

FOCUS AREA: CONNECTING TO MARKETS

Priority Action

UPGRADE MURRAY RIVER CROSSINGS AT SWAN HILL AND TOOLEYBUC TO IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN VICTORIA AND NSW



WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

The Mallee region is a nationally important and internationally respected producer of food and horticultural goods and other products such as mineral sands. Product is exported from the region to domestic and international markets using the region's road and rail network.

Bridges at Swan Hill and Tooleybuc are on strategic freight routes between NSW and Victoria and cater for oversize and higher mass freight vehicles crossing the Murray River.

Single lane bridges at Swan Hill and Tooleybuc are in poor condition and restrict regional and interstate freight movement.

All Murray River crossings have been independently assessed in the 2018 Murray River Crossings Investment Priority Assessment (a VicRoads and NSW Roads and Maritime Services report). The crossings rated poorly against a range of measures including Higher Mass Limits (HML) connectivity, road safety performance, condition of the bridge and proximity to nearest alternative crossing.

The Murray River Crossings assessment provided evidence of the current condition of both bridges, with Swan Hill the first priority for investment, followed by the Tooleybuc bridge as the second short term priority.

PROJECT BENEFITS

The project will:

- Deliver effective and efficient regional freight links within the region and to external markets.
- Improve safety, convenience and connectivity.
- Result in higher mass limit bridges at Swan Hill and Tooleybuc.

RECENT ACTIVITY

The 2018 Murray River Crossings Investment Priority Assessment (prepared by VicRoads and NSW Roads and Maritime Services) has identified the Swan Hill and Tooleybuc bridges as the first and second short term priorities for investment. The report's findings have been endorsed by the Central Murray Regional Transport Forum.

NEXT STEPS

ADVOCACY:

-  Engage with key decision makers, including the Cross Border Commissioner and respective government departments and agencies.
-  Encourage regular project updates including presentations from government project managers.
-  Support funding applications and project delivery.

The Central Murray Regional Transport Forum is an initiative of:



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COMPLETION OF THE MURRAY BASIN RAIL PROJECT TO STANDARDISE AND UPGRADE THE MURRAY BASIN FREIGHT RAIL NETWORK



WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

The region is a nationally important and internationally respected producer of food and horticultural goods and other products such as mineral sands. Product is exported from the region to domestic and international markets using the region's road and rail network.

Rail more efficiently delivers product over long distances in a single movement to port.

The project will better connect key freight centres in Victoria with domestic and export markets.

The project addresses three key problems for the region:

- Restricted access to Victoria's major ports, which can undermine the international competitiveness of bulk products.
- Poor rail network performance, which can increase costs to business.
- Growing road freight movements, which can reduce community amenity.

PROJECT BENEFITS

An increase in axle loading will allow higher freight volumes to be transported by rail, allowing up to 500,000 more tonnes of grain each year and capturing approximately 20,000 journeys currently undertaken by trucks.

Improvements to the regional rail freight network are central to optimising the performance of regional and broader Australian supply chains, and providing efficient access to both export ports and domestic markets.

The benefits of the Murray Basin Rail Project include:

- Reduced costs for industry.
- Increased private investment.
- Improved efficiency and safety of the road network.

The project will benefit Murray Basin producers and pave the way for export industries to compete effectively in domestic and global markets.

The Murray Basin Rail Project will also benefit regional communities through increased business and employment opportunities.

RECENT ACTIVITY

\$440 million has been committed from the Victorian Government and Australian Government:

- Stage One complete: Mildura and Hopetoun rail lines upgraded.
- Stage Two underway: Dunolly to Yelta, Murrayville to Ouyen and Maryborough to Ararat gauge conversion works.
- Stage Three: the Freight Rail Separation project will provide faster and more reliable freight paths by separating freight and passenger trains.

Future Stages: Maryborough to Manangatang and Sea Lake to Korong Vale will commence following completion of Stage Three.

NEXT STEPS

ADVOCACY:



Actively support completion of the Murray Basin Rail Project.



Support and build on the benefits of the Murray Basin rail upgrades to encourage freight transported by rail from the region.

The Central Murray Regional Transport Forum is an initiative of:



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DEFINE HIGH PRODUCTIVITY ROAD NETWORKS AND PRIORITISE UPGRADES



WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

The establishment and expansion of horticultural developments has put pressure on the existing road network including first mile/last mile freight routes.

