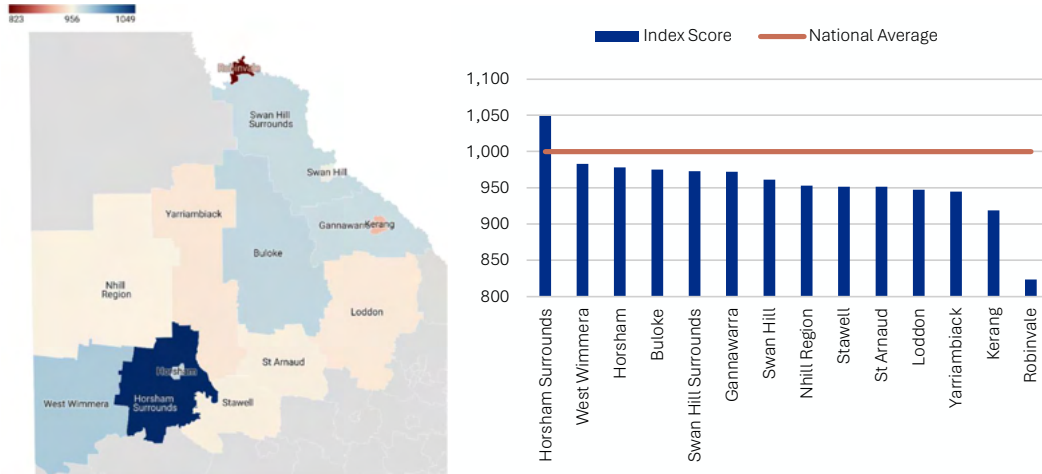
Total Dwellings	Dwelling Occupancy	Dwelling Structure	Household composition	Age Profile	Housing Tenure
47,454	86%	Separate house: 91% Semi-detached / townhouse: 4% Flat or apartment: 3%	Lone person: 30% Couples with no children: 28% Couples with children: 21% One parent families: 8%	60-64 years: 7.8% 55-59 years: 7.3% 65-69 years: 7.1% 50-54 years: 6.5% 70-74 years: 6.4%	Owned outright: 44% Owned with a mortgage: 25% Rented: 20%

Source: Census of Population and Housing, ABS 2021.

Figure 20 shows the distribution of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage across the Study Area. All regions of the Study Area are defined as having relative socio-economic disadvantage except Horsham Surrounds.

In many areas such as Nhill, Stawell, St Arnaud, Loddon and Yarriambiack, the SEIFA index is at 950 or lower, and in the towns of Kerang and especially Robinvale, levels of socio-disadvantage are particularly acute.

**Figure 20. SEIFA, Study Area by SA2s, 2021**



Source: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), ABS, 2021.

\*The SEIFA index measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage based on a range of Census characteristics. The index is derived from attributes that reflect disadvantage such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment, and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations. The national average index score is 1,000, with a score below 1,000 on the index indicating that area has a higher level of disadvantage relative to the national average.

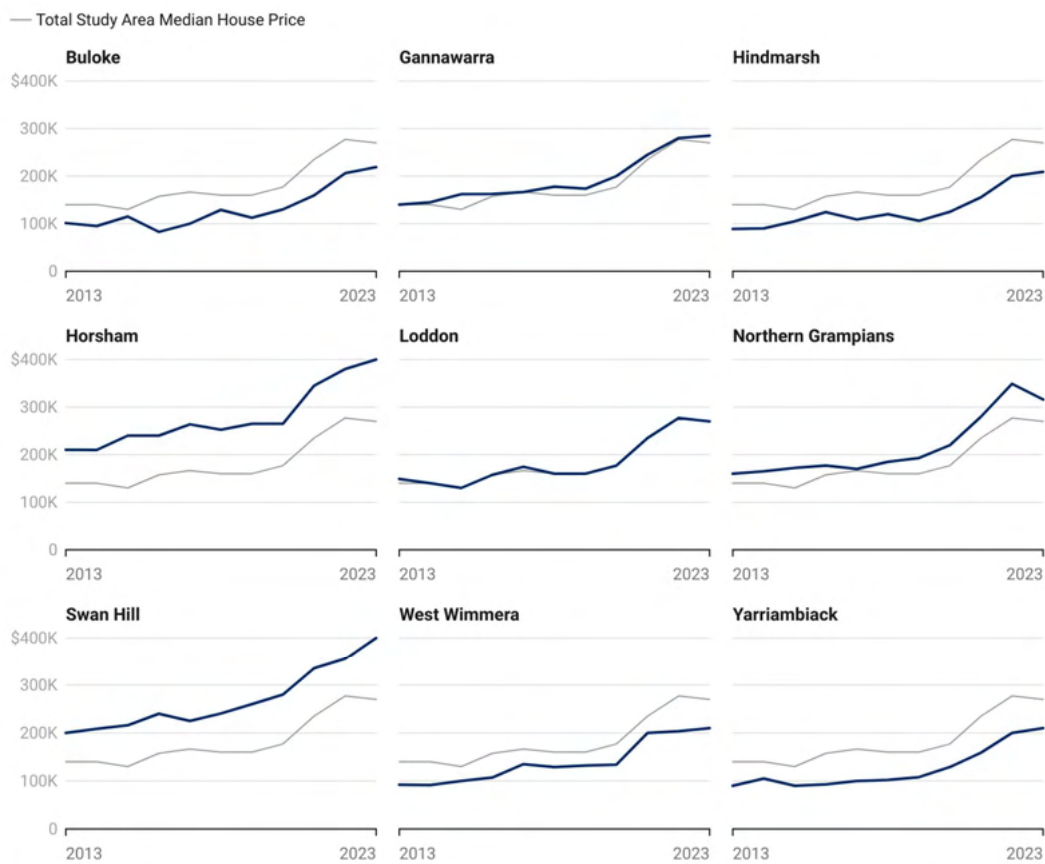
**5.4.3. Property Market**

**House Prices**

House prices in the Study Area are relatively low compared with the Victorian context overall. As shown in Figure 21, median house prices generally range from \$200,000 to \$400,000, with the highest medians in Horsham and Swan Hill. House prices at these levels (especially in areas with medians in the lower parts of the range) typically present challenges to the financial feasibility of developing new housing.

This is a key consideration for towns needed to accommodate additional workers associated with major projects given that the construction of new housing under traditional build to sell models may not be a viable proposition.

**Figure 21. Median House Prices by LGA, 2013-2023**



Source: Victorian Valuer General, 2023; Urban Enterprise.

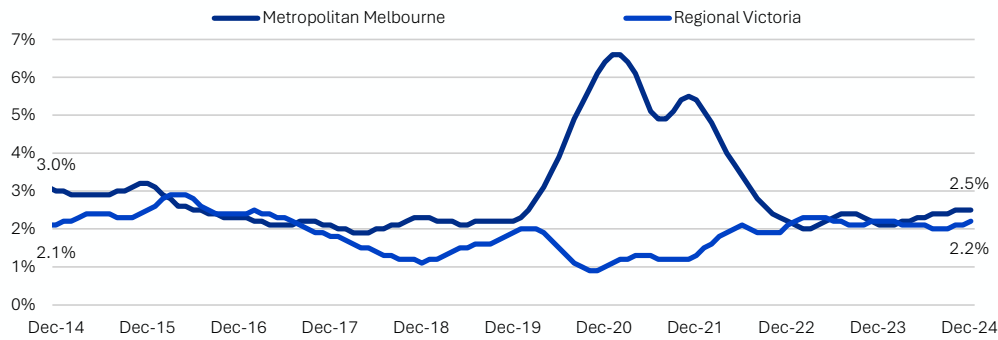
**Rental Market**

Figures 22 and 23 show the rental vacancy rate for Regional Victoria and for key towns in the Study Area, and Figure 24 shows the ten-year trend in median rents and active bonds in the Study Area. The following points are relevant:

- The rental vacancy rate in Regional Victoria is currently at very low levels of around 2.2%, and has remained consistently low since 2014, ranging between 1% and 3% over the past decade.
- All key towns in the Study Area effectively have no rental vacancy taking into account natural vacancy and handover periods, with vacancy rates in August 2025 ranging from 0% (Dimboola) to 1.2% (Horsham).
- The number of active rental bonds in the Study Area has steadily declined since reaching a peak of 5,480 in 2020 and is now 5,099. This is the lowest number of active bonds recorded since 2015-16, indicating a net reduction of rental properties in the region.
- The median rent price in the Study Area is \$320. Median rents have increased at an average of 7.3% per annum since 2019.

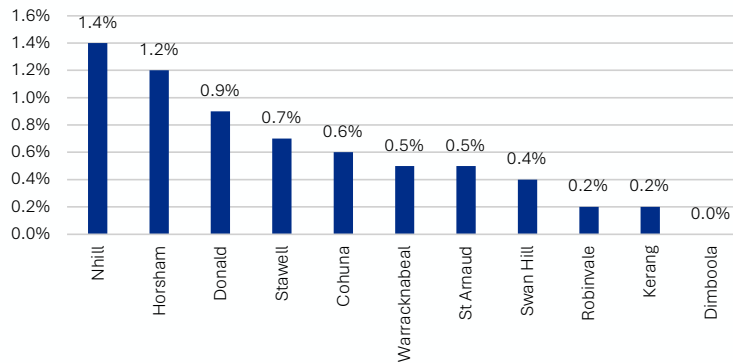
The rental market in the Study Area is experiencing ongoing capacity issues, evidenced by increasing rents alongside a declining availability of rental properties. Rental market conditions in the Study Area indicate that any potential uplift in demand for rental tenure associated with renewable energy or mining will be extremely challenging to service.

**Figure 22. Rental Vacancy Rate, Regional Victoria & Metropolitan Melbourne, 2014-2024**



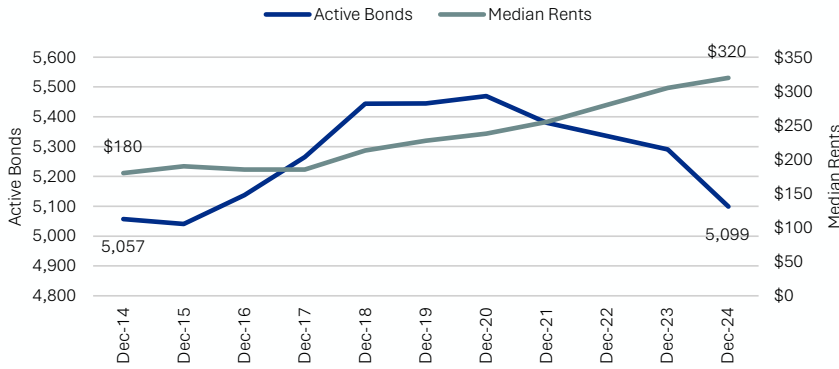
Source: Rental Report, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, December 2024.

**Figure 23. Rental Vacancy Rates by Key Towns, August 2025**



Source: SQM Research. Data is for the postcode of each key town within Study Area.

Figure 24. Active Bonds and Median Rent, Study Area, 2014-2024



Source: Rental Report, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, December 2024.

**Commercial Accommodation**

The Study Area has a relatively limited supply of commercial accommodation.

Table 12 provides a snapshot of accommodation across the tourism regions which comprise the Study Area in 2022/2023. Although the tourism regions do not fully match the Study Area, the information provides a sense of scale and vacancy levels.

The only locations with a significant supply of commercial accommodation in the region are Horsham and Swan Hill, with nearby accommodation provided in Bendigo and Mildura. Where data is available, occupancy rates were most recently at between 68% and 73%, indicating some capacity to accommodate additional demand from temporary workers in the area, however when seasonality and day of week variations are taken into account, the level of capacity is likely to be limited.

Further, existing accommodation normally plays an important role in the region in supporting the tourism industry as well as the functions of government, health, and private enterprise by accommodating business travellers given the distance to major urban centres. To the extent that existing accommodation rooms are utilised by workers for transmission, energy and mining projects, this role could be disrupted in terms of availability and price impacts.

Table 12. Accommodation Summary, FY23

Tourism Region	Key Locations	Rooms	Occupancy
Bendigo Loddon	Bendigo	1,286	73%
Central Highlands	Halls Gap	382	*
Mallee	Swan Hill, Mildura	1,321	68%
Western Grampians	Horsham	563	*
Wimmera	Nhill, Warracknabeal	164	*

Source: Australian Accommodation Monitor, 2023. \* unavailable data.

Figure 25. Tourism Regions Map



Source: Victorian Tourism and Events Resource Unit, 2024.

**5.4.4. Growth Context**

In 2024, the total population of the Study Area was estimated at approximately 93,100. Over the past decade, the population of the Study Area has declined at an average rate of 0.57% per annum (-54 residents p.a.).

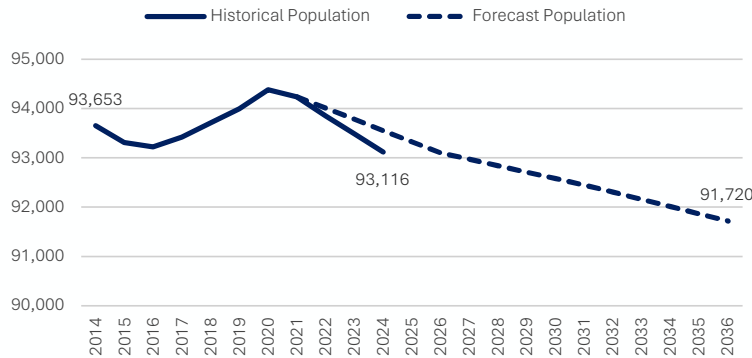
Official State government population projections forecast a further decrease of the population between 2024 and 2036, with a forecast decline of approximately 1,400 residents. However, projected population changes vary across the Study Area as shown in Figure 27. The population in the Horsham and Loddon Local Government Areas is projected to increase, while a loss of population is projected for the remaining seven Local Government Areas in the Study Area, especially in Swan Hill and Yarriambiack.

It is noted that the State projections, along with many forms of economic and demographic projections, rely heavily on past patterns of growth to inform forecasts. Although all assumptions are not disclosed, it is unlikely that the population projections for the Study Area take into account the substantial scale of investment and labour required in the region to service the proposed transmission, energy and mining projects identified in this report.

If the underlying population (i.e. excluding the impact of major projects) does decline as projected, this will limit the availability of new labour and housing. This is likely to result in the need to divert workers from the existing pool of Study Area labour (from other sectors and activities); and/or attract workers from outside of the Study Area, which will have implications for housing and accommodation demand.

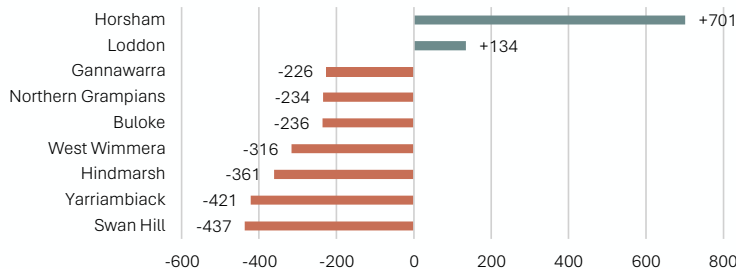
A further challenge, as demonstrated by Figure 28, is that age projections indicate there will be a net reduction in residents of working age in the Study Area over the period 2021 to 2036 (decrease of 5,461 residents aged 20-64 years), alongside an increase in older residents (increase of 5,576 residents aged over 70 over the same period). This will present additional challenges in terms of local labour availability for 'business as usual' activities as well as the ability to service major projects.

**Figure 26. Estimated Resident Population, Study Area, 2014-2036**



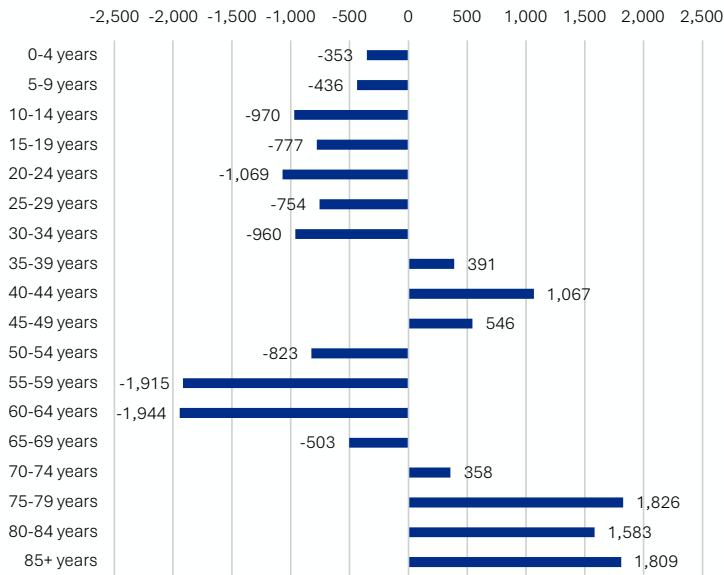
Source: Victoria in Future, 2023; ABS Regional Population, 2024.

**Figure 27. Forecast Population Change by LGA, 2024-2036**



Source: Victoria in Future, 2023; ABS Regional Population, 2024.

**Figure 28. Projected Change in Age Profile, Study Area, 2021 – 2036**



Source: Victoria in Future, 2023.

**5.4.5. Consultation Findings**

Consultation with stakeholders for this report identified the following key issues to do with housing:

- All Councils noted that existing housing availability is poor - housing shortages exist across all LGAs to different extents and supply pressures are likely to be exacerbated by proposed major projects.
- Some Councils noted that there is inadequate developable land supply within their Shires. Councils pointed in particular to challenges associated with obtaining resources to undertake settlement planning and structure plans, along with the difficulty in demonstrating demand for housing to the State government when historical population growth levels (and official government projections) are low or in some cases negative. The unsuitability of historically based population projections was also identified by state government agencies as an issue.
- More common than a lack of zoned land, were references to other constraints to the delivery of new housing within zoned land, such as:
  - High trunk infrastructure extension costs (especially sewer and power) associated with developing existing zoned land which has prevented delivery of new housing in existing zoned areas; and
  - Lack of availability of builders and the need to import materials, leading to high construction costs and slow delivery.
- In many parts of the region, greenfield development is not viable due to the costs of development and low achievable house sale prices.
- Several Councils noted that tight rental markets are affecting housing availability and economic activity as a result. The experience of Moyne Shire was noted, where the rental market was strongly impacted during construction phases of renewable energy projects, which increased rental prices and resulted in some motels being booked out and used for worker accommodation during project construction phases.
- Several councils identified that the existing housing stock is not sufficiently diverse to accommodate the diverse range of housing needed by existing communities, especially older residents, and that the ageing housing stock is not appealing to those looking to move into the region.
- The role of several Study Area settlements in servicing cross-border communities and areas of NSW and SA was highlighted.

### 5.5. Infrastructure

Consultation with stakeholders identified the following issues with existing infrastructure networks:

- Local road networks are extensive and often in poor condition. Councils have difficulty maintaining roads within a rate-capped budget environment. Many are not fit for purpose for heavy vehicle usage, and no state funding has been available for local road projects since 2018. Some Councils noted that even with the improvements to road networks project proponents are expected to contribute, road networks will still be unsatisfactory.
- Rail infrastructure and corridors are prevalent in the region, however many parts of the network require investment to capitalise on freight and passenger opportunities. Upgrades to rail sidings were consistently referenced as needed to move greater existing freight movements in the region off roads. The importance of the existing Ultima Freight Terminal was noted, as was the important role of rail (and other key infrastructure) networks in servicing parts of NSW and SA.
- Water availability is a key challenge. Reduced irrigation volumes to do with Murray Darling Basin and Federal government water buybacks are affecting agricultural production which is critical to existing economies and supply chains. Water prices have increased strongly as a result of intensifying competition for water in the region. Mining projects also need substantial water supply.
- Telecommunications infrastructure and digital connectivity is weak across many parts of the region. Mobile networks across the region are already strained, which affects both temporary and permanent populations. Mobile devices in use by construction workers on major sites place existing networks under further strain, which can take away service from small communities and townships which share networks with project site areas.
- In some parts of the region, electricity supply is weak. Several towns and businesses regularly experience blackouts and brownouts. Major investment is required in Charlton, for example, to build a new sub-station given the existing infrastructure is at capacity.

The existing transport infrastructure networks across the Study Area are shown in Figure 29 for reference.

**Figure 29. Existing Major Freight Networks, Study Area and Key Export Locations**



Source: Urban Enterprise, based on Principal Freight Network.

## 5.6. Local Government

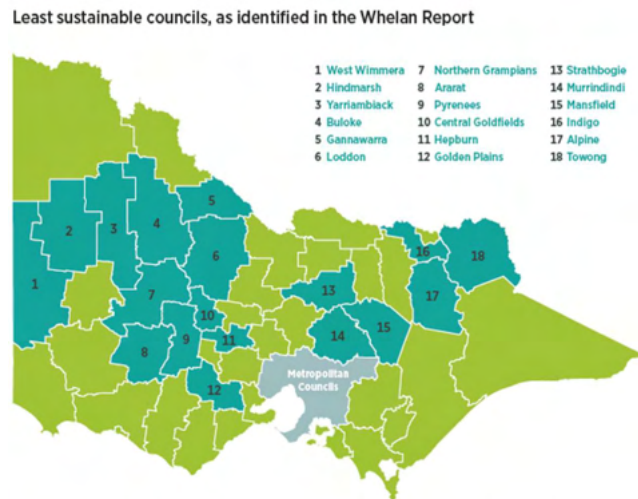
### Existing Council Conditions

Largely, the Study Area councils have low revenues, small rates bases and significant asset responsibilities, especially roads. In 2024, 6 of the 9 Councils with the lowest rates revenue in Victoria were in the Study Area, being West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Loddon, Yarriambiack, Buloke and Gannawarra.<sup>19</sup>

As shown in Figure 30, a Parliamentary Inquiry into the sustainability and operational challenges of local government<sup>20</sup> noted that all study Councils except Horsham and Swan Hill were categorised in the group of “least sustainable Councils” in Victoria. The Parliamentary Inquiry also identified that the combined effects of legislative and policy changes (including rate capping) had increased the overall financial challenges faced by Councils over the period 2013-2018.

Following this theme, a report by the Victorian Auditor General in 2025 found that “key financial indicators for most councils are trending down” and that “there are increasing risks that some councils, particularly the small shires, may not meet their future obligations to their communities if they do not take action.”<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 30. Least Sustainable Councils**



Source: Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee, based on Merv & Rohan Whelan, *Local Government Financial Sustainability: Abridged Report (2010)*, p.18

Source: Parliament of Victoria, 2018

### Consultation Findings

Consultation with stakeholders identified that the provision of services by local governments is generally constrained by financial issues such as small rates bases (most councils in Study Area), lack of population growth in many areas, rates capping legislation and strongly increasing costs of maintaining the substantial network of existing assets, especially roads.

Many councils and communities have experienced particular challenges in recent years due to natural disasters, including floods, which limit the ability to Councils to then fund other programs.

<sup>19</sup> Victorian Auditor General; Urban Enterprise.

<sup>20</sup> Inquiry into the sustainability and operational challenges of Victoria’s rural and regional councils, Final Report, 2018. Parliament of Victoria.

<sup>21</sup> Victorian Auditor General, Financial Management of Local Councils August 2025, p.3. All Study Area Councils are defined by the VAG as ‘Small shires’ except Horsham and Swan Hill.

### 5.7. Key Points

- The Study Area contributes approximately 6% of Regional Victoria's annual output and value-added, and 18% of export-value. An estimated 42,300 jobs are located in the Study Area.
- The agriculture industry is the main driver of the regional economy, and is critically important to economic output, employment, value-add and export value. Key activities include broadacre cropping (grain, cereal and pulse), livestock farming, dairy farming and horticulture.
- Strategic directions for the local and regional economies confirms that strengths and priorities are weighted to agriculture, manufacturing, health care and social assistance and construction.
- There is a relative lack of diversification in the economy, highlighted by the reliance on agriculture and supply-chain sectors such as food manufacturing, construction and transport.
- There are significant existing workforce capacity challenges, labour shortages and skills gaps in the Study Area that are a result of long-term low unemployment, very high labour participation, an ageing workforce and overall population decline. These conditions create challenges for a range of existing industries across the region as raised in consultation with stakeholders.
- The Study Area has recorded areas and periods of population decline. This trend is projected to continue in the majority of Local Government Areas (with the exception of Horsham and Loddon), however official projections are unlikely to have taken into account the population growth needed to service proposed major projects in the region.
- Within the context of a changing and ageing population and very limited capacity in the labour force, the opportunity to meet the labour requirements for renewable energy and mining projects from within the Study Area is very limited. Therefore, to support the delivery and operation of projects, the following will be needed:
  - Diversion of workers from other sectors of the economy; and/or
  - Workers to be sourced from outside of the Study Area, which will have flow-on implications for housing, accommodation and services.
- The housing and accommodation markets in the Study Area are characterised by low prices, a lack of diversity of housing types and sizes, extremely low rental vacancy rates, rapid rent price growth, and a low quantity of commercial accommodation. This presents challenges to existing communities as well as limitations for development feasibility, accommodating temporary workers and accommodating an ageing population in the future.
- The lack of housing availability is already a major constraint to economic activity and service provision across the Study Area.
- Several settlements in the Study Area service cross-border catchments including parts of southern NSW and eastern South Australia which should be considered as part of readiness and impact planning.
- Existing infrastructure networks are extensive but under pressure, especially local roads, telecommunications, water, wastewater treatment and in some parts of the area, electricity. In addition, existing rail infrastructure requires investment to take pressure off roads and move produce more efficiently across the region.
- Local governments in the Study Area generally have very low rates bases and financial sustainability challenges which limit the availability of resources to undertake existing responsibilities.

## 6. Economic Impacts and Opportunities

### 6.1. Introduction

This section describes the range of economic impacts that may arise from major infrastructure and resource developments across the region, including the VNI West transmission project, large-scale renewable energy investments, and emerging mineral sands mining operations. A summary of key methodology elements and assumptions is provided in Appendix C.

### 6.2. Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of projects are categorised and expressed in the following ways:

- Project type: Renewable Energy (solar, wind, battery), transmission, and mining.
- Construction expenditure and employment separated from ongoing (operational) expenditure and employment.
- Local employment separated from other employment impacts, where:
  - Local employment indicates jobs expected to be located on site or within 100km, an indication of potential number of people undertaking work in the Study Area or immediate surrounds as a result of the projects.
- Phases:
  - Phase 1, being projects with relevant approvals (or an acceptable Ministers Assessments for an EES) in place and/or expected to commence in the short term;
  - Phase 2, being projects under assessment for approval, and/or expected to occur in the medium term (including energy projects relying on catalyst transmission infrastructure); and
  - Phase 3, being less certain and longer-term projects yet to commence an approvals process.

#### 6.2.1. Capital Expenditure (Construction)

The total capital expenditure across all identified projects in the Study Area is estimated at \$40.4 billion. Wind energy accounts for the largest share (\$25.9 billion), reflecting several large-scale proposals, particularly in Phase 3. Transmission CAPEX is associated with the VNI West and WIRES projects, while mining contributes a further \$1.6 billion.

It is noted that data shown for mining projects is limited to the three advanced mineral sands projects due to the lack of information available for other projects and variability in construction costs by location, mineral type and so on. Separately, there are two operational mineral sands mines in southern New South Wales within close proximity to the northern part of the Study Area whose impacts are still being assessed by Councils.

**Table 13. Total Construction Phase Capital Expenditure (\$M)**

	Solar	Wind	Battery	Transmission	Mining*	Total
Phase 1	217	0	0	3,535	1,242	4,994
Phase 2	2,474	1,179	1,428	0	368	5,449
Phase 3	1,162	24,719	1,955	2,100	0	29,936
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,853</b>	<b>25,897</b>	<b>3,383</b>	<b>5,635</b>	<b>1,610</b>	<b>40,378</b>

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2025. Transmission projects exclude VTP north-west upgrade projects. \* Mining limited to 3 advanced mineral sands project being Donald, Avonbank and Goschen.

Note: renewable energy projects include all proposed projects, noting that not all will proceed to development and that this energy generation well exceeds VTP targets.

Given that total planned renewable capacity substantially exceeds the REZ capacity targets shown in the VTP, it is unlikely that all projects will proceed. For this reason, the following analysis applies the maximum capacity requirement of the VTP for solar and wind as the planned level of renewable energy investment. This approach indicates a more realistic estimate of potential economic impacts by limiting the analysis to a scale of development consistent with network requirements.

**Construction Phase Expenditure and Employment**

Table 14 shows the capital expenditure results for the refined analysis, including an estimate of the potential local impacts. Based on the refined analysis, total capital expenditure across all phases is estimated at \$24.3 billion of which approximately \$2.8 billion may be spent locally.<sup>22</sup>

It should be noted that local capital expenditure for renewable energy projects typically represents only a small proportion of total project costs, as specialised equipment is often sourced from overseas, and key components such as turbines, panels, and battery systems are rarely manufactured domestically.

A total of at least 9,000 full time equivalent jobs would be supported by the proposed projects, with each job lasting an average of 2.5 years (based on the typical construction period of the projects).

This employment impact would be phased over a relatively long period. If projects were to occur within the three phases indicatively used for this Strategy, then:

- Phase 1 would support approximately 1,700 FTE workers for construction activity;
- Phase 2 would support approximately 3,800 FTE workers for construction activity; and
- Phase 3 would support approximately 3,700 FTE workers for construction activity.

As shown in the table, it is estimated that approximately half of these workers may be able to be sourced locally, with the remaining workers imported from outside the region, however this will depend on a range of factors and may vary considerably, including over time.

This highlights both the significant opportunity for local labour participation as well as the potentially significant impact of existing labour being redirected from current employment in other industries to the major projects, particularly in Phases 2 and 3 when renewable energy projects have increased transmission capacity available and more projects in the pipeline across mining and renewables can occur concurrently.

To the extent that labour is imported to service the construction phases of projects, this will have significant impact on local housing and commercial accommodation markets, all else being equal.

**Table 14. Capital Expenditure (\$M) and Employment, Construction Phase**

	Capital Expenditure (Construction)			Employment (FTE)		
	Local	Other	Total	Local	Imported	Total
Phase 1	810	4,184	4,994	985	717	1,702
Phase 2	753	5,857	6,611	1,761	2,008	3,770
Phase 3	1,273	11,454	12,727	1,676	2,046	3,722
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,836</b>	<b>21,495</b>	<b>24,331</b>	<b>4,423</b>	<b>4,771</b>	<b>9,194</b>

Source: Urban Enterprise.

<sup>22</sup> These results exclude capital costs of projects beyond the renewable energy requirement of 6.4GW across the region, and also exclude transmission upgrade projects.

**Operational Expenditure and Employment**

Annual operational expenditure is estimated at \$888 million across all phases, with an indicative \$590 million (67%) expected to be captured locally. It should be noted that mining projects account for a substantial share of total OPEX due to their labour-intensive on-site operational requirements, which are significantly higher than those of renewable energy projects.

Expenditure is highest in Phase 1, reflecting the larger scale of mining projects expected to commence operation in the short term. The high level of locally captured expenditure highlights the enduring economic contribution of mining operations to the host region over the life of these projects.

Operational employment across all projects is estimated at 2,300 ongoing jobs, with around 1,900 positions (80%) expected to be potentially sourced locally. Employment is highest in Phase 1, reflecting the commencement of large-scale mining projects, which are typically more labour-intensive than renewable energy operations.

**Table 15. Operational Phase Expenditure and Employment**

	Expenditure (\$m)			Employment (annual FTE ongoing)		
	Local	Other	Total	Local	Imported	Total
Phase 1	375	163	538	1,014	254	1,267
Phase 2	136	74	211	465	119	585
Phase 3	78	60	139	381	100	481
<b>Total</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>888</b>	<b>1,860</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>2,333</b>

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2025.

**6.3. Jobs & Skills**

Major infrastructure projects such as renewable energy, transmission, and mining developments generate significant employment and skills opportunities within their host regions. These opportunities extend across both the construction and operational phases, ranging from short-term project-based roles to long-term operational positions.

This section outlines the potential local workforce opportunities for the Study Area, drawing on Australian and international research to identify the types of jobs and skill levels most likely to be required for each project type. The analysis is intended to complement the quantitative estimates presented earlier, providing context for the potential nature and distribution of jobs, and the potential for local workers to benefit from future project pipelines.

**6.3.1. Renewables**

**Overview**

Figure 31 summarises the breadth of career pathways across the large-scale renewable energy sector. Jobs span the full project lifecycle, from early planning and design through to construction and installation, and ultimately operation and maintenance.<sup>23</sup> A summary of the project lifecycle is provided below:

- In the planning and design phase, engineers, planners, legal, finance and commercial specialists play key roles in scoping, approvals, and feasibility.
- During construction and installation, workforce needs peak, with civil workers, trades and technicians, machine operators and project engineers required to deliver large, complex infrastructure.
- Once operational, projects rely on ongoing roles in engineering and technical maintenance, ensuring assets remain efficient and safe over their 25–30 year lifespan.

This highlights that renewable energy development is not confined to a single occupational group; rather, it draws on a diverse mix of professional, technical, and trade skills. It also underscores the significant opportunity for workers from regional areas to transition into long-term, skilled careers in the clean energy economy.

<sup>23</sup> Skilling the Energy Transition, Clean Energy Council, 2022.

**Figure 31. Careers in Large Scale Renewable Energy**

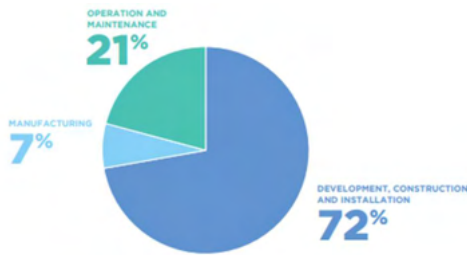


Source: Skilling the Energy Transition, Clean Energy Council, 2022.

**Project Phases**

Figure 32 highlights the distribution of current renewable energy jobs across different stages of the project lifecycle. Most jobs (72%) are concentrated in development, construction and installation, reflecting the labour-intensive nature of building large-scale renewable energy projects. A smaller share of jobs is in the operation and maintenance phase (21%), which will grow steadily as more projects come online, while manufacturing currently accounts for just 7% of total employment. This demonstrates that, at present, construction activity is the primary driver of renewable energy workforce demand, but over time the balance will shift towards long-term operations as Australia’s renewable capacity expands.

**Figure 32. Renewable Energy Current Employment Breakdown by Phase**



Source: Clean Energy at Work, Clean Energy Council, 2020.

**Occupations**

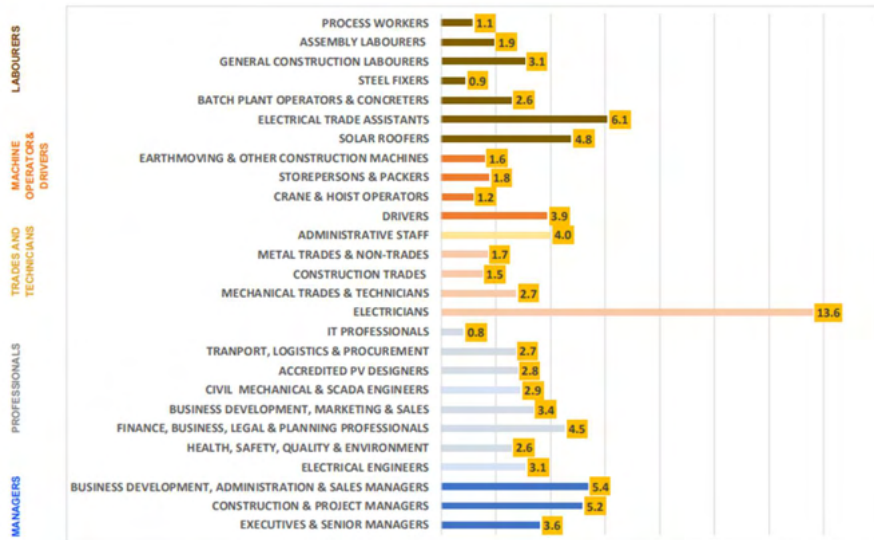
Analysis by the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) estimates the occupational profile of renewable energy jobs between 2020 and 2035, as shown in Figure 33. The data highlights the breadth of roles required, ranging from labourers and machine operators through to technicians, professionals, and senior managers.<sup>24</sup>

The majority of demand is concentrated in skilled trades and technical roles, with electricians standing out as the single largest occupation group at an estimated 13.6% of the renewable energy workforce. Other relevant significant areas of demand include electrical trade assistants, labourers, drivers, construction and project managers, and a range of engineering disciplines.

The profile underscores that while renewable energy projects create employment across the full occupational spectrum, the industry is particularly reliant on technically skilled and licensed roles.

<sup>24</sup> Renewable Energy Jobs in Australia: Stage One, Clean Energy Council/UTS, 2020

Figure 33. Renewable Energy Occupational Composition (2020-2035 average under Step Change Scenario)



Source: Renewable Energy Jobs in Australia: Stage One, Clean Energy Council/UTS, 2020.

**Critical Occupations**

Skilling the Energy Transition (Clean Energy Council, 2022) highlights the occupations where skills shortages are most acute, identifying critical roles across wind, solar and battery projects that are consistently difficult to source and therefore present a risk to the timely delivery of Australia’s renewable energy pipeline.<sup>25</sup>

Table 16 highlights the breadth of critical occupations required for the clean energy transition, spanning both university-qualified professionals and vocationally trained roles. On the professional side, demand is strongest for engineers (electrical, grid, HV, power systems and structural) and development managers, while on the vocational side there are persistent shortages of operational and technical roles such as wind and solar technicians, control room operators, and operation and maintenance managers.

Table 16. Critical Occupations

Education Type	Critical Occupations
University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Electrical engineer</li> <li>- Grid connection engineer</li> <li>- HV engineer</li> <li>- Power systems engineer</li> <li>- Quality engineer</li> <li>- Structural engineer</li> <li>- Development manager</li> </ul>
Vocational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Control room operator</li> <li>- Material and procurement specialist</li> <li>- Wind technician</li> <li>- Solar technician</li> <li>- Operation and maintenance manager</li> <li>- Electrical superintendent</li> </ul>

Source: Skilling the Energy Transition, Clean Energy Council, 2022.

<sup>25</sup> Skilling the Energy Transition, Clean Energy Council, 2022

**Local Opportunities**

Analysis of the origin of renewable energy jobs was also undertaken as part of the UTS analysis. Large-scale wind and solar project proponents were asked to estimate the proportion of jobs that were sourced 'local' to the project (defined as within 100 kilometres). The results of this analysis are summarised in Table 17 and highlight the significant role that local workers can potentially play in renewable energy projects.

For construction, regional employment accounts for 67% of wind farm jobs and 69% of solar farm jobs, with the strongest regional contributions coming from drivers, machine operators and labourers (100%), site administrators (100%), electrical trades (90%), and mechanical trades (90%).<sup>26</sup>

In the operations and maintenance phase, regional participation is even more pronounced for wind at 73%, while solar records 55%. Key roles with high regional representation include electrical technicians (100%), mechanical technicians (100%), and Scada technicians (100%), alongside significant regional engagement in health and safety and operations management roles.

A post-construction assessment of the construction activities for the Murra Warra Wind Farm identified that 45% of the construction workforce was 'local' (i.e. residents in the Wimmera region), while the remaining 55% originated from other parts of Victoria and Interstate. Key observations from the local and non-local workforce profile are summarised below:

- The majority of local employees undertook technician or civil works roles. Some local employees were involved in technical advisory and administrative roles; and
- Main projects roles for non-local workers were electrician/technician, Machinery Operator (specialist crane crews) and Site Supervisor. A higher number of non-local workers were employed in supervisor or management roles.

It is noted that the ability of local workers to be involved in the development and operation of renewable energy projects is highly dependent on the alignment of workforce skills, training pathways, and industry demand within regional areas.

**Table 17. Regional Job Profile**

	Local jobs %*	Wind Farms		Solar Farms	
		% of total	Local %*	% of total	Local %*
<b>Construction</b>					
Construction managers	70%	9%	6%	7%	5%
Electrical engineers	40%	6%	3%	2%	1%
Health and Safety	75%	5%	4%	4%	3%
Civil engineers	40%	5%	2%	4%	2%
Community engagement	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Logistics	50%	5%	2%	2%	1%
Site administrators	100%	3%	3%	5%	5%
Electrical trades	90%	11%	10%	16%	14%
Mechanical trades	90%	7%	6%	6%	6%
Other Trades & technicians	90%	6%	5%	0%	0%
Drivers, Machine Operators & Labourers	100%	26%	26%	32%	32%
<b>Overall % Regional Employment</b>			<b>67%</b>		<b>69%</b>
<b>Operations &amp; Maintenance</b>					
Operations manager	50%	11%	6%	15%	7%
Community engagement	100%	2%	2%	0%	0%
Health and Safety	75%	4%	3%	2%	1.4%
Electrical trades/technicians	100%	40%	40%	31%	31%
Scada trades/technicians	100%	6%	6%	2%	2%
Mechanical trades/technicians	100%	23%	23%	12%	12%
Labourers/landscapers/panel cleaners	-			1%	1%
<b>Overall % Regional Employment</b>			<b>73%</b>		<b>55%</b>

Source: Renewable Energy Jobs in Australia Clean Energy Council/UTS, 2020. \*Local = within 100km of project (classified as "regional" by UTS).

<sup>26</sup> Renewable Energy Jobs in Australia: Stage One, Clean Energy Council/UTS, 2020

**6.3.2. Mining**

**Overview**

The mining industry workforce spans the full project lifecycle, with different occupations in demand at each stage. Employment requirements shift significantly from the specialist professional skills needed in exploration, to the surge in construction trades and operators during mine development, and then to the long-term operational roles that sustain production over decades. Finally, closure and rehabilitation phases create demand for environmental and land management expertise.

Table 18 summarises the key occupations associated with each stage of the mining lifecycle, highlighting the breadth of professional, technical and trade skills that underpin the sector.

**Table 18. Mining Lifecycle & Key Occupations**

Phase	Overview	Key Occupations
<b>Exploration &amp; Planning</b>	Early stage resource identification, feasibility and approvals. Small, specialised workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Geologists, geophysicists, hydrogeologists</li> <li>- Field technicians, drilling crews</li> <li>- Environmental scientists and planners</li> <li>- Mining engineers (conceptual design)</li> <li>- Finance, legal and approvals specialists</li> </ul>
<b>Construction &amp; Development</b>	Building mine site, processing plant, and associated infrastructure. Labour-intensive, short-term peak demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil and mining engineers</li> <li>- Construction/project managers</li> <li>- Heavy machinery operators (cranes, earthmoving)</li> <li>- Electricians, fitters, welders, boilermakers</li> <li>- Logistics and procurement specialists</li> <li>- Health &amp; Safety officers</li> </ul>
<b>Operations (Production &amp; Processing)</b>	Long-term phase, sustaining workforce for decades. Core production and maintenance activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drillers, miners, shot-firers</li> <li>- Truck/excavator operators, processing plant operators</li> <li>- Trades: electricians, fitters, mechanics, boilermakers</li> <li>- Mining engineers, metallurgists, geologists, surveyors</li> <li>- Environmental managers, safety supervisors</li> <li>- IT/data specialists (automation, remote ops)</li> <li>- Mine managers, supervisors</li> </ul>
<b>Closure &amp; Rehabilitation</b>	End of mine life. Decommissioning and land restoration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental scientists, rehabilitation planners</li> <li>- Geotechnical engineers, hydrologists</li> <li>- Civil and earthworks crews</li> <li>- Demolition specialists</li> <li>- Water management and monitoring technicians</li> </ul>

Source: Urban Enterprise, based on a range of literature reviewed.

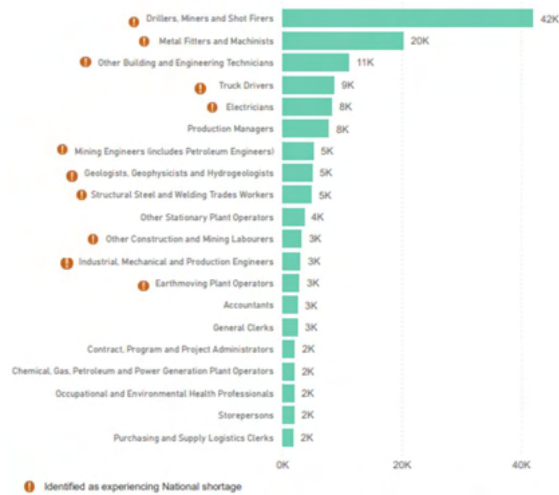
**Workforce Insights**

Recent Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) data highlights the occupational profile and future employment trajectory of the Australian mining workforce. As shown in Figure 34, the largest employing roles are drillers, miners and shot firers, followed by metal fitters and machinists, and building and engineering technicians. These roles, alongside truck drivers, electricians, and production managers, form the backbone of operational mining employment. Importantly, many of these occupations are currently flagged as experiencing national skill shortages, underscoring persistent workforce pressures.

Employment projections point to continued growth across professional and technical roles. Mining engineers, geoscientists, and production managers are forecast to record some of the strongest gains, with projected growth of 20–23% by 2033. Demand for trades and operator roles such as drillers, fitters, and electricians is also expected to rise steadily, though at a slower pace. Overall, the mining workforce is projected to expand from around 275,000 workers in 2024 to over 320,000 by 2033, reflecting both the sustained strength of Australia’s resource sector and the growing importance of critical minerals.

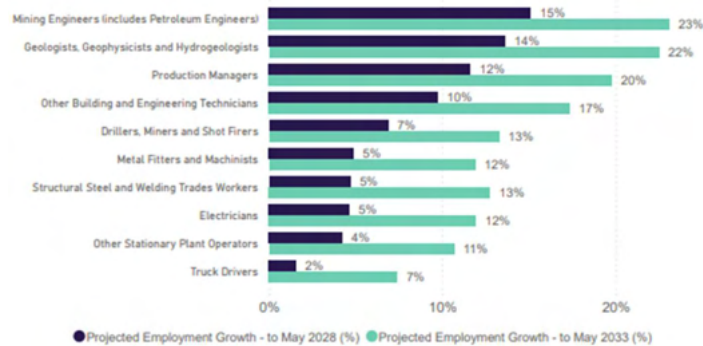
Although the construction phase of mining projects often employs two to three times more workers than the operational phase, this surge is temporary, usually lasting only a few years.<sup>27</sup> In contrast to renewable energy projects, the operational phase of mining projects generates significant employment due to the labour-intensive nature of the work.

Figure 34. Top 20 ANZSCO Occupations by Workforce Numbers



Source: ABS Table Builder 2021 Census - employment, income and education | JSA Skills Priority List 2023. 4-dig SPL (ANZSCO 2013).

Figure 35. Employment Projections by ANZSCO Occupations



Source: Employment Projections produced by VU for JSA (May 2023 to May 2033).

**Local Opportunities**

The mining workforce in Australia is heavily concentrated in regional and remote areas, and this pattern holds true for prospective developments in regional Victoria.

Evidence from comparable mining operations across the country suggests that local workers are well placed to participate in key roles, particularly in trades, machinery operation, transport and logistics, and site administration. These occupations align with existing skillsets in many regional communities, which often have strong employment bases in agriculture, construction and manufacturing. With targeted training and workforce development, there is considerable potential for a high proportion of construction and operational jobs in mining projects to be filled by local residents.

<sup>27</sup> Doyle, M-A. 2014, "Labour Movements during the Resources Boom," RBA Bulletin, December, Reserve Bank of Australia.

However, given very high existing workforce participation and low population growth, there is a clear risk that workers are redirected from current roles to obtain higher paid roles in mining. At the same time, experience from established mining regions highlights the challenges of balancing local employment with fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) labour models. Specialist professional roles, such as mining engineers, geologists and metallurgists, are in national shortage and are frequently sourced from interstate or metropolitan centres.

## 6.4. Supply Chain

In addition to employment and skills, major infrastructure projects such as renewable energy, transmission, and mining developments also generate substantial supply chain opportunities for local businesses. These opportunities arise in both the construction and operational phases and extend across a wide range of industries.

This section provides an assessment of the potential local supply chain opportunities for the Study Area, drawing on Australian and international research to identify the types of businesses and services most likely to benefit. This represents a similar approach to the preceding jobs and skills analysis, with the aim of contextualising the quantitative economic impacts presented earlier in this section.

### 6.4.1. Transmission

Transmission infrastructure projects are a critical part of the energy transition currently underway. These large transmission projects, while different in nature from generation projects, also generate local supply chain opportunities in host regions. Building a transmission line requires extensive on-the-ground work over a wide area, and once built, the line and substations need periodic maintenance.

#### Construction

The construction of high-voltage transmission lines is a major engineering undertaking that can create a significant temporary workforce and demand for diverse local services. Key areas where local businesses can be involved in transmission construction include:

- **Civil Construction and Site Preparation:** Much like renewables, transmission projects need significant civil works. Local civil contractors can be engaged to build access tracks to tower sites, clear right-of-way corridors, and construct tower foundations (including excavation and concrete pouring). Earthmoving and fencing companies in the region are often needed to prepare sites and secure them. Substation construction involves work such as earthworks, concrete foundations, trenching for cables, and building control rooms – tasks that local construction firms or tradespeople can assist with.<sup>28</sup>
- **Labour and Trade Services:** Transmission line builders hire a range of trades. General labourers, equipment operators, and trades assistants from the local workforce can find employment or subcontracting opportunities on the project. There is also demand for specialised trades: for instance, electricians to install substation equipment or wire up components, and possibly steelworkers or riggers to assemble towers.<sup>28</sup>
- **Vegetation Management and Environmental Services:** A major part of transmission line construction is vegetation clearing along the corridor and ongoing environmental management. Local arborists and land management services are often contracted to remove or trim trees along the right-of-way during construction. They may also handle disposal of green waste and later revegetation or offset planting. Additionally, cultural heritage consultants (potentially local indigenous groups or archaeologists) might be hired to monitor works if heritage sites are present, providing another avenue for local specialist engagement.<sup>28</sup>
- **Transport and Logistics:** Transmission projects involve moving vast amounts of materials – steel tower segments, conductor cables (often on large spools), poles, insulators, and heavy machinery – into often remote or rural locations. This provides business for local trucking and logistics companies to haul equipment from manufacturing sites or ports to staging areas and tower sites. An interesting case is tower components: even if towers are manufactured elsewhere (often overseas), there are local opportunities in handling them. This means local businesses can win contracts to manage the warehousing of tower parts, transport them to sites, and even pre-assemble sections, despite the steel fabrication being

<sup>28</sup> Hunter New Energy (2024), Hunter Region businesses invited to register interest in Hunter Transmission Project, available at: <https://hunternewenergy.com.au/hunter-region-businesses-invited-to-register-interest-in-hunter-transmission-project>

imported. Such logistics, inventory, and assembly services are valuable roles that regional companies can play in transmission builds.<sup>29</sup>

- **Equipment and Materials Supply:** There are also opportunities for suppliers of construction materials: e.g. local quarries might provide gravel for access roads or backfill, concrete batch plants in the region could supply concrete for tower footings, and local hardware or industrial suppliers might provide bolts, tools, fuel, and other consumables. These are often procured as close to the project as possible for cost efficiency, thus supporting regional businesses.

### Operational

The local opportunities during the operational phase of transmission projects include:

- **Line Maintenance and Inspection:** High-voltage lines and towers need periodic inspections, hardware tightening, and repairs (e.g. after storms or as components age). Utilities frequently use regional maintenance crews or contract local companies to assist with these tasks.
- **Vegetation Management:** Even after construction, vegetation control under transmission lines is a continual requirement for safety and reliability. This is often outsourced to vegetation management firms. For regional transmission routes, local arborist companies or land care contractors can secure multi-year contracts to periodically clear regrowth and maintain the right-of-way (e.g. keeping trees at a safe distance from wires on a set cycle). This provides steady work for local crews skilled in tree trimming and land management.<sup>30</sup>
- **Substation Operations and Services:** New transmission lines often come with new or expanded substations. Operating a substation may require electrical maintenance services (for transformers, switchgear, etc.) which can sometimes be provided by local engineering firms under contract. Additionally, substations need upkeep such as equipment testing, fence repairs, cleaning, and landscaping. These needs can be opportunities for local maintenance contractors, cleaners, and gardeners. For security, some substations in remote areas use local security companies for alarm response or routine patrols. Though much of substation monitoring is remote/digital, the support services (grounds maintenance, occasional technical checks) can be locally sourced.

### 6.4.2. Renewable Energy

Renewable energy developments have the potential to inject targeted economic activity into regional communities. These projects involve large capital works and ongoing operations that can leverage local suppliers and labour. Research focused on Australia’s clean energy expansion highlights substantial local benefits if regional businesses are included in the supply chain.

### Construction

Construction is the most labour- and resource-intensive stage for renewables, and it offers the greatest number of economic opportunities for the local economy. Key local opportunities during renewable construction include:

- **Civil Engineering and Construction Services:** Building the project’s foundations, access roads, and supporting infrastructure relies on earthmoving, excavation, concreting, and construction crews. These tasks can often be contracted to local civil engineering firms, earthworks contractors, and concreters. For example, wind farm construction requires laying turbine foundations and access tracks, which has involved local contractors for civil works and cement supply in Victorian projects.<sup>31</sup>
- **Building Materials and Manufacturing:** Projects need bulk materials like cement, steel rebar, gravel, and other building supplies. Local quarries and materials suppliers can benefit by providing these inputs. In some cases, regional manufacturing businesses may contribute components or services – for instance, assembling mounting frames or pre-casting concrete elements locally. While major equipment (turbines, solar panels, battery units) is typically sourced globally, ancillary components (cables, brackets, fencing) or secondary fabrication work can be done by host region businesses if capabilities exist.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Hughes et al. 2023, Case Study: SecureEnergy Local Industry Engagement and Procurement Initiative, available at: <https://www.hughesetal.com.au/case-study-secureenergy-local-industry-engagement-and-procurement-initiative>

<sup>30</sup> Hughes et al. 2023, Case Study: SecureEnergy Local Industry Engagement and Procurement Initiative, available at: <https://www.hughesetal.com.au/case-study-secureenergy-local-industry-engagement-and-procurement-initiative>

<sup>31</sup> Murra Warra Wind Farm Economic Benefits Case Study, Ethos Urban, 2022.

<sup>32</sup> Fact Sheet – Renewable Energy: powering jobs and regional communities, Clean Energy Council, 2025.

- **Transport and Logistics:** Moving large components (turbine blades, transformers, battery modules) and materials creates demand for regional transport companies and logistics providers. Local trucking businesses may be contracted to haul equipment from ports to the site, and crane operators or heavy haulage specialists in the area can assist with lifting and installing large units. Research shows transport is a notable beneficiary; for instance, the Clean Energy Council highlights that local transport businesses see increased procurement opportunities delivering components to renewable project sites.<sup>33</sup>
- **Electrical and Technical Services:** The installation of wind turbines, solar arrays and battery systems requires skilled electrical work (laying cables, grid connection, instrumentation). This creates openings for local electrical contractors, engineers, and technicians to subcontract on the project. Large projects often bring in principal engineering firms, but those firms may hire regional subcontractors for electrical installation and testing if available. A fact sheet on renewables notes roles like electricians and technicians are pivotal during construction – local professionals in these fields can be engaged through subcontracting or labour hire.

These construction-phase opportunities are typically the most substantial in terms of local economic impact. They last for the construction period of a project but can leave a legacy of enhanced skills and capacity in local businesses.

### Operational

Once operational, renewable energy projects generate smaller but long-term economic benefits in the local area. A wind or solar farm typically employs a core team of technicians and support staff for operations and maintenance over its 20–30-year lifespan. Although far fewer people are needed compared to construction, the operational phase still provides steady jobs and business opportunities for the host community.

- **Equipment Maintenance and Servicing Contracts:** Operating a wind or solar farm involves regular maintenance such as servicing turbines, cleaning solar panels, replacing inverters or battery components. While original equipment manufacturers often handle major maintenance under contract, there are opportunities for local service providers to be involved. For instance, local mechanical or electrical firms might be contracted for certain repairs or preventive maintenance tasks (such as servicing vehicle fleets, maintaining transformers, or providing tools and hardware). Panel cleaning services and vegetation management around solar farms can also be sourced locally. Similarly, groundskeeping and land management (weed control, road upkeep on the site) can be awarded to local agricultural service businesses.
- **Supply of Consumables and Materials:** Over decades of operation, renewable plants consume various materials – everything from lubricants and spare parts to office supplies. Local suppliers and retailers can provide some of these needs. For example, a wind farm will regularly purchase small replacement components, tools, and safety gear, which nearby hardware or industrial supply stores can stock. Fuel supply for backup generators or maintenance vehicles is another opportunity (local fuel distributors may deliver diesel for backup power units or work trucks).

Although the majority of clean energy jobs are concentrated in the construction phase the operational phase still represents decades of stable economic activity for the community. Each project creates a set of long-term local employment positions and supplier relationships. Though smaller in number, these operational opportunities ensure that local businesses continue to benefit well after construction crews depart.

---

<sup>33</sup> Fact Sheet – Renewable Energy: powering jobs and regional communities, Clean Energy Council, 2025

### 6.4.3. Mining

Mining projects have long been significant economic drivers in regional Australia. A new mining development or expansion typically involves a significant construction phase followed by a decades-long operational phase of extracting, transporting and potentially processing minerals.

#### Construction

The construction or development phase of a mining project is a substantial undertaking involving many contractors, typically over several years. Some key areas where regional businesses benefit include:

- **Bulk Earthworks and Site Preparation:** Establishing a mine involves large-scale earthmoving – clearing overburden, constructing haul roads, preparing processing plant sites, etc. Big mining contractors often lead these works, but they commonly hire or subcontract local earthmoving and construction firms for portions of the job. Local civil contractors might be tasked with smaller earthworks, road construction, or quarrying materials (like supplying gravel).<sup>34</sup>
- **Construction of Facilities and Infrastructure:** Mines require extensive infrastructure: process plants, conveyor systems, workshops, offices, camps, power supply, water and sewage systems, etc. Local construction and engineering firms can secure contracts to build non-specialised structures (such as office buildings, warehouses, accommodation units) and to install utilities (power lines from the grid, water pipelines, communication networks). Regional electricians, plumbers, and general builders can be employed as part of this work.
- **Equipment and Machinery Supply:** During mine development, there is demand for heavy machinery (dozers, excavators, trucks) and other equipment. While large mining companies bring in their own fleets or lease from big suppliers, local equipment hire companies may be used for secondary machinery or vehicles. Additionally, local dealerships and distributors can supply smaller equipment (generators, pumps, light vehicles) and tools.
- **Transport and Logistics:** The logistics of moving construction materials, modules (e.g. prefabricated plant sections), and equipment to the mine site can benefit local transport firms. Nearby trucking companies may be contracted for hauling duties – from transporting oversized loads on regional roads to daily freight runs.<sup>35</sup>

#### Operational

Local businesses can integrate into a mine's supply chain in numerous ways during operations:

- **Ongoing Supply of Goods:** Mines require a constant stream of supplies and consumables. This includes fuel (diesel for mining trucks, power generators), explosives and drilling supplies, spare parts for machinery (e.g. tires, engines, drill bits), chemicals for processing, and general maintenance materials (lubricants, filters, etc.). While some of these are obtained from large national suppliers, there is often a local distributor or agent. Local hardware and industrial supply companies can also provide everyday items (tools, fasteners, safety equipment).<sup>36</sup>
- **Maintenance and Technical Services:** Mining operations involve continuous maintenance of heavy equipment (haul trucks, shovels, processing plant machinery, etc.) and infrastructure. Mines often have on-site maintenance crews, but they also rely on external local services for certain tasks. For example, large mine trucks may have tires replaced by a local tyre service or require outside machine shop work (engine reconditioning, hydraulics repairs) that a local engineering workshop can perform.
- **On-Site Services: Catering, Cleaning, and Facilities:** If the mine has an on-site accommodation camp or even just a canteen at the processing plant, those facilities need to be operated daily. It is common for local catering companies or national caterers with local staff to run mine canteens and mess halls, providing meals for the workforce. Cleaning services are required for offices, camps, and common areas – local cleaning businesses may hold these contracts long-term. Site security might also be outsourced to a local firm to manage gate access, especially for 24/7 operations.<sup>37</sup>
- **Transport and Logistics:** During operations, mines transport their product (ore, coal, concentrate) to ports or customers. In some cases, this is via rail or conveyor, but often road haulage or short-distance trucking is needed (e.g. from mine to rail load-out). Local haulage contractors can be involved in these logistics.

<sup>34</sup> T & R Contracting, 2025, available at: <https://tandrcontracting.com.au>

<sup>35</sup> Quarry Mining Haulage, 2025, available at: <https://quarrymininghaulage.com.au>

<sup>36</sup> Rapid Supply, 2025, available at: <https://rapidsupply.com.au>

<sup>37</sup> Champ Group, 2025, Mining, Commercial & Industrial Cleaning Services, available at: <https://www.gochamp.com.au/capability/facilities-management/mining-commercial-industrial-cleaning>

### Regional Economic Development Opportunities

The Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) for Wimmera Southern Mallee and Mallee highlight the significant economic opportunities associated with the planned growth of renewable energy and mining industries in the region. These strategies aim to ensure that local communities capture the benefits of this investment by strengthening local supply chains, preparing the workforce for emerging industries, and creating an environment that supports sustainable and socially responsible development.

Key priorities identified in the strategies in relation to renewable energy and mining include:

- Maximising local benefits by sourcing resident labour and local inputs, encouraging social responsibility contributions from industry, and leveraging existing infrastructure to support compatible developments;
- Improving coordination and facilitation of investment through streamlined processes, reduced regulatory barriers, and strong advocacy for enabling infrastructure such as transmission upgrades;
- Building workforce capacity by fostering partnerships between industry and training providers, proactively identifying future jobs and skill needs, and coordinating upskilling programs across renewable energy and mining sectors;
- Supporting community-led initiatives and social license by strengthening the capacity of Aboriginal organisations to deliver community-owned renewable energy projects and addressing potential land use conflicts early; and
- Identifying and addressing gaps in enabling infrastructure and business support, including funding models and other mechanisms to drive growth in renewable energy and mining activities.

The Critical Minerals Roadmap identifies the opportunity for the north-western region of Victoria to add value to mineral sands extracted in the region through processing and manufacturing activities. This would represent a substantial step change in the capability of the regional economy.

#### 6.4.4. Consultation

Consultation with stakeholders identified the following challenges and opportunities associated with servicing major energy and mining projects in the Study Area:

- Competition for labour created by mining and energy projects was raised as a key issue which could affect existing businesses. Mining and renewable energy projects (during construction phases) will draw labour away from existing jobs, which is likely to exacerbate existing labour shortages in townships across the region, especially in low skilled occupations, construction and agriculture. Officers noted previous experience that it is often agricultural workers that are re-directed to major projects.
- Some Councils noted that there are existing skills gaps across the region and referred to work being undertaken by RDV and others on workforce plans, skills gap analyses and training need analyses which are designed to address concerns and needs.
- An important readiness consideration is the availability of local training opportunities to upskill existing local populations, particularly through TAFE and VET programs. Support is required to align education and training institutions with anticipated surges in demand for labour relating to energy and mining projects.
- The State government has identified 6 critical education areas for the region which should all be prioritised concurrently, rather than focusing solely on reskilling programs. Any skills overlapping several of these areas are particularly important for funding priority:
  - Agriculture;
  - Mining;
  - Construction;
  - Manufacturing;
  - Energy; and
  - Care.
- Several Councils also noted that the competition for labour is likely to also directly impact Councils themselves, based on past experience and staff movements in other parts of the state affected by major renewable energy projects. Opportunities to increase resources for local government would assist readiness.
- Several Councils discussed both positive and negative impacts on existing businesses expected as a result of major projects, including:
  - Positive impacts on hospitality, accommodation, retail and construction businesses in particular.

- Potential negative impacts on agricultural businesses due to competition for labour, potential disruption to agricultural activities and potential loss of productive land. Several councils emphasised the importance of the agricultural sectors to both the region overall and local economies in terms of supporting employment, business income, supply chains and local communities as a result.
- An inability for small businesses to confidently and proficiently participate in the sophisticated contractor and supply chain processes of major projects was identified. Businesses will require guidance, training and support to enable them to negotiate and participate. Businesses will also need assistance to quickly ramp up and ramp down to respond to peaks and troughs in demand.
- Increased competition for and price of inputs such as water (needed in large quantities by mining projects) and quarry materials (for construction, especially transmission and wind projects) was identified as a key expected impact on existing businesses in the area to be managed.
- A small number of individual businesses were identified as potentially benefitting directly from involvement in the supply chain of transmission and energy projects, such as electrical businesses in Horsham, however very few existing businesses were identified as direct supply chain participation candidates.
- Inadequate remediation and reinstatement of land following mining activity was identified as having potential to impact the agricultural productivity of affected land.

This commentary firmly points to the challenges and potential economic conflicts which could emerge during the upcoming periods of major project construction and operation and the breadth of economic impacts that could occur.

**6.4.5. Summary**

A summary of the local supply chain opportunities for renewable energy, transmission and mining projects in both the construction and operational phases is summarised in Table 19.

**Table 19. Local Supply Chain Summary**

	Renewables	Transmission	Mining
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Civil works &amp; site prep:</b> Earthmoving, concreting, road construction contractors</li> <li>- <b>Materials supply:</b> Quarries, cement and steel suppliers for foundations and structures</li> <li>- <b>Transport &amp; logistics:</b> Trucking and crane companies delivering turbines, panels, batteries</li> <li>- <b>Electrical installation:</b> Electrical and engineering firms for cabling, grid connection, testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Civil construction:</b> Contractors for access roads, tower footings, and site clearing</li> <li>- <b>Trades &amp; labour:</b> Labourers, surveyors, electricians, arborists hired for line and substation works.</li> <li>- <b>Transport &amp; logistics:</b> Transport companies hauling towers, cables; assembly yards for tower components</li> <li>- <b>Materials supply:</b> Nearby quarries and concrete suppliers providing aggregate and concrete for foundations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Site construction:</b> Local civil firms for earthworks, road building, and laying foundations for mine infrastructure</li> <li>- <b>Facility build:</b> Regional construction trades building offices, workshops, camps and installing utilities (electrical, plumbing)</li> <li>- <b>Equipment &amp; parts:</b> Local equipment hire and machinery dealers supplying vehicles, tools, and parts during build-out.</li> <li>- <b>Transport:</b> Local haulage companies moving heavy equipment and modules to site; pilot/escort vehicle services for oversized loads.</li> </ul>
Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Workforce &amp; O&amp;M:</b> Skilled technicians, electricians, and maintenance staff hired locally to operate wind/solar farms</li> <li>- <b>Maintenance services:</b> Local firms contracted for turbine/solar panel maintenance, inverter or battery servicing, and periodic repairs</li> <li>- <b>Vegetation &amp; cleaning:</b> Local contractors managing vegetation around assets and cleaning facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Line maintenance:</b> Local electrical or lines work contractors engaged for routine inspections, repairs, and emergency fixes on lines and towers.</li> <li>- <b>Vegetation management:</b> Regional arborist or land care companies on multi-year contracts to clear and maintain transmission corridors.</li> <li>- <b>Substation upkeep:</b> Local firms providing maintenance of substation equipment, plus cleaning and groundskeeping at substation sites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Procurement of goods:</b> Mine buys fuel, explosives, chemicals, and spare parts regularly, often via local suppliers or distributors (e.g. local fuel depots, equipment part dealers)</li> <li>- <b>Equipment maintenance:</b> Local engineering workshops and technicians service and repair mining equipment, providing fabrication, machining, tyre changes, etc., on contract.</li> <li>- <b>Site services:</b> Ongoing catering at mine canteens, cleaning of facilities, and security – frequently outsourced to local businesses on long-term contracts</li> <li>- <b>Transport &amp; logistics:</b> Local trucking firms transporting product to rail or port (if by road), and bus companies shuttling workers from town to mine</li> </ul>

Source: Urban Enterprise.

## 6.5. Other Economic Effects

### Indirect Effects

Major infrastructure projects generate important indirect benefits for regional economies, particularly through increased spending in hospitality, accommodation, and local retail services. While these impacts are temporary during construction, they can provide a significant economic boost for smaller towns near project sites.

Hospitality and accommodation businesses often experience a surge in demand as non-local construction workers require short-term housing and meals. Local hotels, motels, pubs, and cafes benefit directly, while catering firms may secure contracts to service construction camps.

Retail and local service businesses also see higher turnover as workers and contractors spend on fuel, groceries, hardware, and personal items. Service stations, supermarkets, and equipment suppliers in particular record increased patronage.

Collectively, these impacts not only inject short-term expenditure into regional economies but can also strengthen the viability of local businesses and services, leaving a lasting legacy beyond the construction phase.

Conversely, competition for services and infrastructure can cause challenges during periods of high demand. Examples raised in consultation include childcare services and telecommunications infrastructure. A demand-supply imbalance in core services can cause flow-on economic disbenefits which need to be considered as part of planning for readiness.

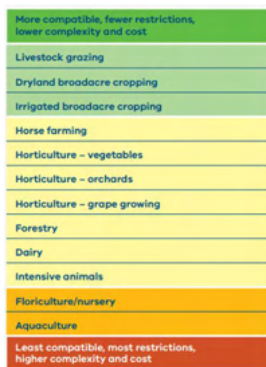
### Potential Agricultural Sector Effects

As identified in previous sections, the agricultural sector is critical to the economies of the Study Area. Any material disruption or disadvantage to agricultural activity caused by transmission, energy and mining projects has the potential to cause flow on disbenefits to the broader economy and communities of the region.

Direct effects of major projects are often considered at the planning approvals stage. For example, Economic impact assessments for mineral sands projects have typically found that the projects will result in a temporary reduction in agricultural production, but that this is relatively minor.<sup>38</sup> The Critical Minerals Roadmap suggests that productive agricultural land use can also occur post-rehabilitation.

There is an important distinction to be made between different types of agriculture and different quality of land. The Victorian Transmission Plan was informed by an assessment of compatibility between renewable energy activity and agriculture.<sup>39</sup> The assessment found that compatibility ranges depending on the type of agricultural activity as shown in Figure 36, with livestock grazing and broadacre cropping most compatible and more intensive forms of agriculture (including horticulture, dairy, floriculture and aquaculture) less compatible.

Figure 36. Agricultural Land Compatibility with Renewable Energy



Source: RMCG, 2025.

<sup>38</sup> For example, the Economic Impact Assessment prepared for the Avonbank mine identified that the "temporary disturbance to agricultural land due to mining activity is estimated to see a fall in agriculture revenue generated of -\$306,850 per annum."

<sup>39</sup> Agricultural Land and Renewables: Assessing Compatibility and Production Potential – Report, RMCG for VicGrid, 2025.

Overall, the study found that "with practical design and agreed mutual operational protocols, the majority of farmland can support renewables infrastructure with limited disruption to farm operations."

As shown in Figure 37, the vast majority of agricultural activity in the Study Area is in the form of cropping and grazing. Some sections of the Study Area, for example in Swan Hill, Gannawarra and Loddon, have a horticultural role, supported by irrigation infrastructure in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District.

Cropping and grazing activity is identified as the agricultural land uses most compatible with renewable energy projects. As shown in Figure 38, these areas comprise the majority of the Study Area and as identified in the RMCG report as areas of relatively low agricultural performance and high compatibility with renewable energy projects. By contrast, large sections of Gannawarra, Swan Hill and Loddon Shires are identified as having higher agricultural performance potential and lower compatibility with energy projects.

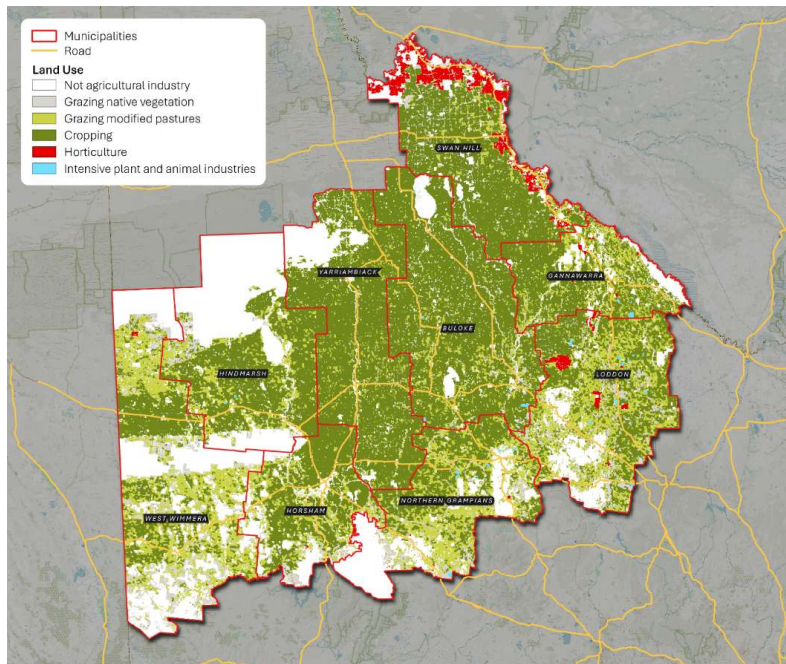
Although the findings of the RMCG report are clear, the report also acknowledges that "there has been limited research into the constraints and benefits of large-scale renewable energy infrastructure on *agricultural production*, particularly in the Australian context."

Given the high economic importance of agriculture to the economies of the Study Area and the lack of detailed and localised analysis of the potential impact on the sector, it is critical to more closely understand the specific impacts of mining, transmission and energy projects on agriculture in the Study Area. This includes:

- Considering the potential cumulative impact of these projects on the value and specialisation advantage of key sub-sectors of the agricultural industry in the area; and
- Planning for the expected increase in competition for labour, equipment, materials and water arising from the proposed major projects.

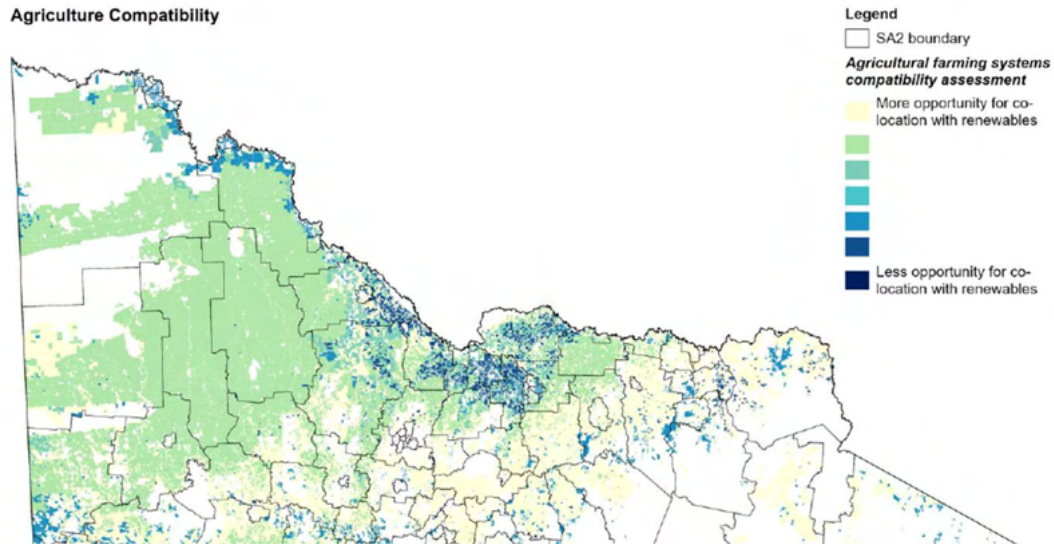
The Critical Minerals Roadmap identifies the potential need for a land use co-existence policy for earth resources, renewable energy industries and agriculture. To the extent that this policy protects ongoing agricultural operations and value, this type of policy would complement the above steps recommended.

**Figure 37. Agricultural Land Use within Study Area**



Source: Urban Enterprise, based on ABARES (2024) "Land use of Australia 2010–11 to 2020–21 (NLUM v7)".

Figure 38. Agricultural Compatibility Map



Source: RMC, 2025. Cropped to northern sections of Victoria relevant to the Study Area.

## 6.6. Key Points

- Proposed projects in the region have a total capital expenditure estimated at \$27.7 billion of which approximately \$2.8 billion may be spent locally.
- Construction employment will average approximately 1,700 workers during early phases, 3,800 in the medium term and 3,700 in the longer term. If a peak of 3,800 workers associated with construction occurs in the region, this would represent a 9% increase in the employment levels across the whole Study Area, a significant and step change increase over a sustained period.
- Labour will need to include a combination of local and imported workers, highlighting both the significant opportunity for local labour participation as well as the potentially significant impact of existing labour being redirected from current employment in other industries to the major projects.
- To the extent that labour is imported to service the construction phases of projects, this will have significant impact on local housing and commercial accommodation markets all else equal.
- Annual operational expenditure is estimated at \$888 million across all phases, with an indicative \$590 million (67%) expected to be captured locally. Operational employment across all projects is estimated at 2,300 ongoing jobs, with around 1,900 positions (80%) expected to occur locally.
- Major renewable energy, transmission, and mining developments generate significant employment and supply chain opportunities within their host regions.
- The majority of employment demand is concentrated in skilled trades and technical roles, with electricians standing out as the single largest occupation group for renewable energy. More broadly across transmission and energy projects, key sectors of demand include labourers, drivers, construction and project managers and a range of engineering disciplines.
- The ability of local workers to be involved in the development and operation of renewable energy projects is highly dependent on the alignment of workforce skills, training pathways, and industry demand within regional areas. Further, the relatively small size of most businesses in the Study Area creates a challenge for existing businesses to confidently and proficiently participate in the supply chains of major projects.
- For mining projects, local workers are well placed to participate in key roles, particularly in trades, machinery operation, transport and logistics, and site administration. However, given very high existing workforce participation

and low population growth, there is a clear risk that workers are redirected from current roles to obtain higher paid roles in mining.

- There is an opportunity for the north-western region of Victoria to add value to mineral sands extracted in the region through processing and manufacturing activities.
- Given the high economic importance of agriculture to the economies of the Study Area and the lack of detailed and localised analysis of the potential impact on the sector, it is critical to more closely understand the specific impacts of mining, transmission and energy projects on agriculture in the Study Area, including:
  - Considering the potential cumulative impact of these projects on the value and specialisation advantage of key sub-sectors of the agricultural industry in the area; and
  - Planning for the expected increase in competition for labour, equipment, materials and water arising from the proposed major projects.
- Overall competition for labour is likely to directly impact the agricultural sector and other parts of the economy – competition for labour and resources is the key potential economic disbenefit to mitigate for the region.

## 7. Local Government and Community Impacts

### 7.1. Introduction

This section outlines considerations for impacts on local governments and communities. Although these are not directly economic issues, community value and effective local governance are foundational to the achievement of the overarching benefits of the proposed projects and to the achievement of net community benefit in the Study Area.

### 7.2. Community Impacts and Social Value

Although this Strategy does not include a social impact assessment, it was consistently raised in consultation by a range of stakeholders that community support and social value is critical to the successful implementation of the proposed projects but that support is very uncertain in the area at present.

The following issues were raised regarding community impacts and social value:

- Community readiness was identified as a high priority by several councils. Community uncertainty, and in some cases, strong opposition, to proposed transmission infrastructure in the region (as well as some mining and renewables projects) is growing and detrimentally impacting community cohesion.
- Opposition groups can be influential in affecting broader community sentiment, often through social media. The potential for misinformation, conflation of issues and erosion of community support can be serious challenges for community readiness and timely delivery of important major projects.
- Mental health impacts, community cohesion issues and perceived inequities in benefit distributions were all noted as key risks associated with the current community readiness challenges.
- In some parts of the Study Area, communities are broadly supportive of renewable energy and other major projects. These are generally in locations where projects are already operational and generating investment and economic activity and are therefore further along the process of community acceptance.
- Several councils have developed and published local government position statements which outline the Council's advocacy stance (or alternatively, a balanced view) on renewable energy, mining and transmission lines that can be provided to the community. Councils also spoke of the importance of trusted local leaders in maintaining accurate information and balanced commentary within affected communities.
- Community benefit schemes were raised by all Councils as a key element of social value and opportunity to generate positive impacts, however the common view was that benefit schemes can be inconsistent in their application and in some cases fail to achieve meaningful benefits. Some councils identified concerns that proponents do or may rescind initial commitments once projects are completed.
- The overwhelming view of stakeholders consulted was that community readiness is of high importance to this Strategy.

### 7.3. Community Benefits

Community benefits include a mix of direct payments or funding that is provided to affected communities, landowners, neighbours and Local Government Areas who host new energy and transmission projects. Community funds are typically directed to support initiatives, programs and projects that generate positive social and economic outcomes.

Australia's Clean Energy Council (CEC) defines community benefit sharing as "sharing the rewards of renewable energy development with local communities."

This section outlines the existing and proposed circumstances for community benefits and benefit sharing relevant to renewable energy, transmission and mining projects.

**Renewable Energy & Transmission**

There are several existing benefit arrangements in place for affected landowners, neighbour landowners, communities, traditional owners and local governments; and are a mix of obligatory requirements and voluntary.

It is important to note that community benefits and neighbour benefits are different:<sup>40</sup>

- Community benefits under a benefit sharing scheme or strategy typically relate to a Local Government, locality or geographic radius from the project; and
- Neighbour benefits are typically offered directly to landowners that are within a certain proximity or radius of the infrastructure.

**Table 20. Summary of Existing Benefit Arrangements, Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects**

Stakeholder	Arrangement	Project	Obligatory / Voluntary
Affected Landowners	Compensation payments to landholders under the Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986 (LACA), which makes available compensation for the acquisition of, or impact on, property due to infrastructure development. The LACA is designed to fully compensate landholders for the establishment of easements on their land, including the impact on farming and business operations.	Renewable energy & transmission	Obligatory
Neighbouring Landowners	Voluntary agreements are offered to landowners within proximity of a renewable energy project, and include an annual payment to compensate for potential amenity impacts associated with the construction and operation of the project. The scale of annual payments will vary based on the distance and proximity of the property from the infrastructure. Payments are typically scaled based on distance from the project.	Renewable energy & transmission*	Voluntary
Affected Communities	Discretionary payments by energy generation, storage and transmission developers as part of their community benefit sharing initiatives, often directed to supporting local community projects, initiatives and programs that encourage positive economic and social benefits.	Renewable energy & transmission	Voluntary
Traditional Owners	Compensation arrangements for Traditional Owners under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 and the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth).	Renewable energy & transmission	Obligatory
Local Government	Established under section 94 of the Electricity Industry Act 2000, the payment in lieu of rates (PiLoR) framework allows electricity generators to negotiate payments made to local councils. A methodology currently exists under section 94(6A) of the EI Act for estimating payments and applies to all coal, gas, hydro, and wind generators. The methodology combines a fixed charge with a variable charge based on the energy capacity of the project.	Coal, gas, hydro, and wind projects	Obligatory

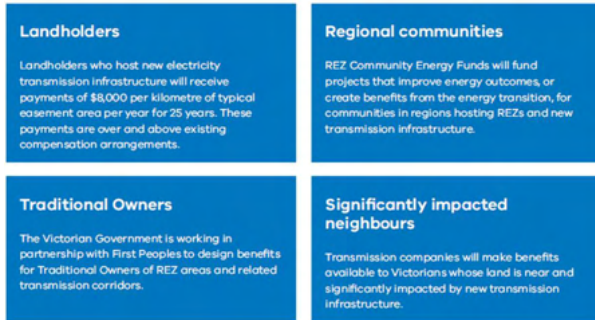
Source: Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria, DELWP, 2021 / Draft Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan, VicGrid, 2024. \* The Victorian Transmission Plan indicates that “transmission companies will make benefits available to” significantly impacted neighbours, however full details are not yet published.

For renewable energy and transmission projects, VicGrid’s Draft Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefit Plan (2024) proposes formalisation of existing benefits arrangements and additional benefits above existing arrangements. These are shown in Figure 39 and include the following proposals:

- Landholders who host new electricity transmission infrastructure will receive payments of \$8,000 per kilometre of typical easement area per year for 25 years. These payments are over and above existing compensation arrangements.
- Significantly impacted neighbours will be eligible for benefits if their land is near a significant impacted by new transmission infrastructure.
- REZ Community Energy Funds will fund projects that improve energy outcomes, or create benefits from the energy transition, for communities in regions hosting REZs and new transmission infrastructure.
- Traditional Owners within a REZ and related transmission corridors will be eligible for benefits.

<sup>40</sup> Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria, DELWP, 2021

**Figure 39. Proposed community benefits, transmission & renewable energy projects**



Source: Draft Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefit Plan, VicGrid, 2024.

**Mining**

For mining projects in Victoria, proponents are required to pay royalties to the State Government based on the resource that is extracted. Under the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990, licence holders are required to pay royalties on the value of extracted minerals or extractives.

If a mining licence or work plan affects private landholders, proponents may need to negotiate compensation or access agreements with them; typically as a result of access, disturbances and/or amenity impacts.

Currently, there are no obligations for proponents to provide payments or deliver benefits to affected Local Governments or local communities where mining projects are located.

The Critical Minerals Roadmap notes that the "the Victorian Government will develop and deliver a community benefits sharing model. This will include consultation on the proposed model to map and understand the various interests of communities, landholders and industry to ensure a balanced and equitable approach." Of relevance to this Strategy, the benefits of this sharing model are expected to include:

- Government: "Equitable outcomes – benefits flow to local area and Traditional Owners"; and
- Community: "Economic benefits flowing to community from mining operations in local area".

**Consultation Findings**

Community benefit schemes were raised by stakeholders consulted as a key element of social value and opportunity to generate positive impacts for the region, however a common view was that benefit schemes can be inconsistent in their application and in some cases fail to achieve meaningful benefits. Some councils identified concerns that proponents do or may rescind initial commitments once projects are completed.

Community benefit schemes were identified as a key opportunity and positive impact of projects. However, consensus was that there is an opportunity to improve the consistency, co-ordination and legacy impact of schemes for broader benefit.

The following issues and opportunities were identified:

- Most Councils advocated for longer-term community benefit projects that can leave more significant legacies. Many community benefit projects have focused on short term and relatively narrow projects, such as sponsoring local sporting clubs, equipment and apparel purchase and so on. While this assists with demonstrating initial social value, there is an opportunity to direct community benefit funds towards projects which can deliver enduring infrastructure, such as health and care facilities, education and network infrastructure.
- Some Councils also suggested revisions to how community benefit schemes operate in order to address the gap between their current focus on smaller sums and local expenditure and more enduring projects. To secure long-term benefits, Councils suggested:
  - Establishing an organisational body that manages and administers community benefit funds in collaboration with and/or on behalf of proponents.
  - Pooling community benefits scheme contributions towards larger capital works projects.

- Co-contributions schemes so that Councils can access some of the funding for projects already planned in the region and identified as needed by communities, rather than Councils role at present which is generally limited to administering funds on behalf of proponents. This would enable Councils to deliver strategic projects, including those which support readiness, as well as addressing existing funding gaps to deliver essential capital projects in the region.
- Consolidation of benefit scheme processes, structure and implementation across the region would be useful in ensuring alignment between Councils, proponents and communities about how benefit schemes can operate and the legacy impacts that can be targeted.
- Councils noted that a key opportunity for the region is to address existing financial challenges through capturing a combination of Payment in Lieu of Rates (PiLOR), community benefits contributions and other government funding to address the widening funding gap faced by Councils with low rates bases, low growth and broad asset networks (especially roads) requiring increasing costly maintenance and renewal.
- Several Councils noted the clear difference between the opportunity presented by renewable energy and transmission projects to reinvest in communities in the region (through PiLOR and benefits schemes) and mining projects. This is because mining projects are not required to pay rates, but rather pay royalties to the State government. Although economic benefits of mining may be greater in terms of operational employment, the lack of direct funding to councils and communities was identified as a significant shortcoming in terms of opportunities and impacts expected in the region. The opportunity to allocate a proportion of royalties to the region or local governments / communities was identified.
- There is no system in place that accounts for the impact on neighbouring states through workforce, housing and transportation from a mining project in a different jurisdiction.

#### 7.4. Potential Local Government Impacts

The following issues were identified in consultation with stakeholders regarding impacts experienced by local Councils. These impacts have been experienced during initial periods where the level of development activity is considerably lower than the scale of activity expected over the coming years, indicating the importance of adequately resourcing Councils.

It is also noted that any redirection of Council resources to address major project requirements could potentially come at the cost of delivery of existing community services, generating a negative impact for the community overall.

The following issues and opportunities were raised:

- Several Councils identified current and expected planning, coordination and resourcing challenges associated with the role of local government in the regulatory approvals and compliance process.
- Planning and other approvals generally occur at the State government / Ministerial level, which limits the ability of Councils to understand and participate in all aspects of proposals. Some Councils likened themselves to a referral agency and noted their inability to collect important income such as planning permit fees despite being required to dedicate significant resources to assessing local project impacts, conditions, compliance and so on.
- Councils noted that State Government agencies and departments cannot always accurately assess local impacts, and councils are often the subject of community dissatisfaction despite not being able to influence project outcomes. Communities also regularly enquire with Councils regarding the status of projects, but this information is often not held by or readily available to Council officers.
- Some major projects when referred to Councils have unclear, insufficient and/or inconsistent information. This lack of project-level detail can lead to difficulties in estimating and anticipating infrastructure and community impacts. A regional approach to information consistency and minimum information was raised as a potential opportunity, which could involve a set of minimum standards or templates for project information shared with Councils.
- Some Councils reported difficulty in navigating state and federal systems regarding funding, infrastructure approvals and strategic alignment.
- Several Councils suggested that additional information and resources will need to be made available to their officer teams well above 'business as usual' to ensure readiness to adequately fulfil their legislative responsibilities.

Government agencies identified that local councils have limited influence of many of the key issues and decisions associated with major projects, however they are usually the first point of contact with communities, especially those seeking information or wishing to express concerns.

## 7.5. Key Points

- Community uncertainty, and in some cases, strong opposition, to proposed transmission infrastructure in the region (as well as some mining and renewables projects) is growing and detrimentally impacting community cohesion. Progressively developing and maintaining social value will be central to achieving positive outcomes for the Study Area.
- Community benefit schemes present a key opportunity to achieve legacy outcomes of the region, however schemes can be inconsistent in their application and in some cases fail to achieve meaningful benefits. There is an overall opportunity to improve the consistency, co-ordination and legacy impact of energy project schemes for broader benefit.
- Mining projects are presently not required to provide local community benefits or rate payments, with royalties paid only to the State. There is a clear opportunity to increase the local share of benefits from mining projects as identified by Resources Victoria, as well as consideration of ways to take into account cross-border opportunities and impacts.
- Although local government has limited influence over most key issues and decisions associated with major transmission, energy and mining projects, Councils are usually the first point of contact for communities, especially in periods of change and uncertainty.
- Most local governments in the region are ill-equipped to adequately assess and respond to major project proposals, and any redirection of Council resources to address major project requirements can come at the cost of delivery of existing community services, generating a negative impact for the community overall.
- Local governments will require assistance well above 'business as usual' to ensure readiness and to adequately fulfil all legislative responsibilities.

# Part D

## Local Government Readiness

## 8. Readiness Issues, Objectives and Actions

### 8.1. Introduction

This section summarises the key issues identified as part of this Strategy regarding local readiness to respond to and capitalise on the major energy and mining projects proposed in the region. This is followed by objectives and recommended actions to implement the Strategy.

### 8.2. Issues and Objectives

It is clear from the preceding research and analysis that existing conditions present significant challenges to accommodating and creating local economic benefit from the major project proposed. The scale of investment is significant and can bring substantial economic opportunities to the region which can assist with overall economic wellbeing in the Study Area, however potential conflict with existing industries and cumulative impacts need to be considered.

Figure 40 summarises the eight key readiness themes and issues based on the preceding analysis. For each issue, an objective has been established. The objectives are designed to identify the ways in which the Study Area can benefit from local outcomes which respond to the challenges and opportunities faced.

The objectives take into account that many of the communities of north-west region of Victoria are experiencing an initial phase of uncertainty regarding the benefits and disbenefits of major projects and that local governments do not have adequate resources to address the range of issues required to respond to all issues.

Figure 40. Themes, Issues and Objectives

THEMES		OBJECTIVES
A	<b>Community readiness</b> , including balanced information available to communities, community leadership and lasting community benefits.	Actively support local communities during a period of change and uncertainty and optimise community benefits.
B	<b>Transport</b> network improvements, especially key road and rail freight network upgrades and investment.	Invest in strategic road and rail upgrades
C	<b>Housing</b> development, including an increase in permanent housing, diversity and enabling infrastructure.	Increase the diversity and availability of housing and other accommodation in key areas near major projects.
D	<b>Labour force</b> attraction and retention, including training programs and labour for settlement services.	Attract, retain and train labour with skills relevant to existing strengths, opportunities in energy and mining, and supporting settlement services.
E	<b>Local government</b> resources, capacity to plan for impacts, and financial sustainability.	Adequately resource local government to facilitate major projects concurrent to existing responsibilities.
F	<b>Agricultural</b> sector support and ongoing productivity alongside proposed project construction and operation.	Ensure local agricultural impacts are understood, avoided and mitigated.
G	<b>Capturing economic benefits</b> for region (business attraction, diversification, circular economy, power security).	Capitalise on economic opportunities for the region presented by the upcoming period of major investment in energy and mining.
H	<b>Managing competition for resources</b> , including water, quarry materials and telecommunications.	Actively manage competition for resources and infrastructure that are critical to both existing activities and major projects.

Source: Urban Enterprise.

### 8.3. Actions

Table 21 shows recommended actions to achieve each objective.

The actions are designed to identify the next steps that would best assist local governments and communities in the Study Area to mitigate the impacts of proposed projects and to benefit from the opportunities for current and future generations. In developing actions, focus has been placed on establishing foundations which help to ready Councils and communities for a relatively long period of change and opportunity.

Implementation of the recommended actions will be subject to the availability of funding, especially from State and Federal governments, and partnerships and contributions from various agencies, proponents and institutions. Given local government constraints, regional co-ordination and state government leadership will be critical to supporting, funding and implementing this Strategy.

It is noted that a several projects and investigations are already underway across the region in response to the issues identified in this report, including projects led by State government and agencies, Wimmera Mallee Development and others. The actions identified in this report aim to establish an overarching framework within which to continue to deliver existing projects, reinforce the need for projects already underway, and identify other supporting actions.

**Table 21. Action Plan**

ID	Action	Priority	Responsibility
	<b>General</b>		
	Study Councils acknowledge and endorse the objectives of the Strategy and commit to partner with all levels of government on implementation. (See Note 1)	High	Study Councils
<b>A</b>	<b>Supporting Local Communities</b>		
1	Funded roles (such as the Resources Victoria NW Communications expert) and funded community education training programs are needed to raise awareness.	High	DEECA and VicGrid
2	Preparation of place-based communications and explanatory materials for a community audience regarding the context for why major projects are being situated in the north-west region.	High	DEECA and VicGrid
3	Fund a publicly available map and dashboard showing projects, commitments, project status and a centralised portal for government, proponents and community to link and alert public engagement activities in each Critical Minerals Priority Development Zone and REZ area similar to Engage Vic.	High	State government to fund an independent body
4	Fund the delivery of Leadership Training in the region to ensure there is the ability for active and informed community participation in the land use transition.	Medium	VicGrid
5	Establish an annual Resource Ready event co-funded by State government and proponents to bring together government, proponents, business and community members to share research, experiences and opportunities.	Low	Independent body
6	Formalise and standardise community benefit schemes across the transmission, energy and mining project types in the study area to avoid duplication for community, maximise benefit and legacy for the hosting region and reduce administration overheads.	High	DEECA and VicGrid with proponent, community and local government assistance
7	Encourage any overarching benefits schemes to prioritise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consolidation of benefit scheme processes, structure and implementation across the region;</li> <li>Establishment of an overarching body that manages and administers the community benefit fund in collaboration with and/or on behalf of the proponents consistent with existing strategic regional and local readiness priorities with strong Local Government representation.</li> <li>Pooling community benefits contributions towards larger capital works projects, including co contributing schemes to enable Councils to access a proportion of the benefit fund for projects planned or underway.</li> </ul>	High	Independent body
<b>B</b>	<b>Strategic Road and Rail Upgrades</b>		
1	Prioritise and implement a Northwest Rail Freight Plan to enable more agriculture, energy generation & transmission infrastructure, and mining product to be transported by rail.	High	DTP and Local Government

ID	Action	Priority	Responsibility
2	Building on assessments undertaken for individual energy and mining project approvals processes, drawing on local government intelligence and having regard to agricultural needs, identify key strategic roads affected by transport demands to enable prioritisation.	High	DTP, DEECA, VicGrid and Local Government
3	Identify key intermodal support, port intake and export capacity, and railway line capital works.	Medium	DTP and Local Government (RCV, RFA and MAV)
<b>C</b>	<b>Housing and Accommodation</b>		
1	Prioritise and implement a regional Worker Housing Plan which brings together existing housing studies from the Study Area to identify key locations and forms of housing across the region to service the expected construction periods. The plan should also identify opportunities for legacy in housing in response to the need for a more diverse and age-appropriate housing mix.	High	DTP, DEECA, DJSIR, Vicgrid and Local Government
2	Plan and prioritise worker accommodation modular work camps that transition to housing estates post construction.	High	DTP, DEECA, DJSIR Vicgrid, Proponents and Local Government
3	Co-ordinate and resource a regular housing development forum for the region to bring together developers, major project proponents and government representatives to identify priority issues in delivering housing in the region.	Medium	State Government, DTP, DEECA, RDV, VicGrid, Proponents and Local Government
4	Identify and have State government fund and prioritise key strategic planning work and enabling infrastructure required by Councils to facilitate major project accommodation requirements.	Medium	DTP with Local Government support
5	Identify towns and growth fronts for potential housing that are constrained by enabling infrastructure issues and advocate for dedicated funding to unlock housing potential, especially in areas proximate to projects.	Medium	DTP, RDV with Local Government support
6	Recognise the Northwest Study area as a region of major growth with incoming industry in State planning policy.	Medium	State Government, DTP with Local Government support
<b>D</b>	<b>Labour Force Development and Settlement Services</b>		
1	Prioritise vocational training opportunities in the region in occupations and skills required to support energy and mining projects by underwriting courses, regardless of student numbers.	High	DJSIR and Proponents with Training Organisations
2	Encourage partnerships between major project proponents and education providers to create a direct training and employment pathway for critical skills.	Medium	Proponents with Training Organisations
3	Prioritise and subsidise Apprenticeships and Traineeships in north-west Victoria in priority sectors supporting existing and emerging needs, including manufacturing, mining, energy, construction and care for small and medium enterprises to grow the local supply chain.	High	DJSIR, Federal Government, Proponents with Training Organisations
4	Investigate opportunities for targeted skilled migration to address labour needs including liveability and settlement services.	Medium	DJSIR, Federal Government, DEWR and Department of Home Affairs (Immigration), Proponents, Local Government
5	Investigate innovative ways to deliver vocational training to increase the volume of participants including mapping of existing skills to new skills and retraining.	Medium	DJSIR
6	Work closely with schools and Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) to demonstrate the demand for vocation training in the Resource Region through funded programs.	Medium	DET with LLENs and Proponents
7	Fund Federation and SuniTAFE to ensure their subject matter is fit for industry needs, through consultation and contextualisation.	Medium	DJSIR and DEECA, VicGrid and Proponents
8	Provide funding to prepare a Childcare Labour Attraction Strategy for the region in partnership with Local Government and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) providers and other relevant co ordinating bodies, with the aim of addressing existing shortages and an ability to respond to future pressures and demand peaks.	Medium	State and Federal DET and Local Government agents
9	Identify and provide services for new migrants to the region to assist with attraction, retention and community cohesion, similar to the NSW Orana Welcome Program.	Medium	DJSIR and Proponents

ID	Action	Priority	Responsibility
10	At the Northwest regional level, investigate how to address the potential skills impact to Councils efficiently maintaining local roads during the peak demand for civil workers and road crews with multiple projects.	Medium	Department of Government Services (LGV) and Local Government
<b>E</b>	<b>Local Government Resources</b>		
1	Establish a dedicated funding and technical resource stream, with a panel of independent providers, including shared labour resources across the Councils, to support in assessing major project applications concurrent to business-as-usual operations and responsibilities.	High	DEECA and VicGrid
2	Develop a suite of standardised and templated documents setting out and explaining the types of information required by Councils from proponents and State government agencies to adequately, efficiently and accurately assess proposals and referrals for comment at each stage of proponent project development.	Medium	DEECA and VicGrid
3	Advocate for State Government leadership, with well supported Local government representative bodies, to communicate with local communities regarding the role of local governments relevant to major projects and how they can participate in key decision and approvals processes.	Medium	DEECA and VicGrid
4	Provide dedicated funding for Local Governments to employ FTE commensurate to the requirements imposed by the land use change occurring.	High	DEECA and VicGrid
<b>F</b>	<b>Agricultural Impacts</b>		
1	Prepare an agricultural impact assessment of mining and renewable energy projects bespoke to north-west Victoria, taking into account the advantages and specialisations of the region and the potential for any cumulative impacts of major projects.	High	DEECA incorporating Agriculture Victoria, Resources Victoria and VicGrid
2	Identify key skills and occupations that most directly overlap between agriculture, mining and construction of energy projects and prepare a targeted strategy to increase the local supply of this labour.	High	DJSIR
3	Prioritise and implement the Critical Minerals Roadmap Land Use Co-existence Policy, ensuring the agricultural value and opportunities of the area are protected.	Medium	DEECA
<b>G</b>	<b>Economic Opportunities</b>		
1	Embed economic development objectives for the energy and mining sector in relevant statutory approvals to facilitate businesses growth and development which capitalises on local opportunities, or enter voluntary codes of commitment to demonstrate place based, fit for purpose responses.	High	DEECA and DJSIR
2	Establish a database of businesses providing goods and services relevant to the transmission, energy and mining supply chains as identified in this report and establish a grants program to enable businesses to access funding to expand or invest to participate in major projects or related downstream activities.	Medium	DJSIR with Proponents
3	Contribute to, prioritise and implement work undertaken at the State government level regarding opportunities for mineral sands value-adding in the north-west region.	Medium	DEECA and DJSIR
4	Prepare information, training and support services to enable existing businesses in the region to participate in the supply chain of major projects.	High	DEECA, DJSIR and Local Government with Proponents
<b>H</b>	<b>Competition for Resources</b>		
1	Advocate for investment in telecommunications infrastructure to withstand surges in demand expected during construction phases of major projects.	Medium	DJSIR and Proponents
2	Liaise with relevant government agencies to ensure continued availability of water to agricultural and recreation users within the Northwest concurrent to supply being made available for major project requirements.	High	DEECA
3	Liaise with gypsum and quarry operators and owners in the region and Resources Victoria to identify issues and opportunities regarding the ability to increase supply in response to increased demand.	High	DEECA

ID	Action	Priority	Responsibility
4	Prepare an energy security plan for towns and businesses in the study area that currently experience supply issues, including consideration of opportunities presented by the construction of new transmission infrastructure and renewable energy generation in the area.	Medium	DEECA
5	Identify and prioritise investments needed to stabilise and increase energy security and fund a business case and construction projects which prioritise outcomes in the host region.	Medium	Independent Body
6	Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the Emergency Service settings required during the construction and operation of energy and mining projects to ensure community safety levels remain or increase.	Medium	DEECA, VicGrid and proponents

Source: Urban Enterprise with input from project partners.

Note 1: The endorsement of this Strategy by Councils does not mean that any Council supports any transmission, renewable energy or mining proposal in the region.

## Appendices

## Appendix A: Renewables Audit

For this project, information about operational and proposed renewable energy projects across the study area was collected, summarised and mapped.

### Audit Methodology

The audit was compiled based on the following method:

- Desktop research was conducted to form an initial audit of all operational and proposed renewable energy projects within the study area. The Victorian Department of Transport and Planning’s Summary of Renewable Energy Projects online portal was used as the foundation for this initial audit along with independent research. Desktop information was gathered from a combination of proponent websites, project information fact sheets, State Government resources and Council websites. Desktop research occurred during the period February to June 2025.
- In May 2025, Urban Enterprise facilitated nine workshops, one with each of the Councils which comprise the study area. Before and during the workshops, a preliminary map and list was provided to attendees which illustrated the location, status and details of all projects captured in the initial audit. Councils were invited to review and comment on the initial audit and identify any changes required based on their current information.
- In April and May 2025, consultation also occurred with other stakeholders, including several renewable energy project proponents. Information provided by stakeholders was used to verify (and update) the audit information.
- All project data was then compiled to form the final version of the Renewable Energy Projects Map and audit tables.
- The Project Map places each project based on the GIS co-ordinates of the project within the State Government Summary of Renewable Energy Projects dataset, or modified to reflect information provided by stakeholders.

The status categories of renewable energy projects are described in Table 22.

**Table 22. Renewable Energy Project Status Definitions**

Project Status	Definition
Operational	The project is already in operation at the time of the audit and is generating energy.
Under Construction	The project has begun construction but is not yet operational.
Approved (Not operational)	A planning permit application for a project has been approved but construction has not yet commenced.
Planning Permit Application Under Consideration	A planning permit application for a given project has been submitted to the Department of Transport and Planning for consideration but not yet approved.
Referred Under Environmental Effects Act	The project has been referred to the Minister for Planning for a decision on whether an EES is required or is currently the subject of an EES process.
Scoping Phase	The project is not yet captured on any State government register (i.e. not yet the subject of a planning permit application or EES process), but is advertised by proponents or known to local or state government as a well-defined proposal currently under investigation, feasibility studies, etc.

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2025. Note: Status categories are derived from State Government status labels. Definitions are based on Urban Enterprise’s interpretations of State Government status labels and independent research.

### Detailed Projects Table and Notes

Itemised projects are shown in Table 23. The following notes relate to the table:

- Project codes are used to identify projects on the Renewable Energy Projects Map shown in the body of the Strategy.
- Capacity in MW for each project is largely obtained through desktop research from information available in the public realm. The expected capacity for some projects was provided by proponents.
- For any projects with a stated capacity range, the midpoint of the range is shown.
- For solar/battery and wind/battery projects, the capacity (MW) for the solar or wind component of the project is recorded in the rows where solar or wind appears first (i.e. solar/battery shows the solar capacity).
- If the capacity of a battery component of a project is published in terms of MW, then this figure is shown. If capacity is published in MWh and there is no further information available regarding the hourly storage capacity, then it is assumed the system is a two-hour BESS and MW capacity is derived accordingly.

**Table 23. Renewable Energy Projects Audit**

ID	Project Name	Proponent	Location	LGA	Energy Type	Capacity (MW)	Status
S1	Stawell Solar Farm	ACEnergy/Sungrow Power Australia	Stawell	Northern Grampians	Solar	5	Operational
S2	Ledcourt Solar Farm	Greentech/Sungrow Power Australia	Ledcourt, 20km north-west of Stawell	Northern Grampians	Solar	5	Operational
S3	Scato Plus Compost Heliostatic Solar Plant	Raygen	Newbridge	Loddon	Solar	0.5	Operational
S4	Cohuna Solar Farm	Potentia Energy	8km south of Cohuna	Gannawarra	Solar	34.2	Operational
S5	Gannawarra Solar Farm	Edify Energy & Gentari	Wandella, 10km west of Kerang	Gannawarra	Solar/Battery	55	Operational
S6	Swan Hill Solar Farm	Australian Solar Group	3.5km west of Swan Hill	Swan Hill	Solar	19	Operational
S7	Bannerton Solar Farm	Foresight Solar Fund Ltd	Bannerton, south of Robinvale	Swan Hill	Solar	110	Operational
S8	Robinvale Solar Farm	Suntech Power Development Australia	Robinvale	Swan Hill	Solar	9.47	Operational
S9	Charlton Solar Farm	Tetris Energy	Charlton	Buloke	Solar	4.95	Approved (Not operational)
S10	Prairie Solar Farm	Pacific Blue	Near Mitiamo	Loddon	Solar	240	Approved (Not operational)
S11	Derby Solar Project Pty Ltd	ACEnergy/Sungrow Power Australia	Derby, between Bendigo and Bridgewater on Loddon	Loddon	Solar	95	Approved (Not operational)
S12	Campbells Forest Solar Farm	South Energy	Campbells Forest	Loddon	Solar	200	Approved (Not operational)
S13	Tragowel Solar Farm	Clean Energy Solar (Tragowel Pty Ltd)	Tragowel	Gannawarra	Solar	430	Approved (Not operational)
S14	Macorna Solar Farm	KIG Energy	Macorna	Gannawarra	Solar	100	Approved (Not operational)
S15	Kerang Solar & BESS Hybrid	ACE Power	Immediately south of Kerang	Gannawarra	Solar/Battery	161	Approved (Not operational)
S16	Kerang Solar & BESS Hybrid 2nd Site	ACE Power	Immediately south of Kerang, opposite sides of BSR Kerang Solar Plant	Gannawarra	Solar		Approved (Not operational)
S17	Kerang Solar Plant	British Solar Renewables (BSR)	Kerang	Gannawarra	Solar/Battery	36	Approved (Not operational)
S18	Acciona Kerang Solar Farm	Acciona	Kerang	Gannawarra	Solar	40	Approved (Not operational)
S19	Gannawarra Stage 2 Solar Farm	Wirsol & Edify Energy		Gannawarra	Solar	240	Approved (Not operational)
S20	Charam Solar Farm	Green Gold Energy Pty Ltd	Charam	West Wimmera	Solar	6.68	Approved (Not operational)
S21	Natimuk Solar Farm	Natimuk Community Energy Inc.	Natimuk	Horsham	Solar	1.2	Approved (Not operational)

ID	Project Name	Proponent	Location	LGA	Energy Type	Capacity (MW)	Status
S22	SEC Renewable Energy Park - Horsham	State Electricity Commission (SEC)	Immediately east of Horsham	Horsham	Solar/Battery	119	Approved (Not operational)
S23	Jung Solar Farm	BayWa r.e.		Horsham	Solar	13	Approved (Not operational)
S24	Murra Warra Solar and Storage Project	RES Australia	Co-located with the Murra Warra Wind Farm, approx. 25 km north of Horsham.	Horsham	Solar/Battery	235	Approved (Not operational)
S25	RES Solar	RES Australia	Between Quambatook and Pine View, just south of Cannie Wind Farm	Gannawarra	Solar	330	Scoping Phase
S26	Nhill Solar Farm	Vibe Energy	Nhill	Hindmarsh	Solar/Battery	6.5	Operational
S27	Newsky Solar & Battery	Unknown	South of Kerang	Gannawarra	Solar/Battery	500	Unknown
W1	Murra Warra Wind Farm	RES Australia (Squadron Energy)	25km north of Horsham	Horsham/Yarriambiack	Wind	435	Operational
W2	Yawong Wind Farm	Epic Energy	Yawong Hills, 17km northeast of St Arnaud	Buloke/Loddon	Wind	7.2	Operational
W3	Coonoer Bridge Wind Farm	Windlab, Owned by Atmos Renewables	Approx. 90km north-west of Bendigo.	Buloke	Wind	20	Operational
W4	Kiata Wind Farm	Atmos Renewables	Kiata, 50km north-west of Horsham	Hindmarsh	Wind	31	Operational
W5	Diapur Wind Farm	BayWa r.e.	Nhill, 20km west of town centre	Hindmarsh	Wind	7.4	Operational
W6	Bulgana Green Power Hub	Neoen	Joel South, 11km east of Stawell	Northern Grampians	Wind/Battery	194	Operational
W7	Ararat Wind Farm	RES Australia	9km - 17km north-west of Ararat	Ararat/Northern Grampians	Wind	240	Operational
W8	Crowlands Wind Farm	Pacific Blue	25km north-east of Ararat	Pyrenees	Wind	80	Operational
W9	Wimmera Plains Wind Farm	BayWa r.e.	10km north-east of Horsham	Horsham	Wind	353.5	Approved (Not Operational)
W10	Jung Wind Farm	BayWa r.e.		Horsham	Wind	8	Approved (Not Operational)
W11	Rifle Butts Wind Farm	NewEn	4km west of Wonwondah North, 20km south-west of Horsham	Horsham	Wind	40	Approved (Not Operational)
W12	Wombelano Wind Farm	Wind Projects Australia	Between Charam and Wombelano	West Wimmera	Wind	35	Approved (Not Operational)
W13	Normanville Energy Park	WestWind Energy	Near Normanville, west of Kerang	Gannawarra	Wind	122	Planning Permit Applications Under Consideration
W14	Curyo Wind Farm and Battery Project	Cubico Sustainable Investments	Between Curyo and Woomelang.	Buloke/Yarriambiack	Wind/Battery	1000	Referred under Environment Effects Act
W15	Cannie Wind Farm	RES Australia	Approx. 25km west of Kerang.	Gannawarra	Wind	1300	Referred under Environment Effects Act

ID	Project Name	Proponent	Location	LGA	Energy Type	Capacity (MW)	Status
W16	Navarre Green Power Hub	Neoen	Navarre	Northern Grampians	Wind/Battery	600	Referred under Environment Effects Act
W17	Warracknabeal Energy Park	WestWind Energy	South-west and north-west of Warracknabeal	Yarriambiack	Wind	1,575	Referred under Environment Effects Act
W18	Campbell's Bridge Wind Farm	RWE Renewables Australia	15km north of Stawell	Northern Grampians/ Yarriambiack	Wind	1000	Scoping Phase
W19	Watta Wella Renewable Energy Project	RES Australia	16km north of Stawell, adjacent to Bulgana Substation	Northern Grampians	Wind/Battery	360	Scoping Phase
W20	Meering West Wind Farm	Virya Energy	Meering West, 25km south of Kerang	Gannawarra/Loddon	Wind/Battery	1500	Scoping Phase
W21	Wilkur Energy Park	WestWind Energy	11km southwest of Birchip	Buloke/ Yarriambiack	Wind	698	Scoping Phase
W22	Corack East Wind	ACEN Australia	Privately owned land between Donald, Birchip and Wycheproof.	Buloke	Wind	Unknown	Scoping Phase
W23	Macorna Wind Farm	Atmos Renewables	Macorna	Gannawarra/ Loddon	Wind	1000	Scoping Phase
B1	Gannawarra BESS	Energy Australia/Edify Energy/Gentari	Wandella, 10km west of Kerang	Gannawarra	Battery	25	Operational
B2	Joel Joel BESS	ACEnergy	Joel Joel, 23km east of Stawell	Northern Grampians	Battery	350	Approved (Not operational)
B3	Koorangie Energy Storage System (KESS)	Edify Energy	Sandhill Lake, 15km directly east of Kerang	Gannawarra	Battery	185	Under Construction
B4	Tragowel BESS	Green Switch	Tragowel	Gannawarra	Battery	250	Scoping Phase
S15/B	Kerang Solar & BESS Hybrid	ACE Power	Immediately south of Kerang	Gannawarra	Battery/Solar	15	Approved (Not operational)
S17/B	Kerang Solar Plant	British Solar Renewables (BSR)	Kerang	Gannawarra	Battery/Solar	100	Approved (Not operational)
S22/B	SEC Renewable Energy Park - Horsham	State Electricity Commission (SEC)	Immediately east of Horsham	Horsham	Battery/Solar	100	Approved (Not operational)
S24/B	Murra Warra Solar and Storage Project	RES Australia	Co-located with the Murra Warra Wind Farm, approx. 25 km north of Horsham.	Horsham	Battery/Solar	235	Approved (Not operational)
S26/B	Nhill Solar Farm	Vibe Energy	Nhill	Hindmarsh	Battery/Solar	2.75	Operational
S27/B	Newsky Solar & Battery	Unknown	South of Kerang	Gannawarra	Battery/Solar	Unknown	Unknown
W6/B	Bulgana Green Power Hub	Neoen	Joel South, 11km east of Stawell	Northern Grampians	Battery/Wind	20	Operational
W14/B	Curyo Wind Farm and Battery Project	Cubico Sustainable Investments	Between Curyo and Woomelang.	Buloke/ Yarriambiack	Battery/Wind	Unknown	Referred under Environment Effects Act
W16/B	Navarre Green Power Hub	Neoen	Navarre	Northern Grampians	Battery/Wind	Unknown	Referred under Environment Effects Act

ID	Project Name	Proponent	Location	LGA	Energy Type	Capacity (MW)	Status
W19/B	Watta Wella Battery Energy Storage Facility (part of W19)	RES Australia	16km north of Stawell, adjacent to Bulgana Substation.	Northern Grampians	Battery/Wind	400	Scoping Phase
W20/B	Meering West Wind Farm	Virya Energy	Meering West, 25km south of Kerang	Gannawarra/Loddon	Battery/Wind	500	Scoping Phase
M1	WiRES Transmission Project	Virya Energy	Warracknabeal to Bulgana	Gannawarra/Loddon	Transmission	1500	Scoping Phase
M2	Horsham Energy Hub	Energy Transition Solutions	7km south-east of Horsham along the Western Highway	Horsham	Firming Station	80	Scoping Phase

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2025. Compiled from various State Government and proponent website sources, and discussions with proponents and Councils.

## Appendix B: Mining Audit

Information about operational and proposed projects across the study area was collected by Urban Enterprise.

The Mining Projects Map shown in the body of the Strategy shows the location of mineral sands, Rare Earth Elements (REE) and gold mining projects within the study area along with their status as of June 2025. Mining licences and retention licences have been included on the map where relevant. The Mining Projects Map allows for spatial visualisation of the pipeline of current and potential mining projects across the region.

### Audit Methodology

The audit of mining projects in the Study Area was compiled based on the following method:

- Desktop research was conducted to form an initial audit of all operational and proposed mining projects within the study area. The foundational source used for the initial audit was Resources Victoria’s map of current mineral projects and selected occurrences in Victoria, which was supplemented by independent research. Information was gathered from a combination of proponent websites, project information fact sheets, State Government resources and Council websites. Desktop research occurred over the period February to June 2025.
- In May 2025, Urban Enterprise facilitated nine workshops, one with each of the Councils which comprise the study area. Before and during the workshops, a preliminary map and list was provided to attendees which illustrated the location, status and details of all projects captured in the initial audit. Councils were invited to review and comment on the initial audit and identify any changes required based on their current information
- In April and May 2025, consultation also occurred with other stakeholders, including several mining project proponents. Information provided by stakeholders was used to verify (and update) the audit information.
- The audit tables and Mining Projects Map was updated to show all available information. The placement of each project was verified against Resources Victoria’s map of current mineral projects as well as GIS data locations of mining licences and retention licences.

Mining projects are classed into one of four categories which are defined in Table 24.

**Table 24. Mining Project Status Definitions**

Project Status	Definition
Operational	Mining activity can occur at the time of the audit.
Approved OR EES Received Acceptable Minister’s Assessment (Not operational)	Approvals are in place or an EES has received acceptable Minister’s assessment. The project is not yet operational.
Referred Under Environment Effects Act	The project has been referred to the Minister for Planning for a decision on whether an EES is required. This status also captures projects which are currently within an EES process.
Exploration Phase	A project is in any preliminary stage of development such that it has not yet been referred for an EES or made a planning permit application. This includes projects which may be engaging in scoping activities, preliminary drilling and/or planning and feasibility study stages, among other activities.

Source: Urban Enterprise 2025. Note: Status categories are derived from State Government status labels. Definitions are based on Urban Enterprise’s interpretations of State Government status labels and independent research.

### Detailed Projects Table and Notes

Table 25 contains the overall audit of mining projects. Project codes are used to identify projects on the Mining Projects Map.

**Table 25. Mining Projects Audit**

ID	Project	Proponent	Location	LGA	Mineral Target	Status
M1	Stawell Gold Mine	Arete Capital Partners	Stawell	Northern Grampians	Gold	Operational
M2	Koppamurra Project	Australian Rare Earths Ltd	Across SA/VIC border near Koppamurra	West Wimmera	Rare Earth Elements	Exploration Phase
M3	Mitre Hill REE Project	Resource Base Ltd	Across SA/VIC border near Koppamurra Project	West Wimmera	Rare Earth Elements	Exploration Phase
M4	Wimmera Project (WIM100 & WIM 50)	Iluka Resources	Jallumba, 40km southwest of Horsham and 35km north-east of Balmoral. Southern Wimmera region.	Horsham	Mineral Sands	Referred Under Environmental Effects Act
M5	Bungalally Project	WIM Resource	Bungalally, 10km south of Horsham	Horsham	Mineral Sands	Exploration Phase
M6	Avonbank Project	WIM Resource	15km north of Horsham, 5km northeast of Dooen.	Horsham	Mineral Sands	EES Received Acceptable Minister's Assessment (Not operational)
M7	WIM 150 Project	Orient Zirconic Resources/Erinbar Ltd.	18km south-east of Horsham	Horsham	Mineral Sands	Referred Under Environmental Effects Act
M8	Donald Mineral Sands Project	Astron	15km east of Minyip	Northern Grampians/ Yarriambiack	Mineral Sands	Approved (Not operational)
M9	Wildwood	North Stawell Minerals	Wildwood	Northern Grampians	Gold	Exploration Phase
M10	Irvine Gold Project	Aureka	16km south of Stawell Gold Mine	Northern Grampians	Gold	Exploration Phase
M11	Goschen Central Project	ACDC Metals	50km south-west of Swan Hill	Buloke/Gannawarra	Mineral Sands	Exploration Phase
M12	Goschen Project	VHM Ltd	Bennett Rd, Lalbert	Gannawarra/ Swan Hill	Mineral Sands	EES Received Acceptable Minister's Assessment (Not operational)
M13	Cannie Project	VHM Ltd	Cannie, 13.5km south of VHM Goschen	Gannawarra	Mineral Sands	Exploration Phase
M14	Four Eagles Gold Project	Catalyst Metals	North of Bendigo	Loddon	Gold	Exploration Phase
M15	Darlington	North Stawell Minerals	Darlington	Northern Grampians	Gold	Exploration Phase
M16	Kingston Gold Project	AIS Resources	35km north-west of Stawell	Northern Grampians	Gold	Exploration Phase
M17	Quambatook Project	WIM Resource	Quambatook, north-west of Boort	Gannawarra	Mineral Sands	Exploration Phase
M18	Wedderburn Project	WIM Resource	Wychitella North, 25km north-east of Charlton	Loddon	Mineral Sands	Exploration Phase
M19	St Arnaud Gold Project	Aureka	St Arnaud	Northern Grampians	Gold	Exploration Phase
M20	Aureka Tandarra Gold Project	Aureka/Catalyst Metals	Tandarra	Loddon	Gold	Exploration Phase
M21	Farrelly Mineral Sands Project	Falcon Metals	Near Boort	Loddon	Mineral Sands	Exploration Phase
M22	Pyramid Hill Gold Project	Falcon Metals	Near Pyramid Hill	Loddon	Gold	Exploration Phase

Source: Urban Enterprise 2025. Compiled from various State Government and proponent website sources and discussions with proponents and Councils.

## Appendix C: Impact Assessment Detail

### Approach

The following outlines the approach used to estimate economic impacts of planned projects across the Study Area.

1. **Project Identification:** The project audit describes key project details including type, scale, status, cost and timing of projects where available.
2. **Application of Economic Benchmarks:** Economic metrics were applied to each renewable energy project to estimate construction and operational impacts. These benchmarks, primarily based on MW capacity, include:
  - Capital expenditure per MW;
  - Construction employment (FTEs per MW);
  - Operational employment and expenditure per MW; and
  - Local economic capture rates.

Benchmarks were tailored by technology type (e.g. solar, wind) using data from sources including CSIRO, Clean Energy Council, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and industry case studies. Adopted local economic capture rates reflect likely regional benefits.
3. For **mining and transmission projects** planned for the region, publicly available information setting out investment value, timing and expected employment and other economic impacts have been adopted.
4. **Aggregation of Impacts:** Individual project impacts were aggregated to estimate the total regional economic contribution over time. This includes capital investment, construction employment, operational expenditure and employment. Results are summarised by project type, timing, and geography to inform broader analysis of regional economic opportunities and challenges. Impacts are phased depending on project status, with timeframes highly variable and subject to change. Employment impacts for renewable energy projects are limited to the upper bound of the overall generation requirements stated in the VTP.

### Key Definitions

The following definitions and descriptions apply to and explain key terms used in the impact assessment:

- **General**
  - **Local:** The host region of a project within an approximately 100km radius. When aggregated, the local metrics represent economic activity expected to occur within the Study Area. It should be noted that due to this definition, the local metrics may include a small proportion of economic activity that will occur outside the Study Area (e.g. if a project is located close to the border of the Study Area the 100km radius would extend beyond the Study Area).
- **Construction**
  - **Capital Expenditure:** This relates to the capital expenditure related to the supply of major equipment as well as site construction, installation and commissioning works.
  - **Employment:** Overall full-time equivalent (FTE) construction employment was estimated for each project. This was then divided by the assumed construction period, providing an estimate of the average number of workers required per project. This approach provides an estimate of the average number of FTE jobs on each project at any given time. When aggregated, the figures represent the average workforce required at any point.
  - **Local employment:** Jobs held by workers who live in the host region (i.e. within 100km of the project) and as such do not require housing.
  - **Imported employment;** Jobs held by workers residing outside the host region and likely to require housing/accommodation.
- **Operational**
  - **Operational Expenditure:** This relates to the fixed operating costs of the facility including plant, O&M staff, insurance, minor contract work, and miscellaneous fixed charges such as service contracts, overheads, and licences.
  - **Employment:** Operational employment was estimated by applying a jobs per MW benchmark to each project's capacity. This provides an estimate of the number of ongoing operational jobs required for each project. When aggregated, the figures represent the total number of workers required at any point during each phase.
  - **Local employment:** Jobs held by workers who live in the host region (within 100km of a project) not requiring housing.
  - **Imported employment;** Jobs held by workers who live outside the host region and as such will require housing/accommodation.



[www.urbanenterprise.com.au](http://www.urbanenterprise.com.au)

ver

## 2.3 Planning Application - 45 Butterworth Street Swan Hill - Subdivision of Land (6 Lots) and Removal of Easement in the Low Density Residential Zone

**Directorate:** Development and Planning  
**Author:** Department Support Officer  
**File Number:** **PLN2025070**  
**Purpose:** For Decision

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Application Number:</b>	PLN2025070
<b>Proposal:</b>	Subdivision of land into six (6) lots and removal of an easement within the Low Density Residential Zone
<b>Applicant's Name:</b>	Northern Land Solutions
<b>Address:</b>	45 Butterworth Street, Swan Hill (Lot 22 on plan of subdivision 144541) 47 Butterworth Street, Swan Hill (Lot 21 on plan of subdivision 144541)
<b>Land Size:</b>	16,000 sqm
<b>Site Features:</b>	Two (2) dwellings and two (2) outbuildings
<b>Zoning:</b>	Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ)
<b>Overlays:</b>	Specific Controls Overlay – Schedule 1
<b>Referral Authorities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower Murray Water (Section 55 - Determining)</li> <li>• Powercor (Section 55 - Determining)</li> <li>• SHRCC Engineering (Section 52)</li> <li>• SHRCC Environmental Health (Section 52)</li> </ul>
<b>Why is a Permit Required?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clause 32.03 -3 – to subdivide the land within LDRZ</li> <li>• Clause 52.02 – permit is required under Section 23 of the Subdivision Act 1988 to remove an easement.</li> </ul>
<b>Lodgement date:</b>	27/10/2025

### Declarations of Interest:

Council Officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

**Summary:**

The purpose of this report to seek a decision from Council on planning application of PLN2025070 for the subdivision of the land into six (6) lots and the removal of an easement at 45 and 47 Butterworth Street, Swan Hill. The subject site is irregular in shape and is made up of two properties (47 Butterworth Street and 45 Butterworth Street) with a combined area of 16,000 square metres. Currently both existing lots contain a single dwelling which will be retained.

The site is located on the corner of Butterworth Street and Derham Drive, Swan Hill. The site is within the Low Density Residential Zone and is subject to Specific Controls Overlay.

The area of each of the proposed lots is as follows:

Lot 1: 3,489 square metres (contains existing dwelling).

Lot 2: 2,095 square metres.

Lot 3: 2,000 square metres.

Lot 4: 2,000 square metres.

Lot 5: 3665 square metres (contains existing dwelling)

Lot 6: 2751 square metres

The easement which is proposed to be removed from the plan of subdivision benefits Lower Murray Water and covers a decommissioned sewer pipe. Given the asset is decommissioned, the section of the easement proposed to be removed is no longer required.

Prior to lodging the planning application, the applicant had lodged stormwater management plans to Council's Engineering Department for pre-approval to ensure that Council could be satisfied that stormwater can be managed appropriately. Council's Engineering Department has provided conditional consent to the application.

The application was advertised and 2 objections were received.

The proposal has been referred to relevant external and internal referral authorities, who have provided conditions and do not object to the subdivision.

**Discussion:**

The subject site is located at 45 and 47 Butterworth Street, Swan Hill, formally known as Lot 22 and Lot 21 on Plan of Subdivision 144541 respectively. The site is zoned Low Density Residential Zone and occupies a total combined area of 16,000 square meters. The subject site is irregular in shape and is located at the corner of Butterworth Street and Derham Drive.

The surrounding area is an established residential neighborhood with lower-density development to the north, south and west within the LDRZ, and higher density development to the east within the General Residential Zone (GRZ). The property is located approximately 2km northwest of Swan Hill CBD.



Figure 1: Ariel view of subject site (Source: VicPlan)

The proposal has been assessed, and it is consistent with the purpose and decision guidelines of the Low Density Residential Zone and aligns with the relevant Planning Policy Provisions. Further to this the application demonstrates that the proposed subdivision will facilitate future appropriate residential development by making efficient use of existing infrastructure, including electricity, telecommunications and water services within an established residential area.

### Key Points / Issues:

The application proposes a six lots subdivision within the Low Density Residential Zone. The proposed lots meet the minimum lot size requirement of 2,000 square metres under the zone as the land has access to reticulated sewer.

Lots 1 and 4 will retain the existing driveway access from Butterworth Street. Lots 2, 3 and 6 will require new driveways to be constructed from Derham Drive, and Lot 5 will require a new driveway from Butterworth Street.

Objections were received regarding the location of the proposed vehicle crossover and driveway for Lot 6 raising concerns about the appropriateness of the proposed location and if this was the safest option.

In relation to the clear-view requirement, the Engineering Department has assessed the proposal and provided the conditions with no objection. The council's engineering department reviewed the objection and the concerns raised by the objectors and confirmed that the crossover and driveway location meet the required standards of the Infrastructure Design Manual.

The applicant has provided a response to the objection; however, the objection has not been withdrawn to date.

The information submitted with the application is considered satisfactory, meets the minimum subdivision size requirements, and demonstrates that the development will connect to existing infrastructure while reserving the character of the surrounding area.

The proposal is considered to be consistent with the relevant provisions of the Municipal Planning Strategy, the Planning Policy Framework and the purpose of the Low Density Residential Zone.

The subdivision will facilitate the creation of four additional lots, each capable of accommodating a dwelling as of right, thereby contributing to the supply of residential land within Swan Hill.

### **Policy Impacts:**

The relevant provisions of Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Planning Policy Framework (PPF) of the Swan Hill Planning Scheme are as follows:

#### Municipal Planning Strategy

- **Clause 02.03-1 – Settlement**

Clause 02.03-1 seeks to encourage appropriate residential growth within Swan Hill and the surrounding townships where services are already established and new growth can be supported.

- **Clause 02.03-8 – Infrastructure**

Clause 02.03.8 seeks to encourage new development in areas that are connected to reticulated services, ensure development is in accordance with the IDM and states that the management of stormwater is a key consideration for any new development. The applicant has also worked closely with Council's engineering team to ensure a suitable stormwater management solution can be implemented.

The proposal represents an orderly urban development within Swan Hill and will utilise existing reticulated infrastructure and services available in the township. Given this, the proposal is considered to be consistent with the relevant clauses of the MPS and PPF,

#### Planning Policy Framework:

- Clause 11.01-1S – Settlement
- Clause 11.01-1R – Settlement – Regional Victoria

- Clause 11.01-1R – Settlement – Loddon Mallee North
- Clause 15.01-3S – Subdivision design
- Clause 16.01-1S – Housing supply
- Clause 16.01-1L – Location of residential development
- Clause 19.02-6S – Open Space

The above clauses generally seek to ensure that new development is directed within existing regional service centres, including Swan Hill and are designed to encourage high liveability and amenity for residents. Any new development is strongly encouraged to be in areas where existing infrastructure and services can be utilised and encourages infill development within Swan Hill specifically.

The proposed subdivision is consistent with the above by facilitating residential growth within Swan Hill, identified as a regional service centre, and contributes to the provision of additional housing opportunities to meet future housing needs. The development represents orderly infill development within an established township area by utilising available development capacity within serviced urban land. The subdivision design also supports the objectives by creating additional residential lots within an established neighbourhood capable of accommodating future dwellings in a safe and functional urban environment.

#### Zones and overlays:

##### Low Density Residential Zone:

#### **Purpose:**

- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- To provide for low-density residential development on lots which, in the absence of reticulated sewerage, can treat and retain all wastewater.

Pursuant to Clause 32.03-3, a planning permit is required to subdivide land.

The purpose of the Low Density Residential Zone is as follows:

- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- To provide for low-density residential development on lots which, in the absence of reticulated sewerage, can treat and retain all wastewater.

The subdivision will provide an increase in appropriate available residential land which is connected to reticulated sewer.

#### Particular Provisions

## Clause 52.02 – Easements, restrictions and reserves

The purpose of Clause 52.02 is as follows:

- To enable the removal and variation of an easement or restrictions to enable a use or development that complies with the planning scheme after the interests of affected people are considered.

The applicant has also proposed to the removal of portion of Lower Murray Water Sewer Easement (E-1).

The applicant states that the easement relates to a former LMW sewer main that has been decommissioned and is no longer operational while the physical pipe remains.

The application was referred to LMW under Section 55 of the Planning and Environment Act, and conditional consent has been provided, which will be incorporated into the planning permit. Given the infrastructure is no longer required, the removal of the easement is considered appropriate.

### **Consultation:**

#### Advertising

The application was advertised pursuant to Section 52 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 by:

- Sending notices to the owners and occupiers of adjoining and surrounding land.
- Sign on site

The application was advertised for a longer period due to the Christmas break to ensure that nearby residents had adequate time to review the proposal and make submissions.

#### Submissions received:

Public notification of the application was given on 19 December 2025 and concluded on 27 January 2026 with two objections received.

The grounds of objections can be summarised as follows:

- Position of the proposed driveway for Lot 6.
- Position of the proposed driveway and crossover for Lot 6 of the proposed subdivision does not meet the requirements of Swan Hill Rural City Council planning regulations as it is less than 3 meters (clear view) from existing trees on the verge.

#### Applicant's Response

The applicant provided Council and objectors with the following response:

*Driveway Access to Derham Drive (Lot 6)*

*A Sight Distance Assessment has been prepared to evaluate the safety and suitability of the proposed access point. The assessment demonstrates compliance with the visibility provisions of AS/NZS 2890.1:2004 – Parking Facilities, Part 1: Off-street Car Parking (Section relating to sight distance at access driveways).*

*The Standard requires that access driveways be located such that adequate entering sight distance is available to drivers exiting the driveway, as well as visibility to pedestrians along the frontage. Required sight distances are determined by frontage road speed and must be free of visual obstructions.*

*For a frontage road operating at 50 km/h, the Standard identifies:*

- *A minimum stopping sight distance of approximately 40 m for domestic-type access; and*
- *Unobstructed visibility exceeding the minimum required distance of 40m is achieved in both directions;*
- *No permanent structures, vegetation, or street infrastructure intrude into the defined sight envelope; and*
- *The crossover can be designed in accordance with IDM SD260 with perpendicular alignment and localised kerbing to maintain safe vehicle entry and exit conditions.*

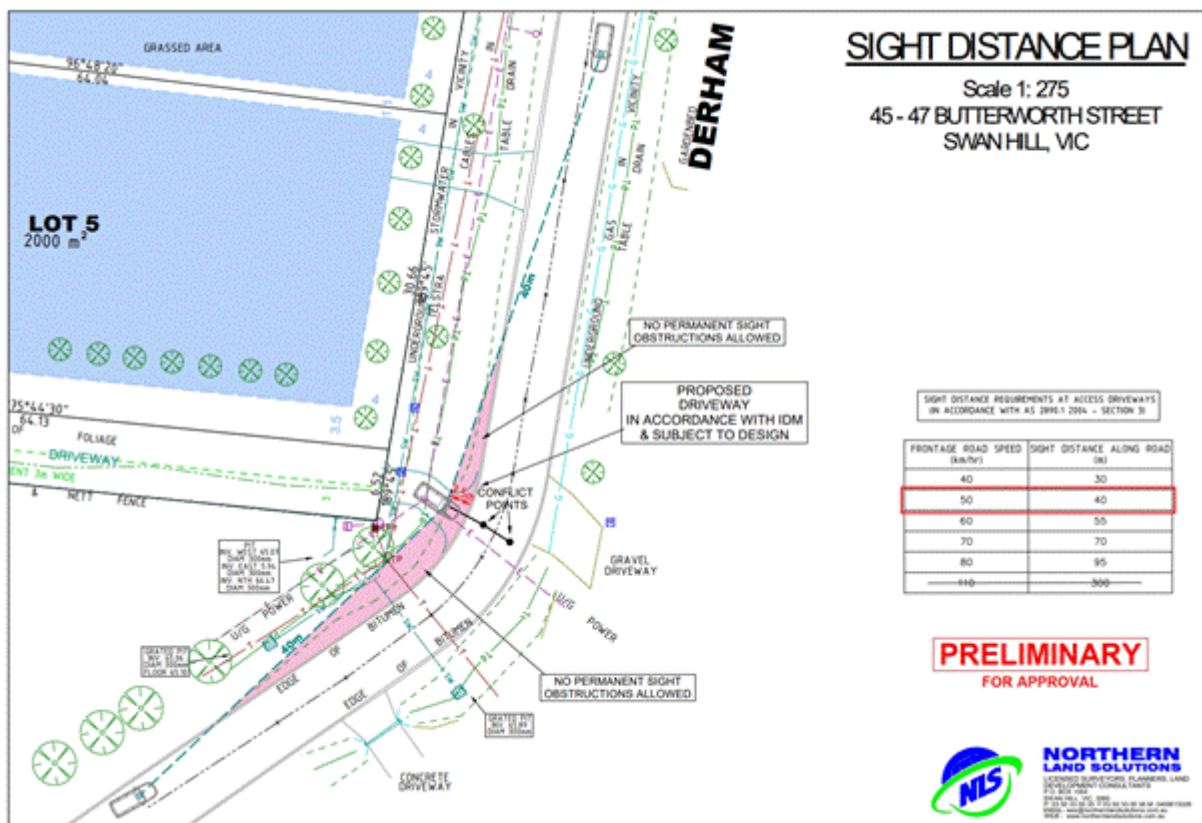


Figure 2: Sight distance plan

### Officer's Response to Objections:

The sight distance assessment confirms that for a frontage road with a 50 km/h speed limit, the required minimum stopping sight distance of approximately 40 metres can be achieved.

The submitted plan indicates that unobstructed visibility exceeding the required distance is available in both directions and that no permanent structures, vegetation, or street infrastructure intrude into the required sight envelope.

Advice from the engineering department concluded that the proposed access arrangement satisfies engineering guidelines and is considered to present no unreasonable traffic safety risk to road users on Derham Drive.

### **Financial Implications:**

N/A

### **Social Implications:**

The proposed subdivision has positive social implications by contributing to increased access to housing opportunities in Swan Hill by creating six new lots within proximity to the town centre.

### **Economic Implications:**

Council is aware that there is a limited supply of low density residential lots in Swan Hill as has been outlined in a recently adopted strategy looking at land supply for rural residential development.

### **Environmental Implications:**

There should be no significant environmental impacts as the land is serviced and already used and developed for rural residential purposes.

### **Risk Management Implications:**

The assessment against the planning scheme adequately covers risk management.

### **Conclusion:**

The proposal is considered appropriate within the Low Density Residential Zone. The subdivision facilitates residential development consistent with the intended purpose of the zone, which supports low-density housing outcomes with access to appropriate service connections and storm water infrastructure design.

The proposal will result in four additional residential lots capable of accommodating future dwellings that will be able to connect to existing infrastructure within the surrounding area. The proposal responds to the need for increased housing within Swan Hill, aligning with the objectives of the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), Planning Policy Framework (PPF). The subdivision represents an orderly infill development that makes efficient use of serviced residential land while maintaining appropriate access and amenity outcomes.

Given its compliance with relevant planning provisions and resulting in an overall increase in land available within the LDRZ, it is recommended that Council resolve to issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit.

- Attachments:**
1. Proposed Plan of Subdivision\_45 Butterworth [2.3.1 - 1 page]
  2. Written Submission\_45 Butterworth [2.3.2 - 25 pages]
  3. Stormwater Plan\_45 Butterworth [2.3.3 - 1 page]
  4. Combined Objections Redacted\_45 Butterworth [2.3.4 - 12 pages]
  5. Applicant Response to Objections\_45 Butterworth [2.3.5 - 3 pages]

### Options

1. That Council issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit for the subdivision of the land into six lots and the removal of an easement at 45 and 47 Butterworth Street Swan Hill subject to conditions.
2. That Council issue a Notice of Refusal to Grant a Planning Permit for the subdivision of the land into six lots and the removal of an easement within the Low Density Residential Zone at 45 and 47 Butterworth Street Swan Hill.

### Recommendation/s

That Council issues a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit PLN2025070 pursuant to Section 60(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 for the subdivision of land into six lots and the removal of an easement within the Low Density Residential Zone at 45 and 47 Butterworth Street SWAN HILL VIC 3585 subject to following conditions:

### No alterations:

1. The layout of the subdivision must not be altered from the layout on the approved and endorsed plans without the written consent of the Responsible Authority.
2. The removal of the easement as approved by this permit must not be altered from the layout on the approved and endorsed plans without the written consent of the Responsible Authority.

### Amenity

3. Any civil works associated with the subdivision must be managed so that the amenity of the area is not detrimentally affected, through the:
  - a. transport of materials, goods or commodities to or from the land
  - b. appearance of any building, works or materials

- c. emission of noise, artificial light, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, vapour, steam, soot, ash, dust, waste water, waste products, grit or oil
- d. presence of vermin

to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

### **Services**

4. The owner of the land must enter into agreements with the relevant authorities for the provision of water supply, drainage, sewerage facilities, electricity to each lot shown on the endorsed plan in accordance with the authority's requirements and relevant legislation at the time.

### **Easements**

5. All existing and proposed easements and sites for existing or required utility services and roads on the land must be set aside in the plan of subdivision submitted for certification in favour of the relevant authority for which the easement or site is to be created.

### **Certification of Plan**

6. The plan of subdivision submitted for Certification under the Subdivision Act 1988 must be referred to the relevant authority in accordance with Section 8 of that Act.

### **Telecommunications**

7. The owner of the land must enter into an agreement with:
  - a) a telecommunications network or service provider for the provision of telecommunication services to each lot shown on the endorsed plan in accordance with the provider's requirements and relevant legislation at the time; and
  - b) a suitably qualified person for the provision of fibre ready telecommunication facilities to each lot shown on the endorsed plan in accordance with any industry specifications or any standards set by the Australian Communications and Media Authority, unless the applicant can demonstrate that the land is in an area where the National Broadband Network will not be provided by optical fibre.

8. Before the issue of a Statement of Compliance for any stage of the subdivision under the Subdivision Act 1988, the owner of the land must provide written confirmation from:
- a) a telecommunications network or service provider that all lots are connected to or are ready for connection to telecommunications services in accordance with the provider's requirements and relevant legislation at the time; and
  - b) a suitably qualified person that fibre ready telecommunication facilities have been provided in accordance with any industry specifications or any standards set by the Australian Communications and Media Authority, unless the applicant can demonstrate that the land is in an area where the National Broadband Network will not be provided by optical fibre.

### **Public open space contribution**

9. Before the Statement of Compliance is issued under the Subdivision Act 1988, the applicant or owner must pay a monetary contribution for public open space of five (5) per cent in accordance with a decision of the Council made under Section 18 of the Subdivision Act 1988. Before the Statement of Compliance is issued under the Subdivision Act 1988 for each stage of the subdivision, the monetary contribution must be paid.

### **Residential Reticulated Gas Service Connection**

10. Any lot shown on the endorsed plan must not be connected to a reticulated gas service (within the meaning of clause 53.03 of the relevant planning scheme). This does not apply to:
- a lot that will not be used for, or include, a dwelling; or
  - a lot that contains an existing dwelling or apartment; or
  - a lot where a permit has been granted for a dwelling or apartment on the land in the lot.

This condition continues to have force and effect after a statement of compliance under the Subdivision Act 1988 has been issued and the subdivision authorised by this permit has been completed.

### **Section 173 Agreement**

11. Before the Statement of Compliance is issued under the Subdivision Act 1988, the owner must enter into an agreement with the Responsible Authority under

section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The agreement must provide for the following:

- a) Demolition of Outbuilding – Lot 2  
The Owner must ensure that the existing outbuilding on Lot 2 is demolished and removed from the land at the Owner's cost if a dwelling is not constructed and completed on Lot 2 to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority within two (2) years from the date of issue of the Statement of Compliance, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Responsible Authority.
- b) Use of Outbuilding – Lot 2  
The Owner must not use, or permit the use of, the outbuilding on Lot 2 for any purpose other than domestic storage and must not be used for human habitation or for any commercial, industrial or other non-domestic purpose.
- c) The obligations contained in (a) and (b) of this Agreement cease to apply upon the construction and completion of a dwelling on Lot 2, evidenced by the issue of an Occupancy Permit, within the two (2) year period specified in this Agreement.

The owner of the land must pay all of the Responsible Authority's reasonable legal costs and expenses of this agreement, including preparation, execution and registration on title.

## **Engineering Department conditions**

### Vehicle Crossing

12. Prior to statement of compliance being issued, new vehicle crossings to service the new lots must be constructed in accordance with the endorsed plan(s) in accordance with the Infrastructure Design Manual, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority, and must:
  - a. Be constructed at right angles to the road, and any redundant crossing shall be removed and area reinstated; and
  - b. Be setback a minimum of 2 metres from any side-entry pit, power or telecommunications pole, manhole cover or marker, or street tree.

### Construction of Internal Driveway

13. The driveways proposed for Lots 5 and 6 (battleaxe lots) are to be designed to a reasonably wider width, in compliance with AS/NZS 2890.1:2004 Parking Facilities – Part1: Off-street Car Parking, detailed in Section 3.

### Vehicle Maneuvering

14. All car parking spaces must be designed to allow all vehicles to enter and exit the land in a forward direction.

### Sediment Discharges

15. The applicant/owner must restrict sediment discharges from any construction sites within the property to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

### Drainage Plan

16. Before the plan of subdivision is certified under the Subdivision Act 1988, a Drainage Plan with computations prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced person, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority, must be submitted to and approved by the Responsible Authority. When approved, the plans will be endorsed and will then form part of the permit. The plans must be drawn to scale with dimensions. The plans must be in accordance with the Infrastructure Design Manual and include details on:

- a) How the land will be drained
- b) Underground pipe drains conveying stormwater to the legal point of discharge
- c) Measures to enhance stormwater discharge quality from the site and protect downstream waterways
- d) A maximum discharge rate from the site equivalent to predevelopment rate of discharge
- e) Documentation demonstrating approval from the relevant authority for the legal point of discharge
- f) Flow paths of a 1% AEP storm need to be determined and the development designed such that no private property is inundated by this storm.

17. Before the Statement of Compliance is issued under the Subdivision Act 1988, all drainage works required by the approved Drainage Plan must be completed to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

### Construction Management Plan

18. Before any site works for the subdivision start, a Construction Management Plan must be submitted to and approved by the Responsible Authority. When approved the Construction Management Plan will be endorsed and form part of the permit. The plan must show:

- a. Measures to control erosion and sediment and sediment laden water runoff including the design details of structures;
- b. Dust control;
- c. Where any construction wastes, equipment, machinery and/or earth is to be stored/stockpiled during construction;
- d. Movements and parking associated with construction vehicles and signs required;
- e. The location and details of a sign to be erected at the entrance(s) of the site advising contractors that they are entering a construction site with the relevant contact details of the site supervisor and emergency contact details;
- f. Locations of any Tree Protection Zones with appropriate fencing to protect the trees;
- g. The location of any temporary buildings or yards.

Development works on the land must be undertaken in accordance with the endorsed Construction Management Plan to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

### **Lower Murray Water Conditions**

19. Detailed plans showing proposed driveways must be provided to Lower Murray Water to determine if the driveway/s will be clear of existing service connections and/or to inform any requirements for the protection of its existing assets and services, prior to commencement of any excavations or works required for construction of the driveway/s. Any costs associated with alterations to existing service connections or to Lower Murray Water assets as a result of new driveway/s must be met by the developer.
20. The plan of subdivision submitted for certification under the Subdivision Act 1988 must be referred to Lower Murray Water pursuant to Section 8 of that Act.
21. The requirements of Lower Murray Water must be met, regarding the provision of water supply and sewage services to the land, including payment of all associated costs prior to the Corporation agreeing to the issue of a Statement of Compliance.
22. Developer to enter into a Developer Design & Construct Agreement with Lower Murray Water if augmentation of the existing Sewer main is required.

### **Section 173 agreement**

23. Prior to the issue of a Statement of Compliance the owner must enter into an Agreement with the Responsible Authority and Lower Murray Water made pursuant to Section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. As per

Section 174, the Agreement must be under seal and must bind the owner to the following covenant which also must be specified in the Agreement:

- a. recognition by the owner that the lot created, when connection to sewerage is required, will be subject to a modified or “non-conventional” sewerage system
- b. that such modified system will include an obligation on the land owner to install a pump mechanism within the relevant allotment
- c. a requirement to provide to Lower Murray Water, before any works relating to the sewerage connection occur, plans to the satisfaction of Lower Murray Water of the proposed pump station and all related assets and connections
- d. that the land owner will be responsible for the purchase, installation, ongoing maintenance and any replacement of the individual property pump stations and related infrastructure
- e. that the individual pump stations will be operated at the cost of the landowner, including all costs of electricity or any other maintenance or operational cost
- f. that normal wastewater tariffs will apply

The land owner must pay the costs of Lower Murray Water associated with the preparation, negotiation, execution and, if necessary, enforcement of such agreement.

The relevant agreement must be registered on the titles to the land including individual lots created.

24. The development must be serviced by an on-site sewage treatment system approved by Lower Murray Water which includes an on-site collection and pump unit. The landowner is responsible for the purchase, installation, ongoing maintenance and any replacement of the individual property pump station and related infrastructure.

### **Powercor Conditions**

25. The plan of subdivision submitted for certification under the Subdivision Act 1988 shall be referred to the Distributor in accordance with Section 8 of that Act.
26. The applicant shall provide an electricity supply to all lots in the subdivision in accordance with the Distributor’s requirements and standards.

27. The applicant shall ensure that existing and proposed buildings and electrical installations on the subject land are compliant with the Victorian Service and Installation Rules (VSIR).

## Expiry

28. This permit will expire if one of the following circumstances applies:

- a. The plan of subdivision, including the removal of the easement, has not been certified under the Subdivision Act 1988 within 2 years of the issued date of this permit.
- b. A statement of compliance is not issued within 5 years of the date of certification.

In accordance with Section 69 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, an application may be submitted to the Responsible Authority for an extension of the periods referred to in this condition.

## Permit Notes

### Responsible Authority

- a. A works within the road reserve permit will be required from the Responsible Authority prior to commencement of any works within the road reserve area.
- b. Prior to any excavation works the applicant and/or their contractors must undertake “Dial before you Dig” information for existing utility services locations. The phone number for this service is 1100.

### Powercor

- c. It is recommended that applications for electricity supply to each lot be submitted at the earliest opportunity so that the precise requirements of the Distributor can then be determined and accommodated. Applications for electricity supply shall be submitted via the Distributor’s web portal, “mySupply” which can be accessed via the following link: <https://customer.portal.powercor.com.au/mysupply/CIAWQuickCalculator>
- d. Extension, augmentation or rearrangement of the Distributor’s electrical assets may be required to make such supplies available, with the cost of such works generally borne by the applicant.

- e. Where electrical works are required to achieve VSIR compliance, a registered electrical contractor must be engaged to undertake such works.

Lower Murray Water

- d. **Urban Water Supply:** The Land is Located inside Lower Murray Water Urban Water District. New Customer Contributions for Water on additional lots applicable. A Water connection required for the additional lots.
- e. **Sewerage:** The Land is Located inside Lower Murray Water Urban Sewer District. New Customer Contributions for Sewer on additional lots applicable. A Sewer connection required for the additional lots.
- f. **General:** It is required that a payment (where applicable) of an investigation/processing fee prior to any further investigations, requirements or correspondence being entered into by the Corporation.

Please quote SN26/007935 when responding to any further enquiries regarding this Choose an item. Should you require additional information please contact Lower Murray Water's Growth and Development Department on (03) 5051 3400.



# PLANNING APPLICATION



**Proposed 6 Lot Subdivision  
& Part removal of Easement**

**45-47 Butterworth Street,  
Swan Hill VIC 3585**



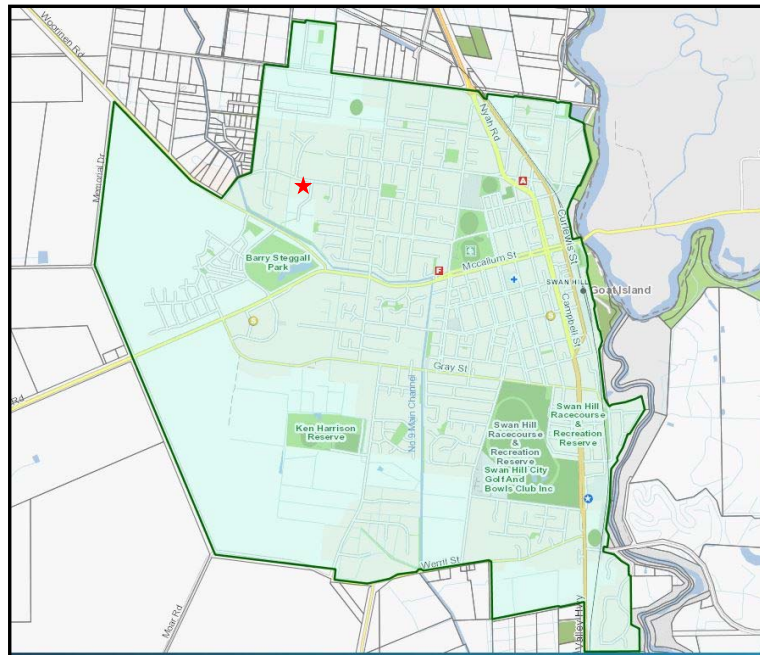
**SUBDIVISION REPORT – REF 182028**

**Proposed 6 Lot Subdivision & Part removal of Easement**  
**45-47 Butterworth Street, Swan Hill VIC 3585**  
**Lot 21 LP144541 (Vol. 9546 Fol. 335) &**  
**Lot 22 LP144541 (Vol. 9546 Fol. 336)**

**THE SITE**

The site comprises of lots 21 and 22 LP 144541 (45-47 Butterworth Street, Swan Hill). The site has a combined area of 16,000m<sup>2</sup> and is located at the corner of Butterworth Street and Derham Drive. Lot 22 is owned by Garry and Marilyn Johnstone, and lot 21 is owned by Alfredo and Rita Guizzo.

The land is zoned Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ) and is affected by the Specific Controls Overlay – Schedule 1 (SCO1).



**Figure 1 – Location of site Butterworth Street, Swan Hill**



Figure 2 – Lot 21 and 22 LP144541



Figure 3 – Aerial imagery of Lots 21 and 22

Lot 21 has an existing single storey brick dwelling located on the lot at a setback of approximately 45 metres from the Butterworth Street frontage, in line with neighbouring dwellings. The dwelling is accessed from a gravel driveway shaded with established native trees that lead to a rear shed and lawn (see Figures 3 & 4).



Figure 4 – Street-view of Lot 21 (47 Butterworth Street)

Lot 22 has an existing single storey brick dwelling located on the lot at a setback of approximately 32m from the Butterworth Street frontage. The dwelling is accessed from a gravel driveway lined with conifers leading to a side shed and rear lawn (see Figures 3 & 5). Lot 22 has a side boundary to Derham Drive. There is no additional access to the lot from Derham Drive.



Figure 5 – Street-view of Lot 22 (45 Butterworth Street)

Both dwellings are fully serviced by electricity, reticulated town water supply, reticulated sewerage, town stormwater network and telecommunications. A new gas main runs within the nature-strip of both Butterworth Street and Derham Drive (see Figure 6).



Figure 6 – Gas Main location in Butterworth and Derham Drive

The western area of Butterworth Street is an established area of low density residential lots typically developed with single storey brick dwellings on 2000m<sup>2</sup> to 4000m<sup>2</sup> lots. The eastern area of Butterworth Street is zoned General Residential Zone and is comprised predominantly of single storey brick dwellings on 600m<sup>2</sup> to 750m<sup>2</sup> lots. Several subdivisions have recently taken place to the north and south of Butterworth Street, particularly within the low-density area, creating opportunities for infill development in a well-served and accessible location.



Figure 7 – Site Analysis Plan



## THE PROPOSAL

This Planning Permit Application seeks approval for a six lot subdivision (see **Figure 8**).

The lots to be created have areas of between 2000m<sup>2</sup> and 3487m<sup>2</sup>:

- Lot 1 is to be 3489m<sup>2</sup> and encompasses the existing dwelling at 45 Butterworth Street and includes its front lawn and driveway.
- Lot 2 is to be 2095m<sup>2</sup> in size with a frontage of 31.42m onto Derham Drive and includes the existing shed of 45 Butterworth Street and part of the rear lawn.
- Lot 3 is to be a vacant lot of 2000m<sup>2</sup> in size with access also off Derham Drive and comprises of the rear lawn of 45 Butterworth Street.
- Lot 4 is to be a vacant lot of 2000m<sup>2</sup> in size and forms the front lawn of 47 Butterworth Street.
- Lot 5 is to be 3665m<sup>2</sup> in size and comprise the existing dwelling and shed at 47 Butterworth Street, accessed via a 6m wide driveway along the western boundary of the site.
- Lot 6 is to be a vacant lot of 2751m<sup>2</sup> in size and forms the rear lawn of 47 Butterworth Street, with access via a 6.48m wide driveway from Derham Drive along the southern boundary of the site.

### Site Access and Road Network

Lots 1 and 4 will retain the existing driveway accesses from Butterworth Street. Lots 2, 3 and 6 will require new driveways to be constructed from Derham Drive. Lot 5 will require a new driveway from Butterworth Street. All new accesses will be constructed to Swan Hill Rural City Council's IDM standards and any requirements outlined in a Works Within a Road Reserve permit.



Figure 8 – Plan of Proposed Subdivision



**Proposed Servicing**

All lots are to be fully serviced with power, reticulated water supply, reticulated sewerage, telecommunications and storm-water disposal.

**Power**

Underground electricity is available from the nature-strips in both Butterworth Street and Derham Drive (see Figure 7). New connections for Lots 2, 3, 4 and 6 will be constructed as part of this subdivision.

The existing power connection for No. 45 is via a pit directly from the power pole in Butterworth Street (see Figure 7). The power connection for this dwelling will be retained.

The existing power connection for No. 47 is via a pit at the north-east corner of the lot (see Figure 7). The existing supply extends from the pit, through Lot 2, to the existing dwelling in Lot 5 (see Figure 8). As part of this subdivision, a new pit will be installed at the north-west corner of the site and a new supply for the existing dwelling will be run through the new driveway access along the western boundary of the site. All existing connections to the dwelling through Lot 4 will be disconnected.

**Reticulated Water Supply**

Reticulated water is supplied to the site via Lower Murray Water Pipelines on the northern nature-strip of Butterworth Street and the eastern nature-strip of Derham Drive (see Figure 9). New connections for Lots 2, 3, 5 and 6 will be constructed as part of this subdivision.

The existing connection for No. 47 is via the water meter at the north-east corner of Lot 21 LP144541. All existing connections to the dwelling through Lot 4 will be disconnected, and a new meter for the existing dwelling will be constructed at the north-west corner of the site (within the 6m wide access).



Figure 9 – Lower Murray Water Assets



**Raw Water Supply**

Raw water is available to the site via the 3m wide water supply easement along the southern boundary of the site (see Figure 8). The water is managed via a consortium and will be available to all lots within the subdivision via a new 2m wide easement through the centre of the site.

**Sewerage**

Lower Murray Water has a rising sewerage main in the northern nature-strip of Butterworth Street and the eastern nature-strip of Derham Drive (see Figure 9). New connections to Lots 2, 3 and 6 will be constructed as part of this subdivision.

New connections have been recently constructed to the existing dwellings to the Butterworth Street rising main. The connection to No. 45 will be retained for Lot 1. The connection to No. 47 will be retained for Lot 4 and any pipes crossing the boundary between Lot 4 and 5 will be disconnected. A new connection to Lot 5 (existing dwelling at No. 47) will be constructed from the Butterworth Street pipeline within the 6m wide access strip.

**Telecommunications**

Telstra and NBN cables exist within the southern nature-strip of Butterworth Street and the western nature-strip of Derham Drive (see Figures 7 and 10). Connections to No. 45 and 47 are via the Butterworth Street network. The connection to the existing dwelling at No. 45 will be retained for Lot 1. The existing connection for the dwelling at No. 47 will be retained for Lot 4, and any cables crossing between Lot 4 and 5 will be disconnected.

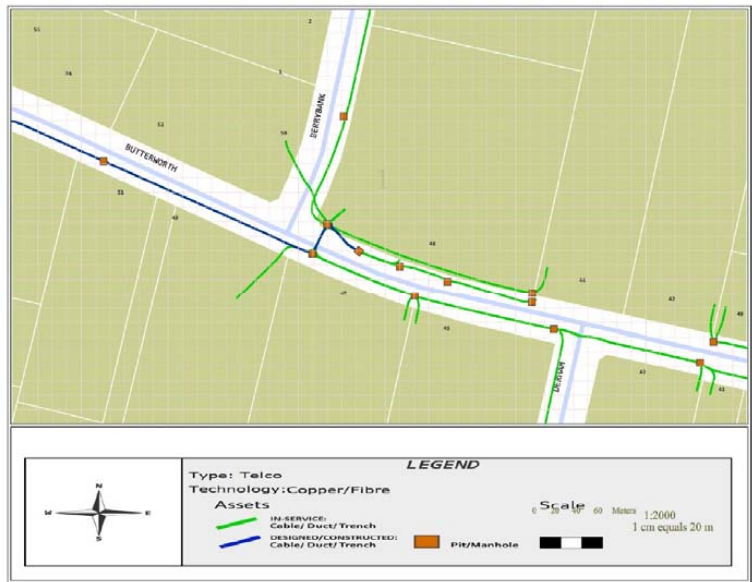


Figure 10 – NBN

New telecommunications connections for Lots 2, 3, 5 and 6 will be constructed as part of this subdivision.

**Gas**

While all lots have access to the new gas mains running within the southern nature-strip of Butterworth Street and eastern nature-strip of Derham Drive, as a result of amendment VC250 and Clause 53.03, it is expected that a permit condition will restrict connection to reticulated gas.

**Stormwater Drainage**

The subject land is included in the catchment area of recent upgrades to Butterworth Street and the underground drainage network. As a result, the allowable discharge rate from the land has increased and the required storage for a 1 in 100 year event has decreased. The proposed stormwater management has been designed by Heil Engineering Consultants Pty Ltd (see **FIGURE 11**). A central swale within a 6m wide easement will collect ground flows on-site with a grated top entry pit at the northern boundary to connect into the upgraded stormwater network on Butterworth Street. The storage of stormwater will be a combination of on-ground swale, above ground tanks and underground pits and pipes. All works will be subject to SHRCC Engineering Department approval.





## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY

The Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) provides an overview of important local planning issues, sets out the vision for future use and development in the municipality and establishes strategic directions about how the municipality is expected to change through the implementation of planning policy and the planning scheme. Issues of note within the MPS are outlined below.

#### **Clause 02.03 Strategic Directions**

**Clause 02.03-1 Settlement** recognises Swan Hill as the largest town in the municipality with no infrastructure constraints for the future development of the town. Settlement planning for Swan Hill Rural City aims to locate the majority of population growth within Swan Hill and Robinvale and ensure that residential growth is coordinated so that infrastructure is provided equitably between the developer and the community.

**Clause 02.03-8 Infrastructure** acknowledges that the efficient delivery of infrastructure is a fundamental element in providing affordable and diverse housing and generating economic growth. Infrastructure planning for Swan Hill Rural City will facilitate a coordinated, efficient and equitable approach to the provision of infrastructure and community facilities and ensure development is in accordance with the *Infrastructure Design Manual* with stormwater management a key consideration for urban development.

#### **Response (Clause 02.03)**

Consistent Clause 02.03-1, the proposal will contribute to accommodating population growth within Swan Hill in a coordinated manner, supporting Council's aim of directing the majority of future development to the municipality's key towns of Swan Hill and Robinvale.

Clause 02.03-8 highlights the importance of coordinated and equitable infrastructure provision to support housing diversity, affordability, and economic growth. The proposal aligns with this objective by ensuring that development will proceed in accordance with the *Infrastructure Design Manual*, with particular regard to stormwater management, and by supporting the efficient and fair delivery of infrastructure between developers and the wider community.

### PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

#### **Clause 11 Settlement**

**Clause 11.01-1S Settlement** aims to facilitate the sustainable growth and development of Victoria and deliver choice and opportunity for all Victorians through a network of settlements. Strategies include:

- Ensure regions and their settlements are planned in accordance with their relevant regional growth plan.



- Provide for growth in population and development of facilities and services across a regional or sub-regional network.
- Encourage a form and density of settlements that supports healthy, active and sustainable transport.
- Limit urban sprawl and direct growth into existing settlements.
- Promote and capitalise on opportunities for urban renewal and infill development.
- Develop compact urban areas that are based around existing or planned activity centres to maximise accessibility to facilities and services.

**Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Regional Victoria** seeks to support sustainable development of Regional service centres, including Swan Hill, by developing settlements that will support resilient communities and their ability to adapt and change.

**Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Loddon Mallee North** aims to plan for and facilitate the growth of Echuca and Swan Hill as Regional service centres and important tourism destinations while considering population change and settlement planning in New South Wales. Further strategies include supporting the incremental expansion of Swan Hill and the provision of infrastructure to facilitate growth.

**Clause 11.02-1S Development capacity** includes strategies aimed at ensuring sufficient development opportunities to meet the needs of current and future Victorians. Strategies including ensuring that at least a 15 year supply of land and development capacity is available to meet housing targets.

**Clause 11.02-2S Structure planning** aims to facilitate the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of urban areas and includes a strategy to deliver sufficient development capacity for residential development to ensure housing targets can be met.

**Clause 11.03-6S Regional and local places** seeks to facilitate integrated, place-based planning, with a strategy focused on recognizing and responding to the distinctive characteristics and needs of regional and local places when planning for future land use and development.

#### **Response (Clause 11)**

The proposed six-lot subdivision within the Low Density Residential Zone is consistent with the settlement and development strategies in Clauses 11.01–11.03 of the Victorian Planning Provisions. The subdivision represents a modest form of residential growth within an established settlement, supporting sustainable development outcomes by utilising existing infrastructure and services. It limits urban sprawl by directing growth into an existing residential area and contributes to housing choice and opportunities for the community.

The proposal supports the role of Swan Hill as a regional service centre by facilitating incremental growth that strengthens the resilience of the local community and responds to regional settlement planning objectives by providing additional housing opportunities within the township. It also aligns with the strategy to support incremental expansion of Swan Hill, providing appropriately scaled residential growth that is compatible with the low density character of the area and making efficient use of existing road, service and community infrastructure.



The subdivision contributes to maintaining an adequate supply of residential land, helping ensure sufficient capacity to meet current and future housing needs. While modest in scale, it provides additional lots within the existing urban framework, consistent with the policy objective to maintain at least a 15-year supply of land for housing. The proposal represents orderly and economic development that complements the surrounding subdivision pattern and provides for a logical extension of the residential fabric.

Importantly, the subdivision responds to the distinctive characteristics of the local area by maintaining the low density residential form, providing larger lots that retain spaciousness and amenity while also offering opportunities for in-fill housing. In doing so, the proposal supports integrated place-based planning by balancing growth with the established character and needs of the community.

Overall, the six-lot subdivision is consistent with the relevant settlement and development policies by directing modest growth into an established settlement, supporting the role of Swan Hill as a regional centre, contributing to housing supply, and responding appropriately to the local context and character.

#### **Clause 12 Environmental and Landscape Values**

**Clause 12.06-15 Urban forests** seeks to protect and enhance tree canopy in urban areas.

##### **Response (Clause 12):**

As demonstrated in **Figure 3**, the site contains several established trees, particularly toward the north of Lot 21 and the south-eastern boundary of Lot 22. All vegetation has been planted since the original subdivision in 1983. The subdivision has been designed to largely retain the majority of the canopy trees where possible which will be incorporated into the garden areas of the new lots (see **Figure 8**).

There is a line of trees along the western boundary of the site that will be within the 6m access strip for Lot 5. Several trees may require trimming or to be removed to facilitate the construction of a new driveway for lot 5.

A line of platypus eucalyptus gums are planted along the southern boundary of the site, within the 6.48m wide access strip for Lot 6. These trees will be require trimming or to be removed to facilitate the construction of a new driveway for lot 6.

Although some trees may need to be removed or pruned, retaining the majority of existing trees and the opportunity for additional planting while providing additional housing delivers a net benefit to the community.

#### **Clause 13 Environmental Risks**

**Clause 13.02-15 Bushfire planning** seeks to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities to bushfire through risk-based planning that prioritises the protection of human life.

##### **Response (Clause 13):**

The site is not within Bushfire Prone Land (see **Figure 12**).

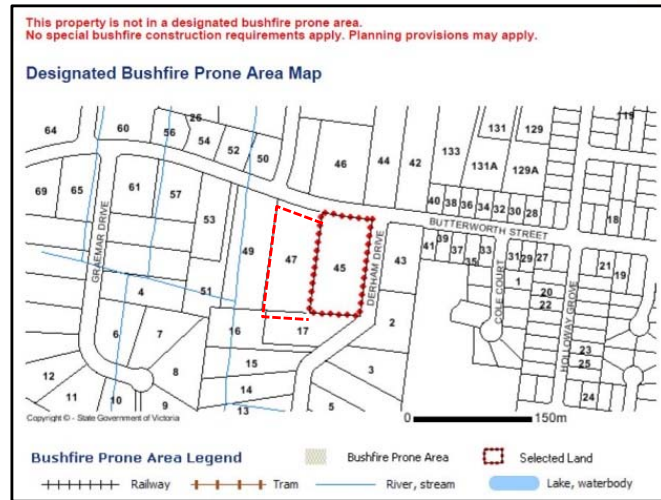


Figure 12 – Bushfire Prone Area Map

**Clause 15 Built Environment and Heritage**

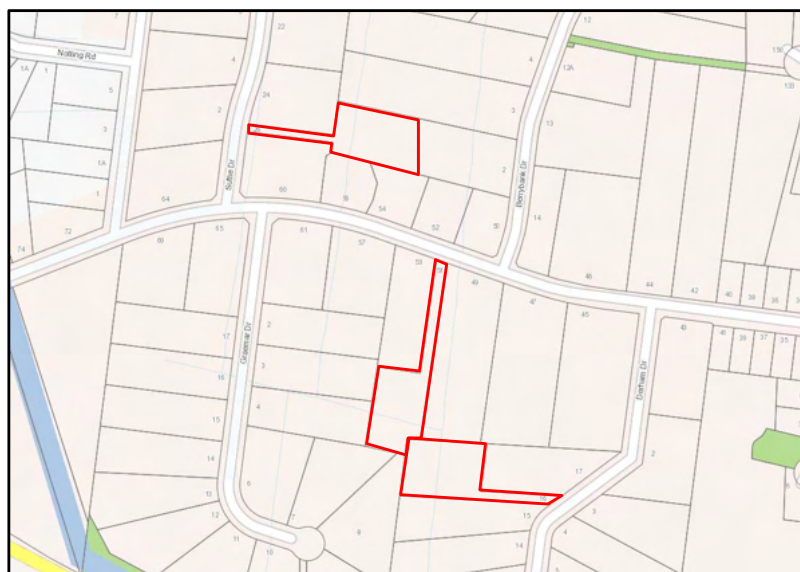
**Clause 15.01-3S Subdivision design** seeks to ensure the design of subdivisions achieves attractive, safe, accessible, diverse and sustainable neighbourhoods. Strategies to achieve this objective include: creating compact neighbourhoods; providing a range of lot sizes to suit a variety of dwelling and household types; and facilitating an urban structure where neighbourhoods are clustered to support larger activity centres.

**Clause 15.01-5S Neighbourhood character** seeks to recognise, support and protect neighbourhood character, cultural identity, and sense of place.

**Response (Clause 15):**

The western end of Butterworth Street (between Derham Drive and Williams Road) and Derham Drive is characterised by low density residential lots of between 2000m<sup>2</sup> and 8000m<sup>2</sup> in size with frontages of 38m – 60m. The original low density residential layout in the 1980’s consisted of large lots with large family dwellings and expansive lawns. The sewerage rising main in Butterworth Street was not constructed until recently, so the lots were larger and dwellings were connected to septic tanks.

Within the last ten years, several of the properties have been re-subdivided to create lots with areas of 2000m<sup>2</sup>; the smaller lot sizes have been made possible by the connection to the sewerage rising main that was constructed to facilitate the Williams Road LDRZ subdivision. Corner lots such as No. 55 Butterworth Street have been re-subdivided easily in a straightforward manner with even division of the site. Other sites have been subdivided to create a front lot with another at the rear (battle-axe) such as 26 Suttie Drive, 51 Butterworth Street and 16 Derham Drive (see Figure 13).



**Figure 13 – Battle-axe lots in Butterworth Street & Derham Drive**



Modern family living and dwelling expectations have changed dramatically since the original subdivision in the 1980's, where large lots and generous outdoor space was coveted. More recently the trend has changed to smaller lots that require less yard maintenance, such as those at Tower Hill. With the construction of the sewerage rising main in this area of LDRZ, there is an opportunity to re-subdivide suitable lots within the area into smaller lots for more dwellings. This is in keeping with the objectives of Clause 15, as the subdivision design is in keeping with the changing character of the area, whilst maintaining wide frontages and larger landscaped gardens.

The existing low density residential character of Butterworth Street and Derham Drive will be maintained by having similarly sized frontages of lots (Lots 1 – 4) facing the road, with lots 5 and 6 accessed via 6m and 6.48m wide access strips to the rear. The wide access strips allow for wide driveways that create safe and functional access to the rear of the site which is in keeping with the low density residential character of Butterworth Street and Derham Drive.

The proposal is consistent with the objectives and strategies of Clause 15 by providing for in-fill development in an efficient and legible manner while minimising the impact to the neighbourhood character by retaining large lot sizes with adequate street frontages and ample opportunity for vegetation retention and replacement. The variety of proposed lot sizes provides for diversity of housing choice reflective of the emerging trend of the area.

### **Clause 16 Housing**

**Clause 16.01-1S Housing supply** seeks to facilitate well-located, integrated and diverse housing that meets community needs. Table 2 of the clause provides a new housing target for Swan Hill of 2,100 and the strategies of the clause include ensuring that zones and overlays accommodate these targets. Additional strategies include: increasing the proportion of housing in urban areas; encouraging higher density housing development on sites that are well located in relation to jobs, services and public transport; identify opportunities for increase residential densities to help consolidate urban areas; and facilitating diverse housing the offers choice and meets changing household needs.

**Clause 16.01-1L Location of residential development** includes strategies to encourage infill residential development within the Swan Hill and Robinvale town boundaries, and discourage residential development that is not adjacent to existing development and is not serviced with reticulated sewerage and town water.

### **Response (Clause 16):**

This subdivision will provide an additional four (4) low density residential lots within an established area where all the relevant services are provided. The lots are well located and within convenient access to jobs and services in Swan Hill and the surrounding nearby townships. The existing two lots are both 8000m<sup>2</sup> in size, and are surrounded by lots with an



average size of 4000m<sup>2</sup>. The minimum size of LDRZ lots is 4000m<sup>2</sup> with no reticulated sewerage, which the lots in LP144541 and PS605218 had no access to at the time of subdivision.

The minimum lot size for LDRZ is 2000m<sup>2</sup> where reticulated sewerage is available. There are several smaller lots of 2000m<sup>2</sup> opposite the site where recent subdivisions have connected to a new sewerage rising main on the northern side of Butterworth Street, which services the housing estates off Williams Road (see **Figure 9**).

The proposal responds positively to Clause 16.01-1S (Housing supply) by facilitating additional residential lots within the Swan Hill urban area, directly contributing to the municipality's housing target of 2,100 dwellings. The subdivision provides well-located and integrated housing opportunities that can support a range of dwelling types to meet the changing needs of the community. The site is suitably positioned in proximity to services and infrastructure, contributing to the objective of consolidating urban areas and promoting sustainable, higher density outcomes where appropriate. Consistent with Clause 16.01-1L (Location of residential development), the proposal represents infill development within the established Swan Hill township boundary and is fully serviced with reticulated sewerage and town water, avoiding unplanned or isolated residential expansion.

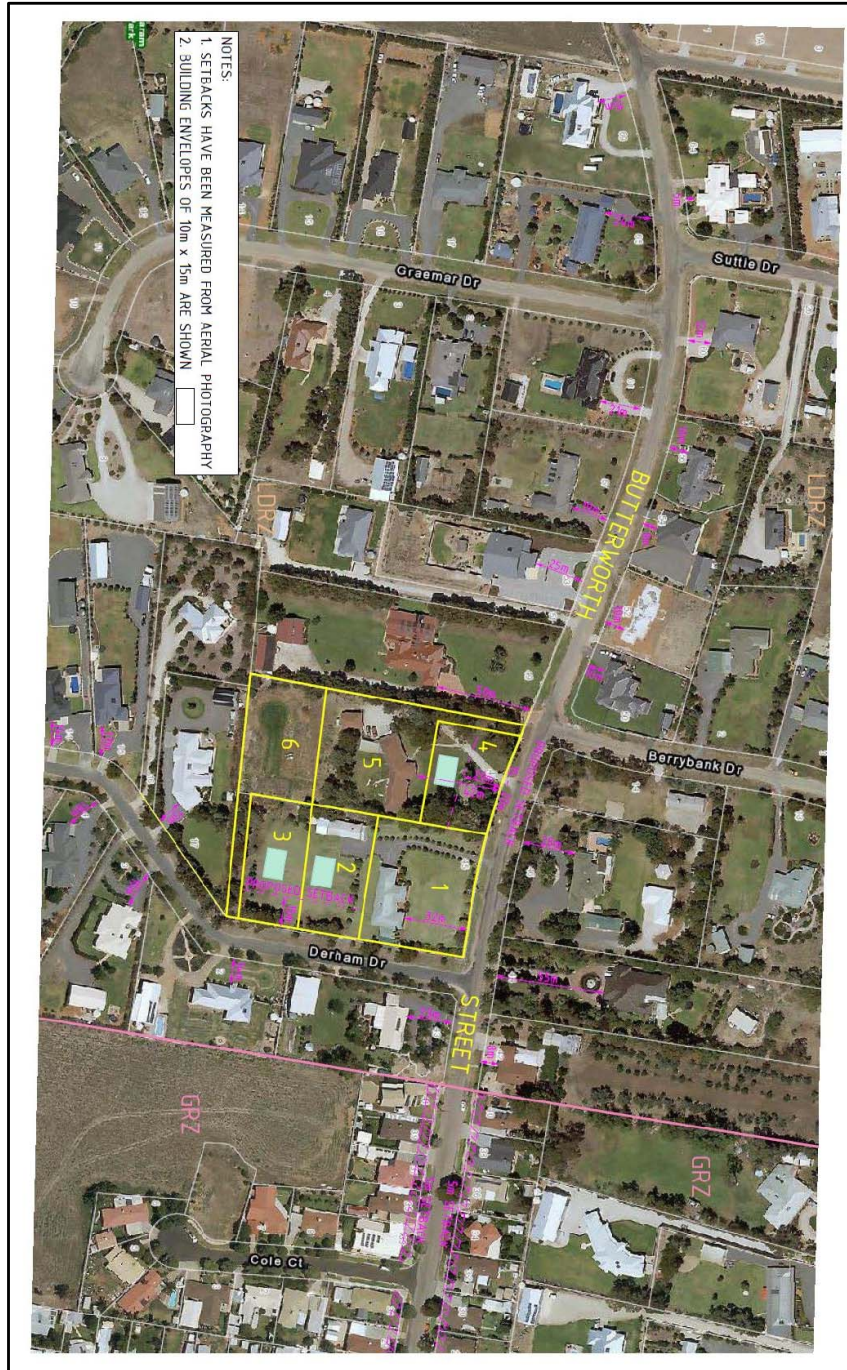


Figure 14 – Street Setbacks in Butterworth Street and Derham Drive

**ZONES**

**Low Density Residential Zone**

The subject site is currently zoned Low Density Residential Zone in accordance with the Swan Hill Planning Scheme.

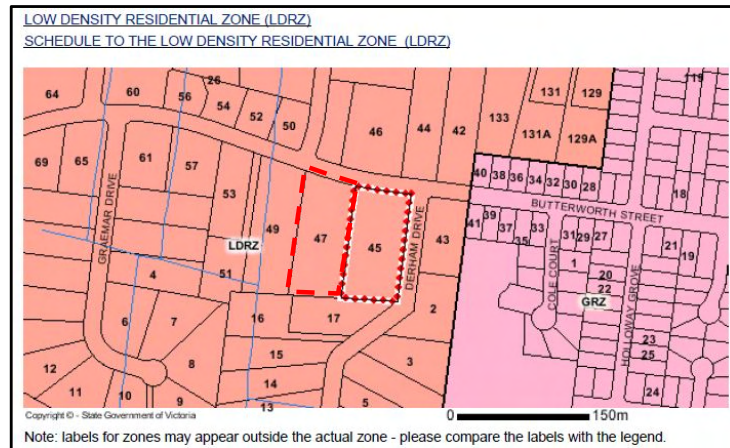


Figure 15 – Zoning of subject land

The purpose of the zone is:

- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- To provide for low-density residential development on lots which, in the absence of reticulated sewerage, can treat and retain all wastewater.

**32.03-3 Subdivision**

In accordance with **Clause 32.03-3**, a permit is required to subdivide land. The clause directs that each lot must have a minimum area of 0.2 hectare where reticulated sewerage is connected.

All lots in the proposed subdivision are equal to or larger than the 2000m<sup>2</sup> minimum size as outlined below:

- Lot 1 - 3489 m<sup>2</sup>
- Lot 2 - 2095 m<sup>2</sup>
- Lot 3 - 2000 m<sup>2</sup>
- Lot 4 - 2000 m<sup>2</sup>
- Lot 5 - 3665 m<sup>2</sup>
- Lot 6 - 2751 m<sup>2</sup>

**32.03-5 Application requirements**



The application requirements relevant to this proposal include a site analysis and an explanation of how the proposed subdivision responds.

The subject land is comprised of two 8000m<sup>2</sup> lots, both developed with single storey brick dwellings which are setback from Butterworth Street by a distance of approximately 50 metres. Each dwelling is accessed via an existing driveway to Butterworth Street. The lots are relatively flat and include established gardens with canopy trees predominantly to the lot boundaries. Both lots are fully serviced and the surrounding road network allows for efficient access to the Swan Hill township.

The surrounding area is an established residential area with lower densities to the north, south and west (LDRZ), and higher densities to the east (GRZ). Building setbacks vary greatly on Butterworth Street from the 5m setbacks within the GRZ lots; to as much as 55m within the LDRZ lots further west (see **Figure 14**). The variability of building setback is due to the changing needs and housing trends over the last 30 years. Older dwellings constructed in the LDRZ have generally larger street setbacks and larger lot sizes, whilst more modern lots are smaller with less street setback.

For example, 44 Butterworth Street was constructed with a central driveway with a circular car turn around at the front of the dwelling. The street setback is 55m and the dwelling is set within the front half of the lot which is 200m long. The long site is not utilized all the way to the rear. 51-53 Butterworth Street, and 17 Derham Drive are similarly long lots (180m and 140m respectively) which have utilized the rear portion with a re-subdivision to create an infill lot to the rear (battle-axe).

Where re-subdivision has occurred without the need for a battle-axe lot, the building setbacks have been 10-15m (50, 52, 54, 56 and 60 Butterworth Street). The setback distance of dwellings on the southern side of Butterworth Street between Graemar and Derham Drives, ranges from 21m to 50m. Building setbacks on Derham Drive range from 14m to 19m.

This subdivision has been designed to complement the existing streetscape in Butterworth Street and Derham Drive by providing the visual appeal of a single dwelling facing the street with appropriately wide frontages, whilst adding two lots nestled to the rear. The inclusion of smaller lots within an established area of large low density residential properties contributes to the improvement of character and visual amenity of the area, which has been trending towards increasingly smaller lots (2000m<sup>2</sup> size) on Butterworth Street with shallower building setbacks, since the sewerage rising main was extended to the western area of Butterworth Street.

Indicative building envelopes and setbacks have been shown in the SMP. Maintaining a setback of 15 - 20m for this subdivision will be in keeping with the neighbourhood character of the area, and allows all lots to situate a 10m x 15m building envelope comfortably.

The ability for each lot to provide generous open space areas and to retain or replant vegetation, including canopy trees, allows for the character of the area to be maintained.

### **35.07-6 Decision Guidelines**

#### **General Issues**



The site is suitable for an infill subdivision as it makes use of the existing infrastructure and services available to the site and is compatible with neighbouring LDRZ properties. As previously discussed, all service connections and accesses will be designed to meet Council's and the relevant service authority's requirements.

### **Subdivision**

All services are available on-site including reticulated potable water, raw-water, power, reticulated sewerage, gas and telecommunications. All lots will be connected into the town's stormwater network via an internal stormwater drainage retention system running through the centre of the site and connecting with the network in Butterworth Street (see **Figure 11**).

Where possible, the existing vegetation has been retained to enhance the low density residential feel of the area. However, as previously discussed, there are several trees required to be trimmed or removed (western and southern boundaries) to facilitate the construction of 2 new driveways (lot 5 and 6).

The existing site is 16,000m<sup>2</sup> in two lots, with two existing single storey brick dwellings. The proposed subdivision will create smaller lots of >2000m<sup>2</sup>, whilst maintaining the existing dwellings within their own lots. The new lots will appeal to families, aged persons, singles and those wishing to have less landscaping maintenance in an established low density residential area.

### **Clause 56.07 integrated water management**

**Clause 56.07-1 Drinking water supply objectives** seeks to supply drinking water to be designed and constructed in accordance with the requirements and to the satisfaction of the relevant water authority; and provided to the boundary of all lots in the subdivision.

**Clause 56.07-2 Reuse and recycled water objective** seeks to supply recycled water in substitution for drinking water for non-drinking purposes.

**Clause 56.07-3 Waste water management objective** seeks to provide a waste water system that is adequate for the maintenance of public health and the management of effluent in an environmentally friendly manner.

**Clause 56.07-4 Urban run-off management objectives** seeks to minimize damage to properties and inconvenience to residents from urban run-off.

### **Response (Clause 56):**

As previously discussed, reticulated potable water is available on-site and new connections for lots 2, 3, 5 and 6 will be constructed to LMW's standards.

Recycled water is not available on-site; however raw water is available via the 3m wide water supply easement at the south of the site, which is managed by a consortium. Raw water will be made available to all lots via a new 2m easement (see **Figure 8**).

All lots will be connected into the rising sewerage mains in Butterworth Street and Derham Drive.



All stormwater runoff will be directed into the town’s stormwater network in Butterworth Street and Derham Drive via a Stormwater Drainage retention system of internal swales and tanks, and will be constructed to Council’s standards.

**OVERLAYS**

**Clause 45.12 Specific Controls Overlay**

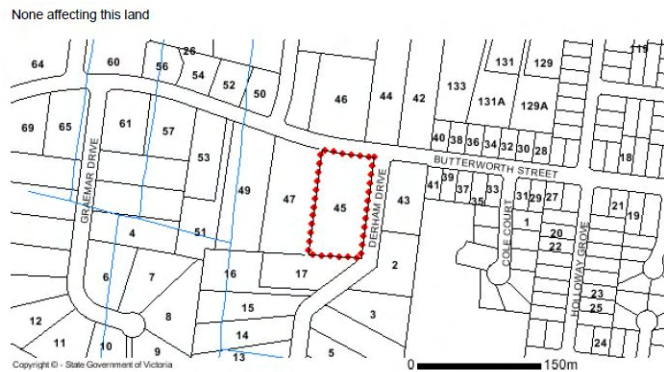
The site is affected by the Specific Controls Overlay – Schedule 1 (SCO1).

The purpose of the SCO at Clause 45.12 is:

- *To apply specific controls designed to achieve a particular land use and development outcome in extraordinary circumstances.*

Land affected by this overlay may be used or developed in accordance with a specific control contained in the incorporated document corresponding to the notation on the planning scheme map (as specified in the schedule to this overlay).

Schedule 1 refers to the Goulburn-Murray Water: Connections Project and Water Efficiency Project Incorporated Document, November 2021. This document applies to works associated with irrigation infrastructure and is not relevant to the development proposal.



**BUSHFIRE PRONE AREA**

The site is not within a Bushfire Prone Area.

This property is not in a designated bushfire prone area.  
No special bushfire construction requirements apply. Planning provisions may apply.

**Designated Bushfire Prone Area Map**



**PARTICULAR PROVISIONS**

**Clause 53.01 Public Open Space Contribution and Subdivision** directs that a person who proposes to subdivide land must make a contribution to the council for public open space in the amount specified in the schedule to the clause. If no amount is specified, a contribution may still be required under section 18 of the *Subdivision Act 1988* (the Act). No amount is specified in the schedule to the Clause and therefore the contribution is subject to the requirements of the Act.

Section 18(1A) of the Act directs that the Council may only make a public open space requirements if it considers that, as a result of the subdivision, there will be a need for more open space. Among the items of consideration are: whether there are existing places or public resort or recreation in the neighbourhood; and how much of the land in the subdivision is likely to be used for places of resort and recreation for lot owners.

To the south of the subject land, Barry Steggall Park offers extensive public open space with access available at the end of Derham Drive. The existing public open space has ample capacity to accommodate future residents. The large lot sizes and the generous garden areas available to each lot also provide for private areas of resort and recreation. As a result, it is submitted that the proposed subdivision will not result in an the need for more open space and therefore a public open space contribution is not validated under the Act.

**CONCLUSION**

The proposed six-lot subdivision of Lots 21 and 22 LP144541 (45–47 Butterworth Street, Swan Hill) represents an orderly and well-considered infill development within an established low-density residential area. The subdivision retains the existing dwellings, provides appropriately sized lots

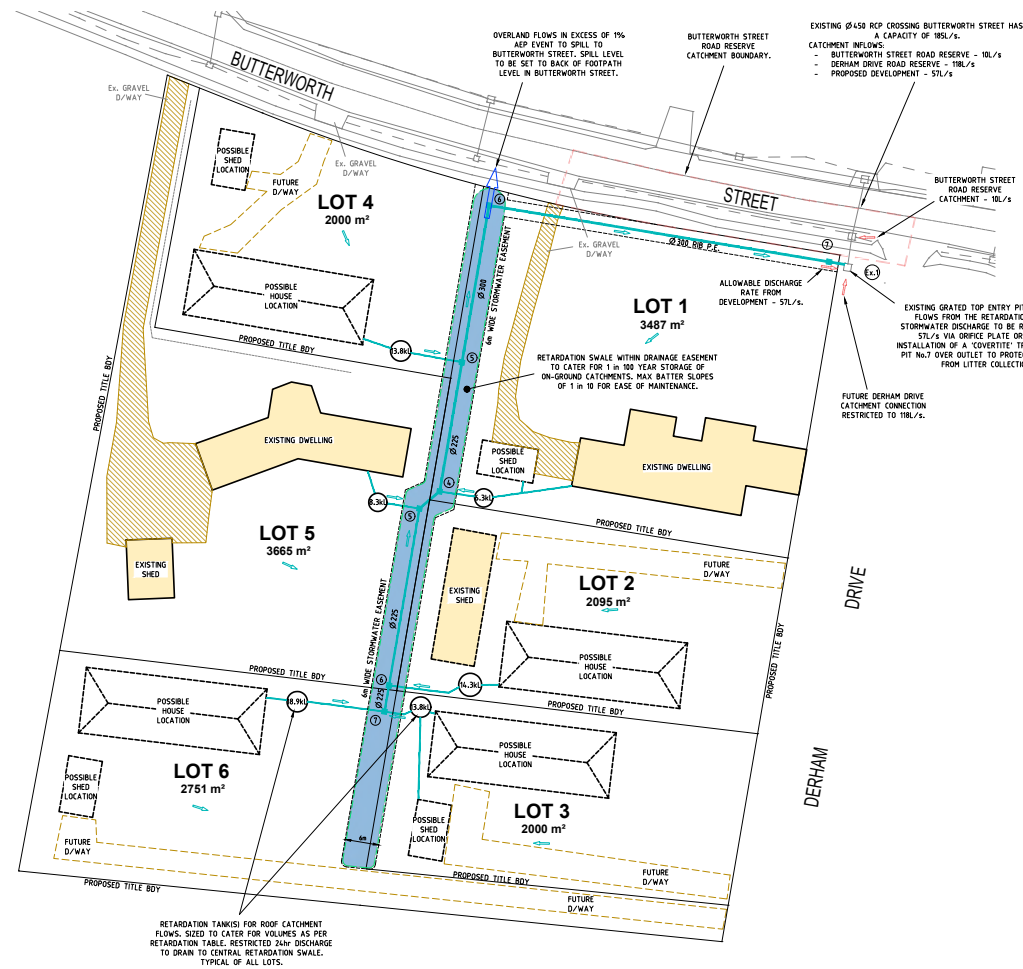


ranging from 2,000m<sup>2</sup> to 3,665m<sup>2</sup>, and incorporates opportunities for vegetation retention and landscaping, thereby maintaining the character and amenity of the surrounding streetscape.

All lots are fully serviced with reticulated water, sewerage, electricity, telecommunications, and access to stormwater management infrastructure, ensuring efficient and sustainable development in accordance with Council standards. The proposal aligns with the objectives and strategies of the Swan Hill Planning Scheme, including the Municipal Planning Strategy, Planning Policy Framework, and Low Density Residential Zone, by supporting incremental housing growth, providing diverse housing options, and facilitating development within the town boundary while utilising existing infrastructure.

Overall, the subdivision supports Swan Hill's role as a regional service centre, provides additional residential land to meet current and future housing needs, and balances growth with the established character and environmental values of the locality. It is consistent with relevant state and local planning policies and represents a sustainable, integrated, and contextually appropriate development outcome.

**PRELIMINARY**



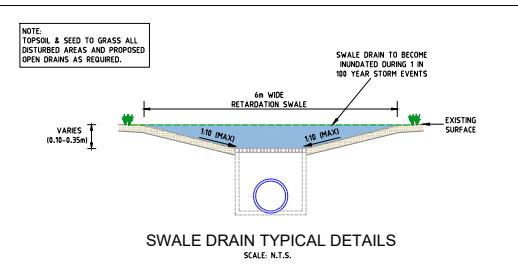
**LEGEND**

**LEGEND**

- EXISTING LEGEND**
- ROAD CENTRELINE
  - EDGE OF SEAL
  - EDGE OF GRAVEL
  - TOE OF BATTER
  - EXISTING DRAINAGE PIT
  - GRAVEL DRIVEWAY
- PROPOSED LEGEND**
- STORMWATER DRAIN
  - STORMWATER PIT
  - PIT NUMBER
  - FLOW DIRECTION (INNER STORM EVENT)
  - FLOW DIRECTION (OVERLAND FLOW PATH)
  - DRAINAGE EASEMENT
  - TOP OF BATTER
  - GRAVEL DRIVEWAY
  - FUTURE TITLE BOUNDARY

**RETARDATION SUMMARY**

Lot No.	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Roof Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Roof Volume (m <sup>3</sup> )	On-ground Volume (m <sup>3</sup> )	Total Volume (m <sup>3</sup> )	Retention Tank Capacity (m <sup>3</sup> )	Swale Capacity (m <sup>3</sup> )	Retention Method
1	3487	1000	100	100	200	100	100	Retention Tank
2	2095	800	80	80	160	80	80	Retention Tank
3	2000	700	70	70	140	70	70	Retention Tank
4	2000	700	70	70	140	70	70	Retention Tank
5	3665	1200	120	120	240	120	120	Retention Tank
6	2751	900	90	90	180	90	90	Retention Tank
<b>Total</b>	<b>16088</b>	<b>5300</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>1060</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>Retention Tank</b>



**SITE LAYOUT PLAN**  
SCALE: 1:400

**RELEASE DETAILS**

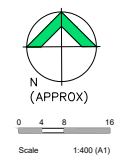
NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE	DOCUMENT STATUS	APP.
P4	PRELIMINARY - FOR DISCUSSION	JUL 25	PRELIMINARY	
P3	PRELIMINARY - FOR DISCUSSION	FEB 19	PRELIMINARY	
P2	PRELIMINARY - FOR DISCUSSION	JAN 19	PRELIMINARY	
P1	PRELIMINARY - FOR DISCUSSION	SEP 18	PRELIMINARY	

**hec HEIL ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS**

Urban Development • Project Management  
 Infrastructure Design • Construction Administration

BRUSH HILL, VIC 3686 P. 03 52622199  
 OCEAN GROVE, VIC 3228 P. 03 52622230 www.heilconsult.com.au

DESIGNED: BC  
 DRAWN: BC



**G. JOHNSTONE & A. GUIZZO**  
**6 LOT SUBDIVISION (LDRZ)**  
 45 - 47 BUTTERWORTH STREET  
 SWAN HILL, VIC

**STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN**

DRAWING NO. 18063\_SWMP\_01  
 SHEET NO. 01 of 01

REVISION NO. P4  
 JAI  
 CAD: 18063\_SWMP.dwg

The information contained in these documents have been redacted as defined in the Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014 and is provided for the purpose of the planning process as set out in the Planning & Environment Act 1987. The information must not be used for any other purpose. By entering this internet site, you acknowledge and agree that you will only use the document for the purpose specified above and that any dissemination or distribution of this information is strictly prohibited. If you have any questions, please contact Council's Privacy Officer on 5036 2333.



## Objection to a Planning Permit

**Note:** A petition is considered as one objection under Section 57(3), (4a) and (4b) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The first person listed will receive correspondence from Council unless another contact is specifically provided.

### Who is objecting?

### What application do you object to?

**Permit application No:** PLN2025070

**Address of proposed permit:** 45 Butterworth Street SWAN HILL VIC 3585

**What is proposed:** Subdivision of Land (6 Lots) and Removal of Easement in the Low Density Residential Zone

### The Objection:

#### Reasons for your objection:

I object to this application for the following reasons:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I live with my family at \_\_\_\_\_ Swan Hill. We have been residents at this address since July 2011.

This submission is made on behalf of a number of concerned residents of Derham Drive.

We received a copy of the "Application for Planning Permit NO. PLN2025070. We would like to submit our opinion on the proposed 6-lot subdivision and easement removal.

We believe that:

45 Splatt St (PO Box 488) SWAN HILL VIC 3585  
Ph: 03 5036 2333 | council@swanhill.vic.gov.au  
swanhill.vic.gov.au | ABN 97435620016



1. the position of the proposed driveway for Lot 6 of the proposed subdivision will increase the risk of road related accidents on Derham Drive and will reduce safe road access, and
2. the position of the proposed driveway and crossover for Lot 6 of the proposed subdivision does not meet the requirements of Swan Hill Rural City Council planning regulations as it is less than 3 metres (clear view) from existing trees on the verge.

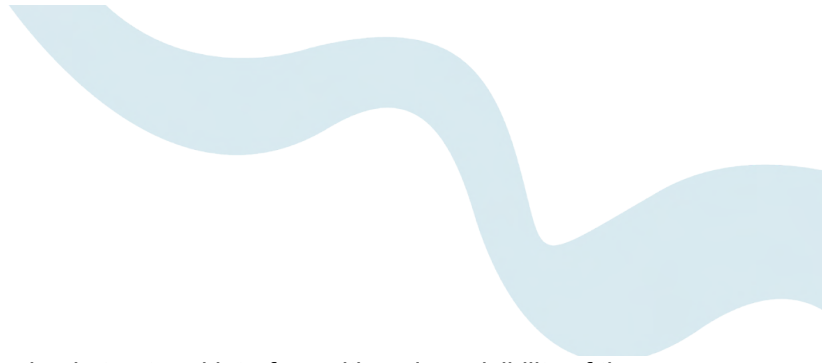
We will address these two points separately.

1. The position of the proposed driveway for Lot 6 of the proposed subdivision will increase the risk of road related accidents on Derham Drive and will reduce safe road access.

The location of the proposed driveway for Lot 6 at the geometric apex of the curve on Derham Drive increases the risk of road related accidents because it is directly opposite the existing driveway for 2 Derham Drive. It is then possible that two vehicles may exit their directly opposite driveways at the same time in a situation where the 'Give Way rule' does not apply, with both vehicles having the same right of way. It will then be only up to the drivers' awareness to prevent a collision or a near miss. Looking at the location of the existing driveways on Derham Drive, all the driveways and crossovers are staggered and not front-to front. This simple control measure eliminates the risk of two vehicles exiting directly opposite driveways at the same time.

It can be argued that the driveway on 2 Derham Drive which is also located at the geometric apex of the curve is also unsafe. This is not the case because its location on the left hand side of Derham Drive (driving south) ensures that incoming traffic from Butterworth St and outgoing traffic travelling from the Derham Drive cul de sac towards Butterworth St have clear unobstructed visibility.

The same cannot be said of the proposed driveway for Lot 6 of the proposed subdivision. This is because the proposed location of this driveway is on the right hand side of the geometric apex when driving south on Derham Drive from Butterworth St. This proposed position enables a clear and unobstructed view of traffic travelling from Butterworth St. into Derham Drive. However, outgoing traffic from the Derham Drive cul de sac towards Butterworth St will not have a clear and unobstructed view of the proposed crossover at Lot 6 of the proposed subdivision. Vegetation planted on the verge, several mature trees



on the verge and one street-light pole obstruct and interfere with a clear visibility of the proposed driveway and crossover. This increases the risk of road related accidents for vehicles and pedestrians alike. Furthermore, if the proposal for the driveway for Lot 6 is approved as is proposed, waste and recycling bins left out for collection may further reduce the visibility, increasing even further the risk of collisions, damage to property and loss of life.

Research carried out in many countries conclude that driving on a curved road is significantly riskier than on a straight street:

‘ riving on curved roads represents a typical natural driving scenario, requiring drivers to simultaneously control both direction and speed, while coordinating the relationship between yaw angular velocity, lateral acceleration, and the curvature of the curve. This renders driving on curved sections more challenging (Godthelp, 1986; Han et al., 2023; Kang et al., 2019; Ren et al., 2015). Curves are shown to experience disproportionately higher crash rates than similar tangent roadways.’

‘Other studies essentially corroborate the findings of these investigations from other countries (Calvi, 2015; Peng et al., 2021). The collision rates on curved sections of roads are approximately 1.5–4 times higher than those on tangent road segments. Approximately 25%–30% of fatal accidents occur on horizontal curves.’

Research status, challenges and trends of curve driving safety: A bibliometric analysis and critical review. Lei Han, Zhigang Du.

Journal of Traffic and Transportation Engineering (English Edition). Volume 12, Issue 4, August 2025, Pages 723-751

The key risk factors for driving on horizontal curves are:

- (a) curves present physical challenges that require active engagement,
- (b) curves exert centrifugal force that increases the risk of losing control, particularly if the speed is not adjusted for the curve. If you enter a curve too fast, the tires lose grip, leading to "run-off-road" accidents,
- (c) curves sometimes have limited visibility and you cannot see what is around the corner,
- (d) curves may lead to driver error when the driver ‘cuts the corner’, thus increasing the risk of a collision with oncoming traffic.



Right-hand curves can sometimes be more dangerous than left-hand curves.

However, the deadliest combination is a curved road at night or in the rain, where visibility and traction are both compromised.

The key to any successful risk management strategy is always to try to eliminate the risk altogether. If eliminating the risk is not possible, then the focus should be placed on:

(a) identifying control measures, (b) prioritising these control measures in order of importance, and (c) implementing one or a combination of these control measures to reduce the likelihood of an event happening.

In this particular case: line painting of the road, rumble strips and road signs limiting speed limits however beneficial, are only minor control measures to reduce road accidents, when compared to positioning the driveway in the safest location on a right-turning curve with reduced visibility.

The increase and type of traffic that the proposed subdivision will generate on Derham Drive also needs careful consideration, given typical traffic on Derham Drive currently includes larger vehicles, including those towing trailers and caravans. Builders and other tradesmen will be frequent road users when construction of homes start in the subdivision. Parking of trademens' vehicles on the verge has been an issue in the past and will continue to be a common occurrence. Therefore, a highest priority in the approval process should be placed on the decision to implement control measures to increase road safety and reduce the likelihood of road accidents.

Derham Drive is also home to approximately ten families with the total number of children around thirty. Many of these children walk or ride bikes to and from school and utilise the designated bus stop at the corner of Butterworth St. and Derham Drive. Children are by nature unpredictable in their behaviour. This corner -as is- has already been acknowledged by residents as an area of safety concern. The potential for loss of young lives is enormous. This further strengthens our argument objecting the proposed Lot 6 driveway.

If this sounds all too theoretical and unlikely to happen:



I, \_\_\_\_\_ had two near misses when driving on Derham Drive in the past years. On one occasion, driving to work at 6:30 am, the driver of an oncoming ute from Butterworth St cut the corner so sharply that -to prevent a collision- I had to drive on the verge and narrowly missing the street-light pole on the left hand side near the curve. The second near miss was a similar scenario, but this time the driver corrected the vehicle's trajectory on time allowing both vehicles to pass within centimetres of each other.

One additional driveway on the geometric apex of the curve has the potential to increase the number of vehicles at the apex of the curve by 25% at any time. Derham Drive is a narrow road. Thus, in the case of a road accident at the apex of the curve, the potential for loss of life and property is also increased.

The decision about the placement of the proposed driveway and crossover should be governed first by local residents' safety and traffic safety and not by site layout. A developer's financial gain from a subdivision can never be prioritised over public safety.

2. The position of the proposed driveway and crossover for Lot 6 of the proposed subdivision does not meet the requirements of Swan Hill Rural City Council planning regulations as it is less than 3 metres (clear view) from existing trees on the verge.

Kerry Young, Engineering Assistant with Swan Hill Rural City Council informed us that any new driveway and crossover must be at a minimum distance of 3.00 metres from existing trees on the verge. The distance is measured from the tree trunk. The tree-dripline is not taken into consideration. Kerry also confirmed that current (new) Victorian Government regulations prohibit the removal of existing trees on the verge to give room for any new driveway and crossover.

The distance between the south-eastern corner of Lot 6 of the proposed subdivision -as is proposed- and the closest existing mature tree on the verge is 2.20 metres. Therefore, the position of the proposed driveway and crossover for Lot 6 does not meet the requirements of current Swan Hill Rural City Council planning regulations.

For all of the above, we object to the proposed location of the driveway for Lot 6 of the proposed subdivision under Planning Permit NO. PLN2025070, not the subdivision itself.



Sincerely



**How will you be affected by the grant of this permit?**

**Signed:**

**Date: 20/02/2026**

Important notes over page



## Important notes about objections to permit applications

1. This form is to help you make an objection to an application in a way which complies with the Planning and Environment Act 1987, and which can be readily understood by the Responsible Authority. There is no requirement under the Act that you use any form.
2. Make sure you clearly understand what is proposed before you make an objection. You should inspect the application at the Responsible Authority's office.
3. To make an objection you should clearly complete the details on this form and lodge it with the Responsible Authority as shown on the Public Notice - Application for Planning Permit.
4. An objection must:
  - State the reasons for your objection, and
  - State how you would be affected if a permit is granted.
5. The Responsible Authority may reject an application which it considers has been made primarily to secure or maintain a direct or indirect commercial advantage for the objector. In this case, the Act applies as if the objection had not been made.
6. Any person may inspect an objection during office hours.
7. If your objection related to an effect on property other than at your address as shown on this form, give details of that property and of your interest in it.
8. To ensure the Responsible Authority considers your objection, make sure that the Authority received it by the date shown in the notice you were sent, or which you saw in a newspaper, or on the site.
9. If you object before the Responsible Authority makes a decision, the Authority will tell you, its decision.
10. If despite your objection the Responsible Authority decided to grant the permit, you can appeal against the decision. Details of the appeal procedures are set out on the back of the Notice of Decision which you will receive. An appeal must be made on a prescribed form (obtainable from the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal) and accompanied by the prescribed fee. A copy must be given to the Responsible Authority. The closing date for appeals is 28 days of the Responsible Authority giving notice of its decision.
11. If the Responsible Authority refuses the application, the applicant can also appeal. The provisions are set out on the Refusal of Planning Application which will be issued at that time.



## Objection to a Planning Permit

**Note:** A petition is considered as one objection under Section 57(3), (4a) and (4b) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The first person listed will receive correspondence from Council unless another contact is specifically provided.

### Who is objecting?

### What application do you object to?

**Permit application No:** PLN2025070

**Address of proposed permit:** 45 Butterworth Street SWAN HILL VIC 3585

**What is proposed:** Subdivision of Land (6 Lots) and Removal of Easement in the Low Density Residential Zone

### The Objection:

#### Reasons for your objection:

I object to this application for the following reasons:

Hello All

We feel that the proposed driveway from Lot 6 entering Derham drive on the corner is unsafe and would be dangerous for the people travelling in Derham Drive.

It would be preferred if the new proposed driveway off Butterworth Street along the side of lot 4 going to Lot 5 be continued on through lot 5 to meet up with Lot 6.

If this was not possible then it should be moved to the boundary between Lot 2 & 3 so as not to enter Derham Drive on the corner. The corner is already a hazardous area.

Kind regards

45 Splatt St (PO Box 488) SWAN HILL VIC 3585  
Ph: 03 5036 2333 | [council@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@swanhill.vic.gov.au)  
[swanhill.vic.gov.au](http://swanhill.vic.gov.au) | ABN 97435620016



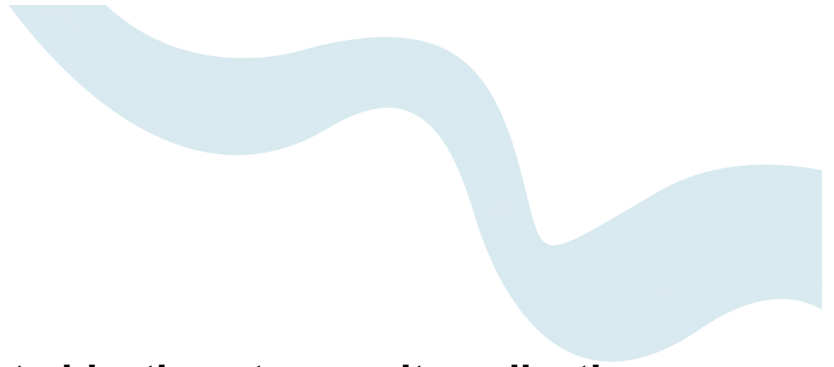


**How will you be affected by the grant of this permit?**

**Signed:**

**Date: 09/02/2026**

Important notes over page



## Important notes about objections to permit applications

1. This form is to help you make an objection to an application in a way which complies with the Planning and Environment Act 1987, and which can be readily understood by the Responsible Authority. There is no requirement under the Act that you use any form.
2. Make sure you clearly understand what is proposed before you make an objection. You should inspect the application at the Responsible Authority's office.
3. To make an objection you should clearly complete the details on this form and lodge it with the Responsible Authority as shown on the Public Notice - Application for Planning Permit.
4. An objection must:
  - State the reasons for your objection, and
  - State how you would be affected if a permit is granted.
5. The Responsible Authority may reject an application which it considers has been made primarily to secure or maintain a direct or indirect commercial advantage for the objector. In this case, the Act applies as if the objection had not been made.
6. Any person may inspect an objection during office hours.
7. If your objection related to an effect on property other than at your address as shown on this form, give details of that property and of your interest in it.
8. To ensure the Responsible Authority considers your objection, make sure that the Authority received it by the date shown in the notice you were sent, or which you saw in a newspaper, or on the site.
9. If you object before the Responsible Authority makes a decision, the Authority will tell you, its decision.
10. If despite your objection the Responsible Authority decided to grant the permit, you can appeal against the decision. Details of the appeal procedures are set out on the back of the Notice of Decision which you will receive. An appeal must be made on a prescribed form (obtainable from the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal) and accompanied by the prescribed fee. A copy must be given to the Responsible Authority. The closing date for appeals is 28 days of the Responsible Authority giving notice of its decision.
11. If the Responsible Authority refuses the application, the applicant can also appeal. The provisions are set out on the Refusal of Planning Application which will be issued at that time.



The information contained in these documents have been redacted as defined in the Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014 and is provided for the purpose of the planning process as set out in the Planning & Environment Act 1987. The information must not be used for any other purpose. By entering this internet site, you acknowledge and agree that you will only use the document for the purpose specified above and that any dissemination or distribution of this information is strictly prohibited. If you have any questions, please contact Council's Privacy Officer on 5036 2333.

ACN: 677 766 040

ABN: 78 677 766 040

220 Campbell Street

PO Box 1054 Swan Hill 3585

57 Victoria Street, Kerang 3579

P: (03) 5033 0035

M: 0409 015 326

E: [info@northernlandsolutions.com.au](mailto:info@northernlandsolutions.com.au)

W: [www.northernlandsolutions.com.au](http://www.northernlandsolutions.com.au)

Muhammad Salman  
Planning Officer  
Swan Hill Rural City Council  
[planning@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:planning@swanhill.vic.gov.au)

16 February 2026

Dear Muhammad

**RESPONSE TO OBJECTION – DRIVEWAY ACCESS ARRANGEMENT  
PLANNING PERMIT APPLICATION – 45 BUTTERWORTH STREET, SWAN HILL**

I write as the Licensed Surveyor and subdivision applicant in response to the objection lodged by \_\_\_\_\_ regarding the proposed access arrangement to Lot 6 from Derham Drive. The applicant acknowledges the concerns raised and confirms that attempts were made to engage with the objectors to discuss the matter. While agreement was not reached, their input has been considered in the assessment below.

**RESPONSE FROM APPLICANT**

**Driveway Access to Derham Drive (Lot 6)**

A Sight Distance Assessment has been prepared to evaluate the safety and suitability of the proposed access point. The assessment demonstrates compliance with the visibility provisions of AS/NZS 2890.1:2004 – Parking Facilities, Part 1: Off-street Car Parking (Section relating to sight distance at access driveways).

The Standard requires that access driveways be located such that adequate entering sight distance is available to drivers exiting the driveway, as well as visibility to pedestrians along the frontage. Required sight distances are determined by frontage road speed and must be free of visual obstructions.

For a frontage road operating at 50 km/h, the Standard identifies:

- A minimum stopping sight distance of approximately 40 m for domestic-type access; and

The submitted sight distance plan demonstrates that:

- Unobstructed visibility exceeding the minimum required distance of 40m is achieved in both directions;
- No permanent structures, vegetation, or street infrastructure intrude into the defined sight envelope; and
- The crossover can be designed in accordance with IDM SD260 with perpendicular alignment and localised kerbing to maintain safe vehicle entry and exit conditions.

On this basis, the proposed access arrangement satisfies recognised engineering guidance and is considered to present no unreasonable traffic safety risk to road users on Derham Drive.



ACN: 677 766 040

ABN: 78 677 766 040

220 Campbell Street

PO Box 1054 Swan Hill 3585

57 Victoria Street, Kerang 3579

P: (03) 5033 0035

M: 0409 015 326

E: info@northernlandsolutions.com.au

W: www.northernlandsolutions.com.au

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS SUGGESTED BY OBJECTOR**

**Relocation to Boundary Between Lots 2 and 3**

Relocation of the access to this position would reduce development efficiency and constrain dwelling envelopes due to setback and easement considerations, while also diminishing solar orientation opportunities.

Further, this option would likely impact established street trees and detract from the existing streetscape character along Derham Drive. It is therefore not considered a balanced planning outcome.

**Internal Access via Lots 4–5**

The suggestion to extend the internal driveway through Lots 4 and 5 to serve Lot 6 would introduce multiple battle-axe style access arrangements and result in an access length of approximately 100 m.

This configuration would be inconsistent with orderly planning outcomes by:

- Increasing servicing and maintenance burden;
- Reducing lot functionality; and
- Concentrating access movements unnecessarily onto Butterworth Street rather than distributing access between both street frontages.

The current layout, providing two access points to Butterworth Street and two to Derham Drive, achieves a more appropriate distribution of vehicle movements and maintains consistency with typical subdivision design practice for infill contexts.

**CONCLUSION**

The proposed access to Lot 6 has been assessed against relevant visibility guidance and demonstrates compliance with recognised Australian Standards. Alternative arrangements suggested in the objection would introduce planning and urban design disadvantages without delivering measurable safety improvements.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the proposed access configuration represents an appropriate and safe design outcome within the Low Density Residential context and should be supported.

Should Council require further clarification or supporting documentation, the applicant would be pleased to provide it.

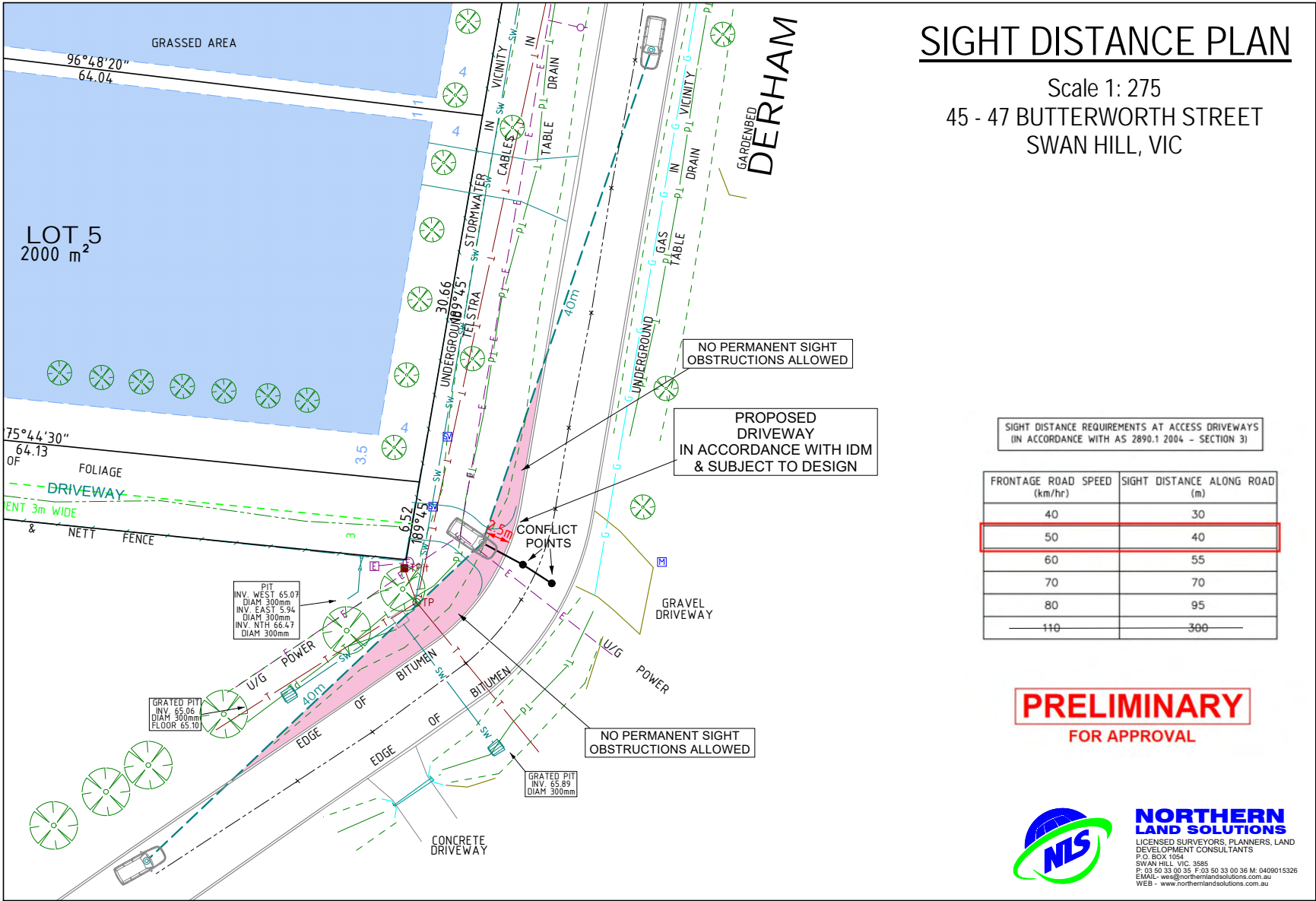
Regards

Wesley Pye

B. Geom. Eng. (Hons.) . ACSV. MSSI. ISV. ISNSW

Licensed Surveyor (VIC)

Registered Surveyor (NSW)



## 3 Decisions Which Need Action / Ratification

### 3.1 Sign and Seal

**Directorate:** Chief Executive Officer  
**File Number:** S16-05-01  
**Purpose:** For Noting

#### Declarations of Interest:

Council officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

#### Summary

The following documents and agreements have been signed and sealed by the Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer on the respective dates. Those actions require the ratification of the Council.

#### Discussion

During any month Council is required to sign and seal a range of documents arising from decisions made on a previous occasion(s). Examples include sale of land, entering into funding arrangements for Council programs etc.

As the decision to enter into these agreements has already been made, these documents are signed and sealed when received, with Council ratifying the signing and sealing at the next Council meeting.

The following documents were signed and sealed since the last Council meeting:

No.	Document Type	Document Description	Date signed/ sealed
1212	173 Agreement – 32 Murlong Street, Swan Hill (condition 5)	Between Swan Hill Rural City Council and Catholiccare Victoria Housing LTD (ACN 613 345 396)	14/04/26

Note: A Section 173 Agreement is typically a contract between the Council and a landowner that places use or development restrictions on the land.

They are intended to ensure compliance with conditions contained in permits granted by the Council and are often used in subdivision matters. These agreements refer to Section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

## **Consultation**

Council authorise the signing and sealing of the above documents.

## **Recommendation/s**

**That Council notes the actions of signing and sealing the documents under delegation as scheduled.**

## 3.2 Councillor Briefings - Record of Attendance and Agenda Items

**Directorate:** Chief Executive Officer  
**File Number:** S15-05-06  
**Purpose:** For Noting

### Declarations of Interest:

Council officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the matter of this report.

### Summary

The following report provides attendance details of Councillor Briefings on a monthly basis.

### Discussion

Whilst Minutes have not been recorded, Agenda items and those in attendance are reported and presented to Council.

A briefing of Councillors is defined as a meeting that is planned or scheduled and where the matters being considered that are intended or likely to be the subject of a Council decision.

No formal decisions can be made at a briefing but rather direction can be given that is likely to lead to a formal decision of Council.

Details of the most recent briefings of Council are attached.

### Council Plan Strategy Addressed

**6. Transparency and Effectiveness** – Ensuring Council is open, accountable and responsive, with services and decision-making that reflect community expectations. Objective 6.1: Deliver accessible, responsive and inclusive customer and community engagement.

6.1.3 Improve community engagement and participation in Council decisions.

### Current Strategic documents

No strategic documents applicable.

### Key Legislation

There is no key legislation applicable

**Attachments:** 1. COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA  
April [3.2.1 - 5 pages]

**Options**

Council Briefings are reported to ensure good governance and transparency.

**Recommendation**

**That Council note the contents of the report.**

**COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA  
17 March 2026 at 8.30am-1.30pm, Robinvale bus tour**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

- Tour CMV pistachio Farm
- Ronald Street, Robinvale
- McCartney Court, Robinvale
- Robinvale - Stadium / Splash Park / Netball courts
- Robinvale Riverfront terraces

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED**

- Nil

**ATTENDANCE**

Councillors

- Cr Stuart King
- Cr Terry Jennings
- Cr Lindsay Rogers

**Apologies / Leave of Absence**

- Cr Hugh Broad
- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Peta Thornton
- Cr Phillip Englefield

**OFFICERS**

- Scott Barber, Chief Executive Officer
- Michelle Grainger, Director Development and Planning
- Stephen Fernando, Director Corporate Services

**Other**

- Nil

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Nil

**COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA  
24 March 2026 at 10.00am, Swan Hill Town Hall, Council Chambers**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

- Fees and Charges
- 241 Murray Valley Highway, Swan Hill (materials recycling)
- 45 Butterworth Street, Swan Hill (6 lot subdivision)
- Lakeside Drive Residents Group – Lake Boga Areas 4 and 5
- Goulburn-Murray Water
- Container Deposit Scheme baskets

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED**

- Nil

**ATTENDANCE**

Councillors

- Cr Stuart King
- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Hugh Board
- Cr Lindsay Rogers
- Cr Terry Jennings

**Apologies / Leave of Absence**

- Cr Philip Englefield
- Cr Peta Thornton

**OFFICERS**

- Scott Barber, Chief Executive Officer
- Bruce Myers, Director Community and Cultural Services
- Michelle Grainger, Director Development and Planning
- Leah Johnston, Director Infrastructure
- Stephen Fernando, Director Corporate Services
- Ash Free, Acting Director Corporate Services
- Alexandra Jefferies, Planning Manager
- Dennis Hovenden, Economic and Community Development Manager
- Laura O'Dwyer, Enterprise Assets Manager
- Peter Ross, Engineering and Special Projects Manager
- Darren Rovere, Senior Authorised Officer

**Other**

- Neville Hoare & Loretta Belton - (45 Butterworth St)
- Roberto Senes - (45 Butterworth St) on behalf of Karissa & Damian Box, Danielle & Greg Sait, Lauren & Brad Fowler, Wendy & Ken Bett, Neville Hoare & Loretta Belton, Kirsty Gaut, Liam & Sarah Keighran, Trish & Andrew McMahan.
- Anthony Rullo together with Dean Palmer and Toby Gilmour (Lakeside Drive Residents Group)
- Mark Bailey, Goulburn-Murray Water

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Nil

**COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA**  
**31 March 2026 at 10.00am, Swan Hill Town Hall, Council Chambers**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

- Councillor Expenses Report
- Contract 24 1903 01 – Panel – Supply and Delivery of Concrete, Quarry and Bituminous Products
- Councillor Professional Development Program 2026
- SHDH precinct car-parking options
- FOGO Service Implementation
- Hearing of Submissions for Special Rate
- McCrae Street Intention to sell
- Saleyards verbal update

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED**

- Update 8 Saleyards Road
- Municipal Building Surveyor Contract Update
- Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC) – Draft Murray Darling Basin Plan submission
- Robinvale Childcare

**ATTENDANCE**

Councillors

- Cr Stuart King
- Cr Hugh Board
- Cr Lindsay Rogers
- Cr Terry Jennings (on-line)
- Cr Philip Englefield (on-line)

**Apologies / Leave of Absence**

- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Peta Thornton

**OFFICERS**

- Scott Barber, Chief Executive Officer
- Bruce Myers, Director Community and Cultural Services
- Michelle Grainger, Director Development and Planning
- Leah Johnston, Director Infrastructure
- Stephen Fernando, Director Corporate Services
- Helen Morris, Organisational Development Manager
- Ash Free, Finance Manager
- Jess Chislett, Procurement and Properties Coordinator
- Dennis Hovenden, Economic and Community Development Manager
- Helen Morris, Organisational Development Manager
- Peter Ross, Engineering and Strategic Projects Manager
- Nathan Keighran, Economic Development Coordinator

**Other**

- Colin McKenzie, Special Rate - submission

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Cr Terry Jennings declared a conflict of interest in “SHDH precinct car-parking options” due to his position on the hospital board.

**COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA**  
**7 April 2026 at 10.00am-5pm, Swan Hill Town Hall, Council Chambers**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

- Presentation on Draft Budget

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED**

- Nil

**ATTENDANCE**

Councillors

- Cr Stuart King
- Cr Hugh Board
- Cr Lindsay Rogers
- Cr Terry Jennings
- Cr Philip Englefield
- Cr Les McPhee

**Apologies / Leave of Absence**

- Cr Peta Thornton

**OFFICERS**

- Michelle Grainger, Acting Chief Executive Officer
- Bruce Myers, Director Community and Cultural Services
- Jess Warburton, Acting Director Development and Planning
- Leah Johnston, Director Infrastructure
- Stephen Fernando, Director Corporate Services
- Ash Free, Finance Manger

**Other**

- Nil

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Nil

**COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA**  
**14 April 2026 at 10.00am, Swan Hill Town Hall, Council Chambers**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

- Finalisation of Draft Budget
- Strategic disposal and development
- Swan Hill Inc Special Rate submissions outcome
- GM-Water Pumped Irrigation districts review
- AGL – Microgrids “Almond Orchard”

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED**

- Nil

**ATTENDANCE**

**Councillors**

- Cr Stuart King
- Cr Lindsay Rogers
- Cr Terry Jennings (on-line)
- Cr Philip Englefield

**Apologies / Leave of Absence**

- Cr Peta Thornton
- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Hugh Board

**OFFICERS**

- Scott Barber, Chief Executive Officer
- Michelle Grainger, Director Development and Planning
- Leah Johnston, Director Infrastructure
- Stephen Fernando, Director Corporate Services
- Ash Free, Finance Manger
- Dennis Hovenden, Economic and Community Development Manager
- Alexandra Jefferies, Development Manager

**Other**

- Steven Abbott and Warren Blyth, GM-Water
- Richard Johnston, Mark Talbot and Angela Armitage – AGL Microgrids in Almonds

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Nil

## 4 Notices of Motion

## 5 Foreshadowed Items

## 6 Urgent Items Not Included In Agenda

## 7 To Consider and Order on Councillor Reports

## 8 In-Camera Items

### RECOMMENDATION

That, in accordance with sections 66(1) and 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the meeting be closed to members of the public for the consideration of the following confidential items:

#### **8.1 Contract Review - Supply and Delivery of Concrete, Quarry and Bituminous Products Panel**

*CONFIDENTIAL ITEM This item is to be considered at an In Camera meeting in accordance with Section 3(1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2020, this item is to be considered in an incamera meeting on the grounds that the item concerns Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.*

#### **8.2 Strategic Disposal and Development of 64–66 McCrae Street Swan Hill**

*CONFIDENTIAL ITEM This item is to be considered at an In Camera meeting in accordance with Section 3(1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2020, this item is to be considered in an incamera meeting on the grounds that the item concerns Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.*

#### **8.3 Strategic Disposal and Development of 42 Monash Drive Swan Hill**

*CONFIDENTIAL ITEM This item is to be considered at an In Camera meeting in accordance with Section 3(1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2020, this item is to be considered in an in camera meeting on the grounds that the item concerns Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.*

## 9 Close of Meeting