To reduce supply chain costs, farmers are using higher productivity or higher mass limit vehicles, which negatively impacts a regional road network not originally designed for the increased volume and axle weights of High Productivity Freight Vehicles (HPFVs).

The region currently does not have a clearly defined HPFV network, from farm gate to processing plant, port or markets that encompasses the whole of the region.

The growth of horticulture developments has negatively affected specific collector roads including the Hattah Robinvale Road which is no longer fit for purpose.

Funding to upgrade priority roads needs to be identified.

PROJECT BENEFITS

The project will provide a more effective, safe and efficient freight network, reduce supply chain costs and provide better connectivity with domestic and export markets.

The project will:

- Clearly define the HPFV freight network, from farm gate to processing plants and markets.
- Identify potential funding sources and a project funding structure. The project will examine funding sources from the Australian Government, and state and local governments, as well as contributions from growers and processors.
- Provide an evidence base for funding proposals and priority gaps.

RECENT ACTIVITY

Regional Roads Victoria has commenced a \$1.7 million strengthening and resurfacing project to improve safety and reliability for approximately 2.5 kilometres of the Hattah-Robinvale Road.

NEXT STEPS

CORRIDOR STRATEGIES:

-  Central Murray Regional Transport Forum (CMRTF) to support the completion of corridor strategies that prioritise and define road upgrades.

ADVOCACY:

-  Support the development of funding strategies that enable local road improvements and HPFV access.

The Central Murray Regional Transport Forum is an initiative of:



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IDENTIFY AND UPGRADE LOCAL ROAD ACCESS INCLUDING BRIDGES AND CULVERTS ON PRIORITY TRANSPORT ROUTES



WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

Horticulture is the cornerstone of the Central Murray regional economy with \$1.1 billion in agricultural outputs from the region in 2017. Horticultural outputs are forecast to double over the next decade.

Over 20,000 hectares of new plantings of almonds, olives, table grapes, citrus, dried fruit, other nuts and stone fruit have been approved or are underway. New food processing facilities have also been established in the region.

The agricultural industry, including horticulture is increasingly using High Productivity Freight Vehicles to increase productivity and reduce costs. The use of HPFVs is becoming more frequent with in the region including on local and collector roads not designed to accommodate this type of vehicle. This creates a significant challenge for freight planning, route selection and 'freight from farm gate'.

Bridges and culverts in preferred B-double routes are no longer fit for purpose which creates a significant challenge for freight planning and route selection. Priority routes from farm gate to market are not well defined and there is a lack of data in some areas on the ability of channel bridges and culverts to carry HPFVs.

PROJECT BENEFITS

The project will:

- Improve HPFV access between farms and processing plants and to domestic and export markets.
- Identify strategic local bridge and culvert structures and accommodate HPFV access in irrigated primary production areas.
- Assist council and relevant authority decision making in asset improvement, renewal, maintenance and prioritisation.
- Complete a review of bridge and culvert load limits within the irrigation areas of the region and prioritise upgrades.
- Provide an evidence base for funding applications.

RECENT ACTIVITY

A Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID) bridges and structures report (which included the Campaspe, Swan Hill and Gannawarra Shire Councils) was completed in March 2018. The report will provide the basis for an assessment framework for bridges and structures outside the GMID.

A horticulture supply chain study has commenced which will also discuss local and collector road issues within the broader Mallee region.

NEXT STEPS

COMPLETE A LOCAL ROADS ACCESS STUDY, INCLUDING BRIDGES AND CULVERTS ON PRIORITY TRANSPORT ROUTES:

-  For the Mildura, Wentworth, Balranald and Murray River Shires, based on the 'Structures and Higher Mass Limits Access within the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District' report.
-  Meet with key decision makers to discuss bridge and culvert upgrades and funding sources.

The Central Murray Regional Transport Forum is an initiative of:



2 STATES
7 COUNCILS
1 REGION

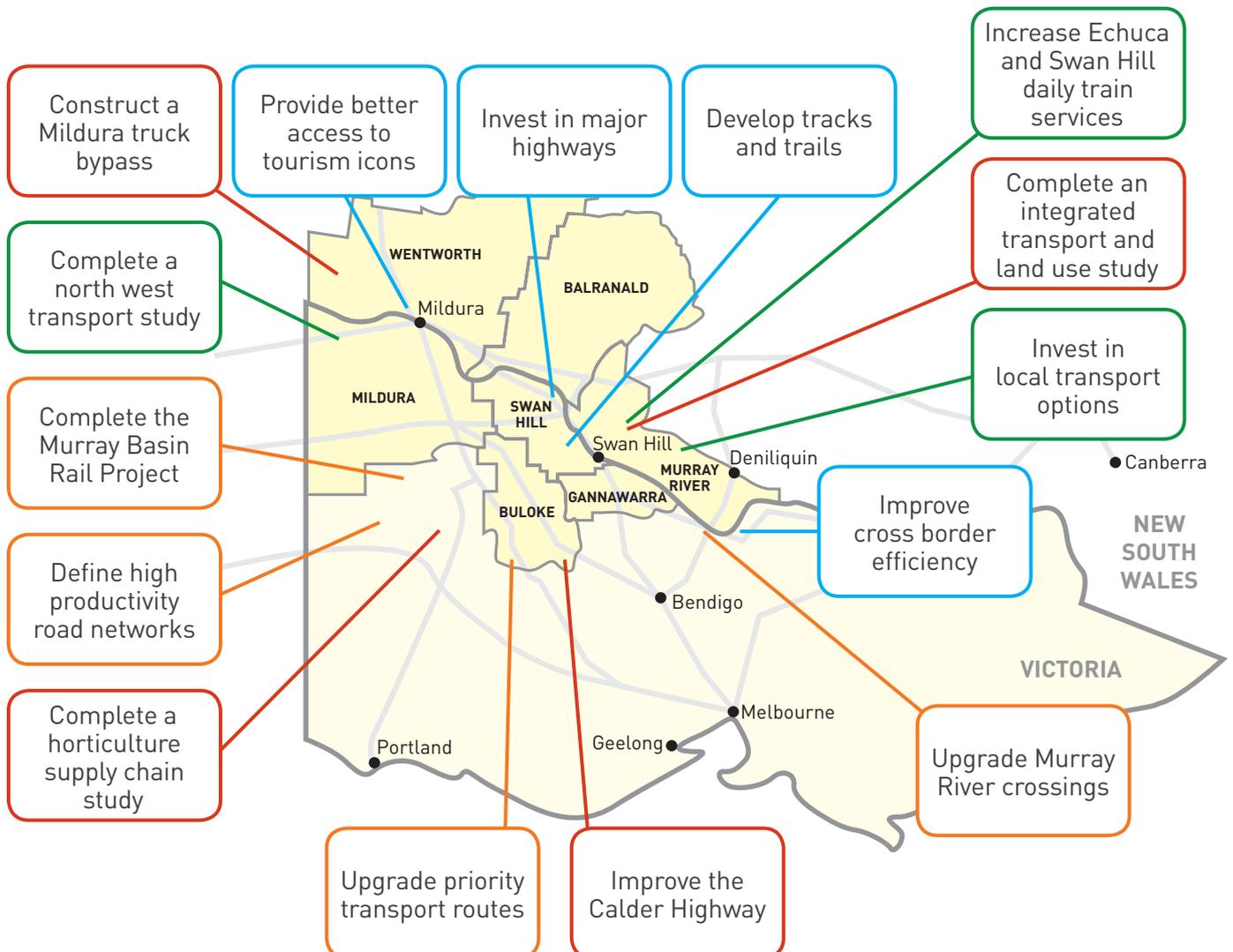
THE CENTRAL MURRAY REGIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM

THE CENTRAL MURRAY REGIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM

The Central Murray Regional Transport Forum (CMRTF) was established in 2010 to identify transport needs and challenges of the Sunraysia/Mallee region and advocate for improvement to the region's transport network.

Comprising councillors and senior staff from the shires of Balranald, Buloke, Gannawarra, Murray River and Wentworth, and the rural cities of Swan Hill and Mildura; the CMRTF has developed a Strategy to clarify the region's transport infrastructure needs and better position the region for the next stages of economic growth and social development.

PRIORITY ACTIONS:



The Central Murray Regional Transport Forum is an initiative of:

