



Business Plan

2021-22



Acknowledgment of Country

**We acknowledge the traditional custodians
of the land on which we live.**

**We recognise their continuing connection
to land, waters and culture and pay our
respects to their Elders past, present
and emerging.**

We support initiatives that encourage greater unity,
knowledge, cultural awareness and respect for the
first occupants of our land.

We work with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners
Aboriginal Corporation, Eastern Maar Aboriginal
Corporation and Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners
Aboriginal Corporation to encourage stronger
community links and local representation.

To the first Australians, the Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*)
has many uses. Its use in ceremonies acknowledges that the tree is a
partial parasite, taking nutrients from its host plant before
establishing itself independently. For visitors to Country this is a
beautiful metaphor to share the resources of the land while caring for
it as if it was their own. It is a reminder of the importance of
cooperation between people if all are to prosper.

Source: <https://www.recreatingthecountry.com.au/>

JobSeeker 12.6%
of 22-64 year olds in
Glenelg reliant on
JobSeeker⁴

\$80 million less

In 2020, visitors spent an
estimated \$620 million in the
region, 11.8% / \$80 million
less than in 2019⁸

14% increase

in intrastate overnight
stays between March
2019 and March 2020⁸

Recovery opportunities

Health/community services
Education/training
Domestic eco/cultural tourism
Advanced manufacturing¹⁴

\$900 million less

In 2020, visitors spent an
estimated \$1.1 billion in the
region, 45.3% / \$900 million
less than in 2019⁶

**\$11 million lost
due to key worker
accommodation crisis⁹**

Digital access

Digital infrastructure and
capability gaps are inhibiting
business adaptation and growth¹⁰

Workforce shortages

4,000 jobs being filled by people
from outside region¹¹

37% fewer OS students
at Deakin University in 2021¹²

Tourism 36% decline

In visitor trips to the region⁷

Job losses 9.3%

fewer payroll jobs in the
Warrnambool and South West
(Colac-Otway, Corangamite,
Moyn, Warrnambool, Southern
Grampians, Glenelg)¹

JobKeeper 54.1%

fewer payroll jobs in the Geelong
SA4 Region (Greater Geelong,
Queenscliffe and Surf Coast)²

Tourism 49.5% decline

In visitor trips to the region⁵

Job losses 9.1%

fewer payroll jobs in the Geelong
SA4 Region (Greater Geelong,
Queenscliffe and Surf Coast)³

Hydrogen Economy

Leverage advantages:
Renewable power
conditions, world-class
generation assets,
research and innovation
capacity, secure water
supplies, electrical
infrastructure, proximity
to markets¹³

Chair's Message

Foreward

The Barwon South West is well known for successful economic transition and has undertaken significant planning to support further economic diversification and growth, benefiting residents across the entire region.

Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have driven a different approach to the 2021-22 RDA BSW Business Plan. Over the past 12 months, immediate barriers to economic recovery have emerged that threaten to impact the region's short and mid-term economic goals. In addition to addressing these recovery barriers, we must also work together to seize emerging opportunities while continuing to support regional stakeholder group initiatives that address our longer-term strategic focus areas.

Priority sectors that have been most negatively impacted by the pandemic include the visitor economy, international education, food processing, and meat and seafood exports. Recommendations to support these sectors through the crisis phase are included in this plan, along with mid-term recommendations to ensure a more resilient economy into the future.

Whilst the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are severe, restarting our economy also presents a unique opportunity for business transformation and growth, allowing us to proactively redesign our economic foundations to achieve a more resilient and prosperous regional economy for the Barwon South West region.



Chair's Message (continued)

2020-21 Achievements

In this challenging pandemic environment, the RDA BSW Committee has provided critical advice to both state and federal governments on the impacts of COVID-19 through participation in regular teleconferences and written submissions on urgent and targeted interventions to support businesses and the visitor economy in our region. We also provided advice on opportunities for growth. Outcome highlights include:

- funding to establish Hycel Technology Hub, the nation's first regional hydrogen hub at Deakin University in Warrnambool
- retention of the Australian Tax Office and associated jobs in Geelong
- temporary COVID disaster payments to support business and worker through ongoing lockdowns

The Geelong City Deal has completed works on three Revitalising Central Geelong projects as it continues to roll out the 10-year program of works.

RDA BSW continued to focus on job creation and enabling and delivering private sector investment through the work of Regional Development Victoria's Investment and Trade team, including establishing the \$23.4 million Private Sector Business Enablement Fund for the Shipwreck Coast region.

We worked with local government and industry to deliver regional projects including:

- Creative Industries Strategy for G21 region
- Great South Coast Economic Futures Implementation Planning
- Geelong City Deal Brand Concept Development
- Brand Geelong Stage 2





Chair's Message (continued)

Activities and Interventions

The immediate barriers to economic recovery that threaten to impact the region's short and mid-term goals include:

- Skilled workforce shortages
- Affordable and accessible housing
- Visitor economy decline
- Digital infrastructure and capability

Key emerging opportunities include:

- Competitive advantage in emerging Hydrogen Economy
- Greater support for regions at state and federal levels
- Increase in migration to regional areas
- Greater opportunity to influence policy
- Opportunity to 'build back better' in a more equitable, environmentally sustainable and socially responsible way.

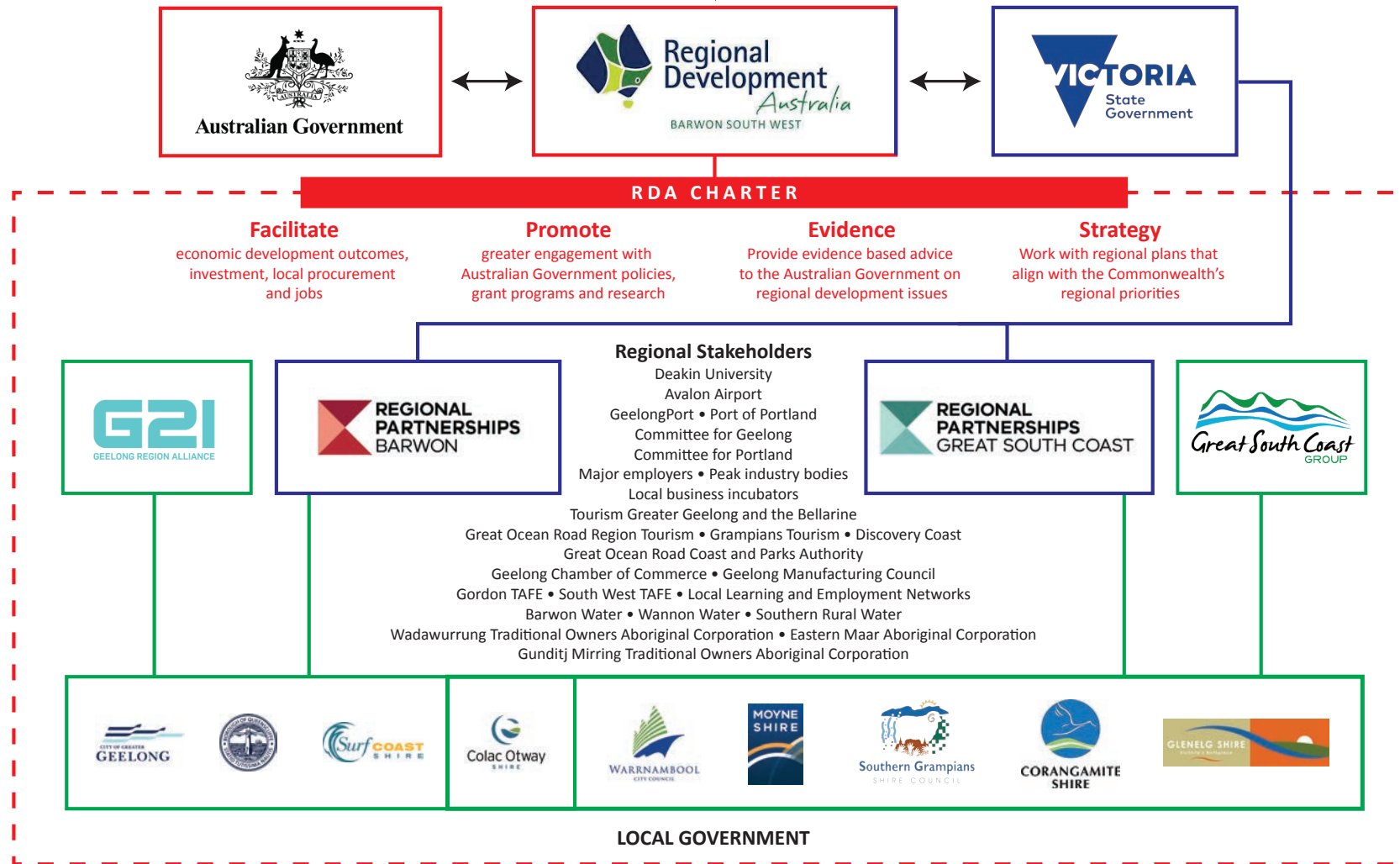
The RDA BSW Committee must operate for maximum impact over the next 12-18 months. We have identified 'interventions' to accelerate collaborative short-term and mid-term outcomes for our region, including clarifying the roles and relationships of our regional stakeholder groups, improving the consistency of our evidence base and strengthening coordination of advocacy efforts from the region.

We look forward to supporting the priorities of our regional stakeholders and will work with them to deliver even stronger outcomes for the region on behalf of the Australian Government.

Bruce Anson

Chair, RDA BSW Committee

RDA & Regional Partnership Integration



The Australian and Victorian Governments are committed to strengthening the regions and building stronger communities through the RDA network. RDA Committees play an important role in their regions by focusing on economic development, facilitating local projects that aim to make a difference for their local communities and promoting government programs.

As part of efforts to support stronger integration between the work and priorities of RDA committees, Regional Partnerships (RPs) and Regional Development Victoria (RDV), up to three RDA Committee members will sit on each RP to ensure there is Commonwealth representation and provide input and advice on priorities requiring Commonwealth investment.

RDA RP members will continue to deliver the requirements of the RDA Charter and support regional economic development planning. RDA RP members will engage, through the RPs, on broader regional issues (economic, social and environmental) and collaborate to leverage public and private investment in the region. This will strengthen RDAs capacity to provide comprehensive advice on socio-economic issues and economic development opportunities for the Victorian and Commonwealth Government to drive economic growth and investment and guide government grant programs and investment decisions by:

- Capitalising on the Regional Partnership model and extend the benefits to the Commonwealth Government
- Delivering a direct entry point for country communities to communicate their priorities, articulate challenges and seek solutions from both State and Commonwealth governments
- Reduce duplication and confusion, so the community can have their issues easily addressed by the appropriate entity
- Improve identification of government and industry investment opportunities
- The response to region-specific priorities will be greatly improved through the connection of Commonwealth and Victorian programs and strategies.

The RDA BSW Committee work with regional stakeholders to fulfil the four Charter objectives illustrated in red above.

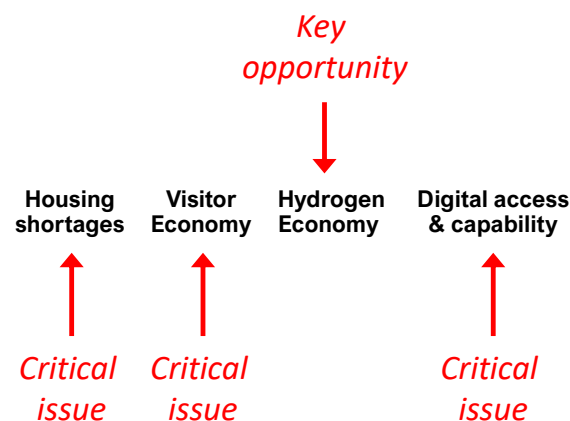
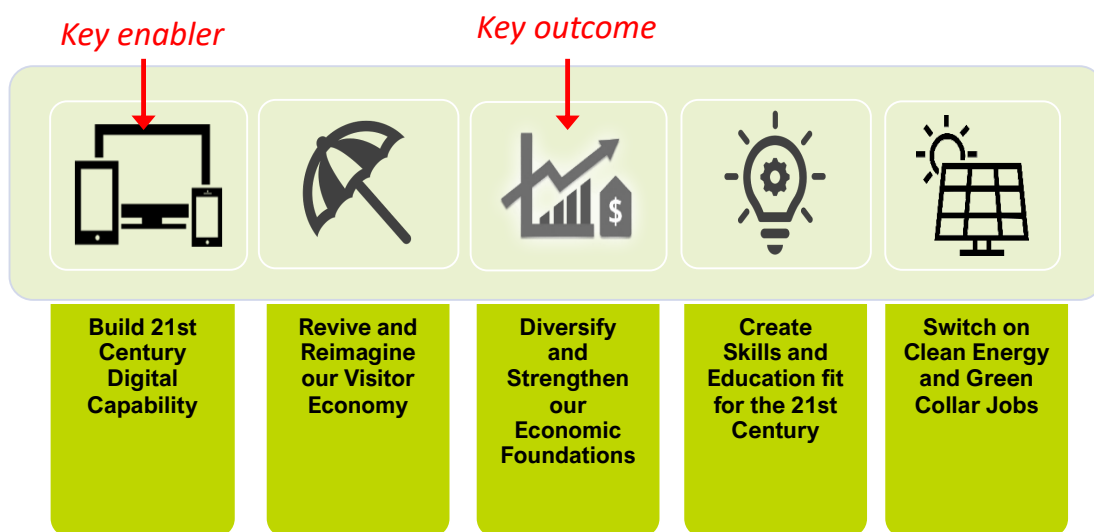
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW OUTCOMES

We consulted with key stakeholder groups (see page 6) to inform our discussion on how the RDA BSW Committee might improve its Charter outcomes. We found:

- Inconsistent understanding of the relevance and value of the RDA Charter objectives
- Several of our key regional stakeholder groups have recently renewed their leadership and/or membership
- Key regional stakeholder groups are currently reviewing their priorities and activities
- Our previous Business Plan's strategic focus is supported by our regional stakeholder groups
- Immediate barriers to economic recovery have been identified by key regional stakeholder groups

Review Strategic Focus

Informed by consultation with key regional stakeholder groups, we reviewed the relevance and prioritisation of the five strategic focus areas of our business plan.



RDA BSW Planning Day

Reviewing our Strategic Focus Areas

In the wake of COVID-19, we determined that the RDA BSW Business Plan needed not only to address mid-term priorities for economic growth, but also to achieve maximum impact for economic recovery over the next 12-18 months, in the lead-up to State and Federal elections. At our planning day we considered:

- Impacts of COVID-19 for the region
- Immediate economic barriers and opportunities
- Exemplar methodology for RDA BSW Committee activities
- How we might better clarify roles, responsibilities and relationships between regional stakeholder groups.

Regional stakeholder group input

To inform our discussion on how the RDA BSW Committee might improve its RDA Charter outcomes, we asked key regional stakeholder groups to provide their opinion on the RDA BSW Committee Strategic Focus Areas, our short and mid-term priorities and the role of the RDA BSW Committee.

Immediate issues

Regional stakeholder groups supported addressing immediate barriers to economic recovery. They viewed a shared regional evidence base and coordination of advocacy effort as high value activities, along with leveraging competitive advantage for growth and supporting mid-term strategic focus areas.

Interventions and actions

This plan presents interventions to address immediate barriers and actions to support initiatives of our regional stakeholder groups in addressing our mid-term strategic focus areas.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

Diversify and Strengthen our Economic Foundations

Build 21st Century Digital Capability

**Revive and Reimagine our
Visitor Economy**

**Create Skills and Education
fit for the 21st Century**

**Switch on Clean Energy
and Green Collar Jobs**

**Affordable
housing for
key workers**

**Direct
support
for
Visitor
Economy**

**Address
immediate skill
and workforce
shortages**

**Digital
access and
capability
gaps**

**Hydrogen
Economy
competitive
advantage
activities**

INTERVENTIONS

Objectives

Support regional stakeholder priorities

Provide evidence, policy information and advocacy support for priority projects of regional stakeholder groups aligning with our Strategic Focus Areas.

Use and maintain shared evidence base

Improve consistency of use and confidence in regional data sets.

Coordinate advocacy effort

Work with regional stakeholder groups to present consistent messaging, priorities and evidence for regional initiatives.

Interventions

Address economic recovery barriers


Housing, workforce and skills, digital access and Visitor Economy.

Seize economic growth opportunities

Leverage competitive advantage in Hydrogen Economy.

Improve evidence and advocacy

Establish a shared database of evidence to inform regional priorities and coordinate advocacy efforts.

<div>  <div>Regional Development Australia BARWON SOUTH WEST</div> </div> <div>RDA Barwon South West 2021 Draft Engagement Plan</div>									
	March / April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
RDA BSW Committee Meetings		• 21 May 2021			• 20 August (TBC)		• 15 October (TBC)		• 3 December (TBC)
RDA BSW Chair & Deputy Chair Engagement		• 18 May – Chair to meet with Nous Group prior to RDA Chairs & Directors Workshop • 28 May 2021 - Greater Geelong Hydrogen Technology Cluster Launch - VIP Event	• 15 – 17 June RDA National Forum				<div>REDS Development</div>		
			Intervention activities					Regional stakeholder forum	
RDA BSW Committee Member Engagement	• 2 March – RDA Regional Tourism Town Hall Teleconference • RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • Regions Rising (17 – 18 March)	• RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • 5 May 2021 – Infrastructure Australia Workshop – Regional Strengths & Gaps • 20 May Regions Rising Webinar	• 9 June - RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • 17 June – GSC RP Meeting	• 14 July - RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • 7 July – Barwon RP Meeting	• 11 August - RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • Regions Rising Webinar • 6 August – GSC RP Meeting • 4 & 5 August – Regional Partnership State Forum • 6 August – G21 Stakeholder Forum	• 8 September - RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino)	• 13 October - RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • Regions Rising Webinar • 6 October – Barwon RP Meeting • 15 October – GSC RP Meeting	• 10 November - RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • Regions Rising – Victorian State event in Shepparton • 16 – 18 November SEGRA (Kalgoorlie Boulder WA)	• 8 December - RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino)
RDA BSW Administration / Reports (due date)				• 2 July - 2021/2022 RDA BSW Business Plan		• 30 September – RDA Annual Outcomes Report	• 31 October – Audited Financials	Regional stakeholder forum	
			Evidence base development						
RDA Victorian Chairs network	• RDA Chairs Induction	• 27 May 2021 – RDA Chairs & Directors Workshop		• 1 July – RDA Chairs & Directors Workshop • 7 July – RDA Chairs Catchup	• 18 August – RDA Chairs Catchup	• 29 September – RDA Chairs Catchup		• 10 November – RDA Chairs Catchup	• 22 Dec – RDA Chairs Catchup
RDA BSW Media & Public Engagement	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots • Web update • Visitor Economy Videos	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots • Web update	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots • Web Update	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots
<div> <div>• RDA Chairs Network (6 weekly)</div> <div>• RDA Executive Catchup (6 weekly)</div> <div>• RDA Teleconferences with Minister Marino (monthly)</div> <div>• RDA Town Hall Teleconferences (Ad Hoc)</div> </div>									

Annual Work Plan

Establish a shared evidence base

- Develop and distribute framework for evidence base
- Seek evidence from key regional stakeholder groups to fill identified gaps

Brown Bag Briefing Series

- Deliver a series of **out-of-session** briefings with key stakeholders to share information and collaborate where appropriate on immediate barriers and opportunities
- Clarify roles, share evidence and provide intelligence on key interventions to improve economic outcomes

Regional Forum

- Hold the inaugural Regional Stakeholder Forum to better integrate work and priorities of RDA committees, Regional Partnerships (RPs), Regional Development Victoria (RDV) and Local Government Areas (LGAs)
- Establish protocols for using and maintaining shared evidence base, confirm roles and responsibilities of key regional stakeholder groups
- Coordinate key messaging and advocacy effort

Address barriers and opportunities

Continue to work with key stakeholders across the region to support the required interventions that will address:

- Affordable housing for key workers
- Direct support for Visitor Economy
- Address skill and workforce shortages
- Digital access and capability gaps
- Hydrogen Economy competitive advantage activities

RDA Barwon South West 2022 Draft Engagement Plan

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September
RDA BSW Committee Meetings		11 February (TBC)		15 April (TBC)		17 June (TBC)		19 August (TBC)	
RDA BSW Chair & Deputy Chair Engagement			• Possible Canberra Delegation			• RDA National Forum (TBC)			
	REDS Development								
	Intervention activities								
RDA BSW Committee Member Engagement	• RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino)	• RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • Barwon RP Meeting • Portfolio Briefings (TBC)	• RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • GSC RP Meeting • Regions Rising Webinar Series (TBC) • RDA Town Hall Teleconference (TBC)	• RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • Barwon RP Meeting • Portfolio Briefings (TBC)	• RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • GSC RP Meeting • Regions Rising Webinar Series (TBC) • RDA Town Hall Teleconference (TBC)	• RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • Barwon RP Meeting • Portfolio Briefings (TBC)	• RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • GSC RP Meeting • Regions Rising Webinar Series (TBC) • RDA Town Hall Teleconference (TBC)	• RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • Barwon RP Meeting • G21 Stakeholder Forum • Portfolio Briefings (TBC)	• RDA Teleconference (Minister Marino) • GSC RP Meeting
RDA BSW Administration / Reports (due date)							• 2022/2023 RDA BSW Business Plan		RDA BSW Annual Outcomes Report 2021/2022
	Evidence base maintenance								
RDA Victorian Chairs network	•	• 2 Feb – RDA Chairs Catchup	16 March – RDA Chairs Catchup	• 27 April – RDA Chairs Catchup	•	• 8 June – RDA Chairs Catchup	20 July – RDA Chairs Catchup	• 31 August – RDA Chairs Catchup	•
RDA BSW Media & Public Engagement	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots • Web update • Visitor Economy Videos	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots • Web update	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots • Web Update	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots	• Social media posts • G21 Snapshots

• RDA Chairs Network (6 weekly)

• RDA Executive Catchup (6 weekly)

• RDA Teleconferences with Minister Marino (2nd Wednesday of each month)

• RDA Town Hall Teleconferences (Ad Hoc)

Annual Work Plan (continued)

Support regional initiatives and projects that progress our strategic focus areas:

- Diversify and Strengthen our Economic Foundations
- Build 21st Century Digital Capability
- Revive and Reimagine our Visitor Economy
- Create Skills and Education fit for the 21st Century
- Switch on Clean Energy and Green Collar Jobs

Identify and facilitate economic development opportunities that leverage private and public sector investment in the BSW region.

Identify and facilitate opportunities that will deliver jobs growth and local procurement outcomes in the BSW region.

Provide seed funding support to projects and initiatives that will accelerate outcomes in our intervention areas and/or strategic focus areas.

Recovery Planning and Strategic Planning

Provide strong leadership and support the development of regional response plans with industry action groups driving COVID-19 recovery in the BSW region.

Play a lead role in contributing to the post-COVID 19 recovery ensuring rural and regional considerations communicated to the Victorian and Australian Governments.

Work with the Victorian Government to develop Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) for each of the Regional Partnership regions to ensure the plans address Commonwealth regional priorities.

RDA Barwon South West Committee

2021-22



Bruce Anson
Chair



Elaine Carbines AM
Deputy Chair



Peter Brown



Peter Dorling



Dr Michael King



Alison McLeod



Darryl Mohr



Liz Price



Anita Rank



Brendan Ryan



David Spear



Grant Sutherland



Andrew Westlake



Paul Roth
*Director of Regional
Development*



Kathy Timmins
Investment & Trade



Meg Bullen
Planning & Coordination



Lyn Moore
Senior Project Officer

EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

Our team

About our Committee

RDA Barwon South West committee members are selected for their business expertise in the region's key economic areas. The high calibre team has global, national and local experience in advanced manufacturing, digital capability, agriculture, education, tourism and energy.

Underpinning this expertise is the deep political experience of the chair, Bruce Anson who was the Warrnambool CEO for 11 years, and the Deputy Chair, Elaine Carbines AM, who was formerly a Victorian Member of Parliament and CEO of Geelong Regional Alliance G21. The team has extensive networks and experience supporting economic outcomes.

Read more about our Committee members at <https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/regional-development-australia/barwon-south-west/about-us#who>

Executive support

The Director of Regional Development provides strategic and operational leadership to the RDA BSW Committee and the executive support team. The executive support team promotes the region's activities to all levels of government, industry, business and community, highlighting competitive advantages and encouraging decentralisation and relocation opportunities. They oversee RDA projects and report on activities, including the management and monitoring of the Commonwealth and State grants programs.

Regional Development Victoria's Investment and Trade team lead private investment facilitation activities on behalf of RDA BSW. This work directly contributes to outcomes that support economic growth, investment and job creation.

RDA BSW executive support has offices at each end of the region in Geelong and Warrnambool and will soon establish an office in Portland.

Top 5 Strategic Focus Areas

- 1. Build 21st Century Digital Capability** – for our region to remain economically competitive and recover from the impacts of COVID-19, investment in digital infrastructure is required urgently. Reliable connectivity will activate business transformation and growth by driving investment in digital platforms, technology and digital skills development.
- 2. Revive and Reimagine Our Visitor Economy** – leverage our region's world-renowned natural assets and the \$370 million public investment in the Geelong City Deal to drive private sector investment in high-value tourism and Indigenous cultural tourism product development opportunities.
- 3. Diversify and Strengthen our Economic Foundations** – pathway prospective new high value opportunities, taking advantage of the region's comparative advantages and latent potential.
- 4. Create Skills and Education Fit for the 21st Century** – urgent support needed to activate the economic contribution of the education sector in our region (deeply impacted by COVID-19), as well as medium and longer term need to ensure a strong and well aligned pipeline of people with the skills and capabilities required to meet industry demand - now and in future.
- 5. Switch on Clean Energy and Green Collar Jobs** – harness compelling regional advantages including the skilled manufacturing workforce to create a path to a greener energy grid, new fixed and distributed power applications and a potential new export sector and facilitate establishment of circular economy waste as a resource project.

Top Business Activities

- 1. Deliver the RDA Brown Bag Briefing Series** - a series of out-of-session briefings with key stakeholders to share information and collaborate where appropriate on immediate barriers and opportunities in the Barwon South West region.
- 2. Hold the inaugural RDA BSW Regional Stakeholder Forum** to promote coordinated advocacy effort and regional prioritization.
- 3. Lead engagement activities** that will contribute to the development of the Victorian Government's Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) in our region to ensure alignment with RDA BSW strategic focus areas and ensure the plans address the Commonwealth regional priorities.
- 4. Invest in regional initiatives** that will enable high value growth and diversification opportunities that will support our region's recovery and transformation and address barriers to economic recovery – Delivering Key Worker Housing in the Barwon South West, Understanding the Spirit Traveller to unlock the opportunity for Regional Victoria and other projects that support our strategic focus or intervention areas.
- 5. Work with all levels of government** to deliver targeted interventions that support outcomes in our mid-term intervention focus areas.
- 6. Provide regional recovery advice to government** on actions and interventions required to support the needs of sectors hardest hit by COVID-19 - the tourism, events, hospitality, arts, entertainment, retail and university sectors - and ensure there are localised pathways that support targeted economic recovery for these sectors.

RDA Charter

The RDA Charter outlines the role and expectations of the Australian Government to the future activities of the RDA Committees. The Charter has four elements and collaborating with other RDA Committees, all levels of government, and the private sector, RDA Committees will:

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

Strategic Focus Areas and Interventions

In addition to our five strategic focus areas RDA BSW has identified five interventions to address immediate barriers to economic recovery and seize economic growth opportunities.

These interventions will guide the Committee's efforts over the next 12 – 18 months:

- Affordable housing for key workers
- Direct support for Visitor Economy
- Address skill and workforce shortages
- Digital access and capability gaps
- Hydrogen Economy competitive advantage activities.



Pictured above is the frame of the Eel Aquaculture Centre, with Eel holding tank already in place. Once complete the Centre will be an interactive space where visitors can view and learn about the life cycle of eels and their important place in the culture of the Gunditjmara people, as well as enjoy food and drink at the on-site café. The Centre is located at Lake Condah (Tae Rak), where eels were farmed for food and trade over thousands of years and evidence of sophisticated engineered traps and channels along the lava flow still remains.

Budj Bim Cultural Landscape – UNESCO World Heritage Site

“The Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, located in the traditional Country of the Gunditjmara people in south-eastern Australia, consists of three serial components containing one of the world’s most extensive and oldest aquaculture systems. The Budj Bim lava flows provide the basis for the complex system of channels, weirs and dams developed by the Gunditjmara in order to trap, store and harvest kooyang (short-finned eel – Anguilla australis). The highly productive aquaculture system provided an economic and social base for Gunditjmara society for six millennia. The Budj Bim Cultural Landscape is the result of a creational process narrated by the Gunditjmara as a deep time story, referring to the idea that they have always lived there. From an archaeological perspective, deep time represents a period of at least 32,000 years. The ongoing dynamic relationship of Gunditjmara and their land is nowadays carried by knowledge systems retained through oral transmission and continuity of cultural practice.”

Strategic Plan Alignment

The BSW region boasts several mature and accomplished regional alliances, partnerships and networks. These organisations undertake extensive community consultation to inform the region’s well-developed regional strategic plans, growth plans and agreed regional priorities.

In recognition of the complimentary roles and differentiated responsibilities across these organisations, RDA BSW endeavours not to duplicate but to align, add value and identify opportunities to achieve common objectives.

Our work aligns with key regional stakeholder group strategic plans, including the G21 Geelong Region Plan, Great South Coast Region Growth Plan, Geelong Economic Futures, Great South Coast Economic Futures, Our Country Our Plan, Visitor Economy Master Plan for the Great Ocean Road Region (draft), and the Great Ocean Road Action Plan.

Regional Economic Development Strategies

RDA BSW will work with the Victorian Government to develop Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) for each of our Regional Partnership regions to ensure the plans address the Commonwealth regional priorities.

The REDS will provide a consistent evidence base and the strategic framing of economic opportunities to coordinate investment and activity in each region. The REDS methodology, approach and timing is consistent with the requirements and best practice parameters for the Strategic Regional Plan requirements in that they will:

- be living documents, with a long-term timeframe
- be underpinned by extensive engagement with targeted stakeholders
- describe strategic directions based on areas of comparative advantage
- identify opportunities
- take into consideration the strategic policy environment at a national, state and local level.

OBJECTIVE ONE

Facilitate regional economic development outcomes, investment, jobs and local procurement

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- a. Provide details and/or a copy of a suitable existing strategic Regional Plan that your RDA is contributing to or that your RDA is developing in accordance with the Charter and the RDA Better Practice Guide.
- b. Provide details of the investment (in dollar terms), jobs (number), local procurement opportunities (in dollar terms) and other regional development outcomes that your RDA will facilitate (for planning purposes) or has facilitated (for reporting purposes) for your region during this financial year. Please separate these in terms of outcomes that your RDA has: Led/championed – heavily involved with the outcome, or Contributed to – moderately involved with the outcome, or Otherwise assisted – marginally involved with the outcome. Examples of these levels of involvement are at item A.3.3 of your 2021-25 funding agreement.

What will we do?

- 1. Identify economic development opportunities that leverage private and public-sector investment in the Barwon South West region**
 - Engage with organisations or potential investors to identify and create investment opportunities (L)
 - Facilitate new investment in the region, assisting local businesses and industry to invest, create and retain jobs (C)
 - Seek and encourage procurement decisions and activities that maximise benefits for the region, including local supply chain, job creation and the delivery of skills development and training (L)
- 2. Advocate for and drive interventions to address immediate economic barriers and opportunities**
 - Affordable housing for key workers (L & C)
 - Direct support for Visitor Economy (C)
 - Address immediate skill and workforce shortages (C)
 - Digital access and capability gaps (C)
 - Hydrogen Economy competitive advantage activities (C)
- 3. Advocate for investment into initiatives that align with RDA BSW Strategic Focus areas (L)**

Anticipated Outcomes

Level of involvement

Refer to the activities opposite under “What will we do?”

- (L) = RDA BSW Committee lead or champion this initiative
(C) = RDA BSW Committee contribute to this activity
(O) = RDA BSW Committee otherwise assist this activity.

Expected timeframes

Refer to schedule on pages 9-10.

Anticipated outcomes

- Increased economic opportunities and investment in the Barwon South West region.
- Barriers to economic recovery reduced.
- Emerging opportunities for economic growth progressed.
- Regional stakeholder group initiatives aligning with RDA BSW strategic focus areas are supported.

OBJECTIVE TWO

Promote greater regional awareness of and engagement with Australian Government policies, grant programs and research

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- a. Provide details of where you have supported awareness raising and/or engagement
- b. Number of submissions supported.

What will we do?

1. Engage with key stakeholders to raise awareness of Australian Government grant programs, policies and research

- Facilitate stakeholder meetings or briefings to promote and or assist in the delivery of Australian Government programs (L)
- Represent the Australian Government on the Barwon Regional Partnership and the Great South Coast Regional Partnership to connect Australian Government's regional programs and align regional development priorities across the three levels of government, industry and/or community (L)

2. Use targeted communication channels to raise awareness of Australian Government grant programs, policies and research Meetings

- Disseminate information on Australian Government policies and grant programs via existing communication channels including newsletters, stakeholder campaigns, social media and websites (L)

3. Support stakeholders to develop project proposals to access Commonwealth grant program

- Assist potential stakeholders to identify and prepare competitive applications, supporting documents and evidence (C)
- RDA BSW will provide letters of support for applicants for grant applications where the project will contribute to long term economic growth and is a priority within our region (L)

Anticipated Outcomes

Level of involvement

Refer to the activities opposite under "What will we do?"

(L) = RDA BSW Committee lead or champion this initiative

(C) = RDA BSW Committee contribute to this activity

(O) = RDA BSW Committee otherwise assist this activity.

Expected timeframes

Refer to schedule on pages 9-10.

Anticipated outcomes

- Improved understanding of the roles of the RDA BSW Committee and other regional stakeholder groups.
- Improved understanding of the relationships between regional stakeholder groups and the Victorian and Australian Governments.
- Improved consistency of messaging.
- Stronger advocacy outcomes in lead-up to state and federal elections.

OBJECTIVE THREE

Contribute to Commonwealth regional policy making by providing intelligence and evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on regional development issues

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- a. Outline instances where you have provided intelligence and evidence-based advice to the Australian Government
- b. Number of instances information / feedback was provided.

What will we do?

1. Engage with key stakeholders to clarify roles, share evidence and coordinate advocacy effort and advice to government

- Develop evidence base with links that support the strategic focus areas (L)
- Seek evidence from key regional stakeholder groups to fill identified gaps (L)
- Interview leaders of key regional stakeholder groups to inform RDA BSW decision making (L)
- Deliver RDA BSW Regional Stakeholder Forum (L)
- Confirm roles and responsibilities of key regional stakeholder groups (C)
- Coordinate advocacy effort, with a particular focus on the lead-up to state and federal elections (C)

2. Provide evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on critical regional development issues; and provide information on regional activities and competitive advantages to all levels of government, industry, business and community sectors.

- RDA BSW will deliver advice, in the form of reports, briefings or submissions, to the Australian Government on critical regional development issues and priorities for our region (L)
- Contribute to the Regional Intelligence Briefing teleconferences and Town Hall series (L)
- Meet with members of parliament to discuss regional matters (L)
- Submissions to parliamentary enquiries (L)
- Departmental surveys and submissions (L)

Anticipated Outcomes

Level of involvement

Refer to the activities opposite under “What will we do?”

(L) = RDA BSW Committee lead or champion this initiative

(C) = RDA BSW Committee contribute to this activity

(O) = RDA BSW Committee otherwise assist this activity.

Expected timeframes

Refer to schedule on pages 9-10.

Anticipated outcomes

- Reduction of duplication and inconsistent evidence.
- Improved confidence in regional evidence.
- Consistency of the evidence referenced across all regional stakeholder groups.
- Better identification of evidence gaps.
- Improved regional insight for all stakeholder groups.

OBJECTIVE FOUR

Contribute to regional policy making by providing intelligence and evidence-based advice for and on behalf of the Victorian Government

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Outcomes and performance indicators being sought by State Government
- Activities that will contribute to the achievement of common outcomes and performance indicators
- Number of activities that will contribute to the achievement of state government

What will we do?

- Work with the Victorian Government to develop Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) for each of our Regional Partnership regions to ensure the plans address the Commonwealth regional priorities (C)**
- Work with the RDA Victorian Network in partnership with the Victorian Government.**
 - Contribute to the Victorian RDA's three agreed priorities collectively (C)
 - RDA Digital Opportunities Project that will help address Victoria's rural and regional divide (C)
 - RDA Local Government Engagement Project to help forge stronger relationships with LGA's and alignment of economic objectives (C)
 - RDA Economic Development Investment Facilitation Project to build a stronger understanding of private sector investment opportunities and alignment with RDA regional strategies. (C)
- Work with the Victorian Government's Regional Partnerships and Regional Development Victoria**
 - Maximise outcomes for the Victorian Regional Partnerships by providing advice to the Commonwealth on Regional Partnership priorities that align with the RDA Charter and RDA BSW Business Plan (L)
 - Leverage Commonwealth Funding programs and provide advice to regional stakeholders on current Commonwealth programs, particularly where there is opportunity for joint funding (C)

Anticipated Outcomes

Level of involvement

Refer to the activities opposite under "What will we do?"

(L) = RDA BSW Committee lead or champion this initiative

(C) = RDA BSW Committee contribute to this activity

(O) = RDA BSW Committee otherwise assist this activity.

Expected timeframes

Refer to schedule on pages 9-10.

Anticipated outcomes

- Alignment of Victorian Government Regional Economic Development Strategies with Commonwealth regional priorities.
- More opportunities for regional communities to engage on local digital investment priorities.
- Enablement of initiatives that help address Victoria's rural and regional digital divide.
- Recommendations and issues identified in RDV's nine Regional Digital Plans are addressed.
- Stronger relationships between RDA Committees and LGAs with deeper understanding of aligned economic objectives.
- Improved capacity for RDAs and LGAs to identify and develop private sector opportunities.

Communications

2021-22



Evidence & Advocacy

Communications strategy

A communications strategy has been developed for RDA BSW. The communications strategy defines how RDA BSW will engage with stakeholders and leverage new and existing channels to promote the work of the committee and the priorities of the region.

Communications channels & schedule

Key communication activities are included in the RDA Barwon South West 2021 Draft Engagement Plan (see pages 9-10).

Key channels include both RDA BSW and regional stakeholder group assets including:

- Direct email
- Social media
- Websites
- Newsletters
- Reports
- Submissions
- Promotional videos
- Workshops
- Meetings
- Regional forums
- Regional delegations
- Brown Bag Briefing Series

Context

BARWON SOUTH WEST REGION

The Barwon South West regional context is unique in Victoria and, indeed, Australia. Within the region is **Victoria's second biggest city, Geelong**, which has a strong sense of identity and is experiencing population growth more than most other regional cities in Australia.

The region comprises two sub-regions, Barwon and the Great South Coast (GSC). The Barwon sub-region encompasses the local government areas of **Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe, Colac Otway and Surf Coast**. The GSC encompasses the local government areas of **Warrnambool City, Moyne, Corangamite, Glenelg and Southern Grampians**.

The residential population of the BSW region was **403,569 people in 2017**. The region abuts the nation's largest population growth corridor (west of Melbourne), and it is expected the region will reach a population of more than **480,000 by 2022**.

The BSW has three economies: one inland which is founded on agriculture; one on the coast that is dominated by tourism and amenity lifestyles; and one in Geelong which has a diverse economic and social base.

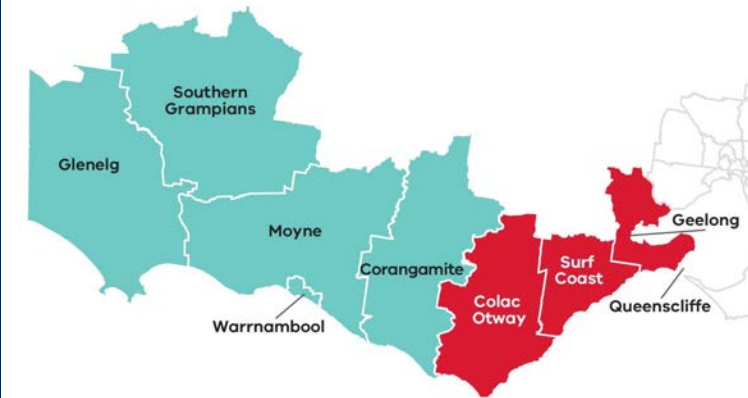
The main industries are manufacturing, retail trade, health care, construction, education and training, agriculture, forestry, fishing and tourism. Manufacturing, health and retail trade are currently the largest employing industries, although the economy has significant opportunities for growth in new energy, advanced manufacturing and food security industries.

Environmentally, the BSW enjoys higher than average rainfall and wind, providing us with ongoing competitive strengths in agriculture, food, renewable and clean energy production. The region also boasts nearly **forty percent of Victoria's coastline**, including marine national parks, the **Surf Coast**, the **Shipwreck Coast** and the iconic **Great Ocean Road**.

Beyond the coast are diverse and vulnerable landscapes including the **UNESCO World Heritage listed Budj Bim**, areas of State Forest and National Park, internationally significant wetlands, the **Grampians** and **Otway Ranges** and highly productive timber and agricultural land.

The region has a wide selection of **tertiary education providers** including a multi-campus university, two TAFE colleges and various private providers operating throughout the region. It also boasts a significant transport network, with infrastructure that includes the **Port of Geelong** and **Port of Portland, Avalon Airport**, Princes Highway Transport Corridor, passenger and freight rail infrastructure.

About the region



Appendices

Appendix 1 – RDA BSW Economic Recovery Submission to Commonwealth Support business adaptation and economic transformation (Page 3-4)

Priority Objective:

Provide economic stimulus programs facilitating business adaptation and industry transformation to areas that are growing and are sustainable.

Top Priorities:

- A. Fast track funding and implementation of major projects in the region already approved and committed to in the Geelong City Deal, prioritising the construction of:
 - i. the Geelong Convention Centre, and
 - ii. the Twelve Apostles Precinct.
- B. Pilot Avalon Airport as a low risk ‘travel bubble’ for people to move between states, territories and other nations – leveraging its geographic location, existing infrastructure, and existing quarantine facilities to limit risk.
- C. Fast track investment and implementation in a Portland Economic Diversification stimulus package.
- D. Fast track investment to address priority digital infrastructure supply shortfalls, including mobile coverage, and access to business-grade broadband to support improved digital connectivity in line with recommendations in the region’s Digital Plans.

Recommendations:

Short Term (Crisis Management)

1. Accelerate planning approvals for major public and private sector projects in the region, with approval specifically conditional on actions creating stimulus – such as bringing forward construction start dates, mandating local content and employment requirements (as has been done for the Geelong City Deal), and quotas for new apprentices and trainees.
2. Accelerate the implementation of small to medium sized Local Government Community and Economic Infrastructure Projects - mandating content and employment provision targeting regional businesses and local job seekers.

3. Resource Regional Tourism Boards to facilitate industry development programs enabling business re-building and transition initiatives to support adaption of tourism businesses, and implement new tactical marketing campaigns timed to align with approved easing of travel restrictions.
4. Resource our region’s established innovation precincts to provide impacted businesses with specific opportunities to participate in business model adaptation and redesign programs -enabling transition of output and employment from areas at risk into those that are growing and sustainable.
5. Mandate local content provisions for publicly funded stimulus projects - ensuring revenue and employment outcomes are retained within the region to multiply local economic recovery objectives.
6. Enhance business confidence by reducing the financial risk of making new business investments, by providing additional immediate tax incentives - such as instant asset write-offs and deduction, targeted stimulus payments and payroll tax reductions.

Medium Term (Stabilisation and Recovery)

7. Fast track approval, funding and implementation to support investment in major projects that support high value economic diversification in the region, with a focus on:
 - i. High-value agriculture - delivering sustainable high value food precincts critical to the nation’s food security;
 - ii. Renewable energy - as a priority industry sector and vital part of the future energy mix integral to supporting economic growth and diversification in the region; and
 - iii. Tourism - implementation of the BSW Visitor Economy Investment Pipeline, including Traditional Owner opportunities.
8. Fast track policy and provide a supportive regulatory framework to progress \$3-5 billion worth of investment ready renewable energy projects located in the BSW region.
9. Accelerate implementation of the Great Ocean Road Action Plan and establishment of the Great Ocean Road and Parks Authority (GORAPA), enabling coordinated land management to support sustainable tourism in the Great Ocean Road region.
10. Use the bilateral 10-year Geelong City Deal Agreement as a framework for increased investment into current and emerging economic stimulus projects.

Appendices

Appendix 2 – RDA BSW Economic Recovery Submission to Commonwealth Transformation of our labour market (Page 3-4)

Priority Objective:

Facilitate development of shorter labour market supply chains, using local education and training capabilities to close key skills gaps and meet demand from new and emerging growth sectors.

Top Priorities:

- E. Fast track the additional \$18 million Federal and State Government investment required for the next phase of the Hycel Technology Hub, positioning the region as a national leader in hydrogen energy knowledge and skills - testing and demonstrating new technologies, and leveraging new growth opportunities in the emerging world-wide market for clean hydrogen energy.
- F. Provide resources to extend reach and amplify the impact of local and regional job boards, matching local employment opportunities (demand) with local job seekers (supply), for example - the Geelong Careers initiative.
- G. Implement a National Employment Scheme to create employment opportunities for job seekers in: surge industries such as health and cleaning; local and community initiatives and projects; and state and national infrastructure projects.
- H. Mandate and provide support for a quota of apprenticeships and traineeships for publicly funded stimulus projects - targeting key skills gap areas and delivering new employment opportunities for young people.

Recommendations:

Short Term (Crisis Management)

- 11. Develop a national response to address the disruption to regional and rural high school students to ensure they remain engaged and active in their studies, and have clear pathways to further education and employment.

- 12. Improve digital infrastructure and capability building in education/training facilities to support students.
- 13. Provide financial support in the form of wage subsidies or tax incentives to limit disruption to practical placements required for completion of TAFE and tertiary qualifications.
- 14. Facilitate domestic and international labour mobility pathways - enabling employers to directly recruit high-skilled people to address key skills gaps and hard to fill job roles that are crucial for business continuity, growth, and essential services.
- 15. Provide job seekers and businesses impacted by COVID-19 with specific opportunities to accelerate the development of digital skills focused on business model innovation and customer acquisition – using our region's established innovation precincts and programs.

Medium Term (Stabilisation and Recovery)

- 16. Fast track the funding for the key findings and recommendations of the National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy, with specific focus on:
 - i. improving access to tertiary study options for regional students including access to reliable and fast internet services;
 - ii. more flexible financial support arrangements for regional students;
 - iii. a regionally-based model for professional career advice; and
 - iv. increasing research capacity of regional universities.
- 17. Invest in building a stronger regional learning system focused on skills development, by improving links and collaboration between employers (demand), training providers, and job seekers (supply) to support the priority growth areas of high value agriculture, advanced manufacturing and renewable energy.

Appendices

Appendix 3 – RDA BSW Economic Recovery Submission to Commonwealth Create shorter, diversified and more durable industry supply chains (Page 3-4)

Priority Objective:

Facilitate development of shorter, diversified and more durable industry supply chains, prioritising input quality and consistency of supply ahead of lowest cost.

Top Priorities:

- I. Collaborate with the university sector to provide additional financial and social support to displaced international students; as well as communication and marketing activities to rapidly rebuild the reputation of Australia as a safe, caring and desirable destination for the multi-billion dollar international student market.
- J. Use existing infrastructure at Avalon Airport as a priority entry and exit point for state and international airfreight, leveraging its geographic location, spacious site, and existing quarantine facilities to limit risk.
- K. Fast track investment from the Victorian Higher Education Investment Fund to establish a National Centre of Composite Materials at Deakin University's Geelong Future Economy Precinct, to support industrial scale capabilities across the full composite value chain, leveraging the increasing opportunity in this fast-growing sector and utilising the existing capability of the region's advanced manufacturing industry.

Recommendations:

Short Term

- 18. Provide funding to facilitate adaptation and uptake of local supply chain opportunities to support immediate industry supply shortfalls.
- 19. Prioritise immediate local supply opportunities for publicly funded stimulus projects - for example manufacturing composite sleepers for rail projects and upgrades, and supply of locally manufactured modular kits for social housing projects.

Medium Term (Stabilisation and Recovery)

- 20. Facilitate the development of advanced circular economy supply chain technologies that can be commercialised to open up new markets, jobs and growth – by leveraging the region's capabilities and emerging expertise at Deakin University.
- 21. Initiate an import replacement program to identify and activate opportunities for investment in the development of local supply chain opportunities - leveraging industry capability, improved business continuity, and greater sovereignty in the event global supply chains are disrupted.

Appendices

Appendix 4

Economic Impacts of COVID-19 (Page 3)

1. From the start of the pandemic job losses peaked in April, prior to firms gaining access to JobKeeper in May. At its peak there were 9.1% fewer payroll jobs in the Geelong SA4 Region (Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast) and 9.3% fewer in Warrnambool and South West (Colac-Otway, Corangamite, Moyne, Warrnambool, Southern Grampians, Glenelg). (Source: ABS – Wages and Payroll, Week Ending 5 June 2021, 2021)
2. In August 2020 at the peak of the second lockdown when the ‘ring of steel’ separated regional Victoria from metropolitan Melbourne, at least 19.8% of businesses in each of the region’s municipalities were accessing JobKeeper to support staff, up to 54.1% in the case of Surf Coast Shire. (REMPLAN – JobKeeper Explorer, 2021)
3. From the start of the pandemic job losses peaked in April, prior to firms gaining access to JobKeeper in May. At its peak there were 9.1% fewer payroll jobs in the Geelong SA4 Region (Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast) and 9.3% fewer in Warrnambool and South West (Colac-Otway, Corangamite, Moyne, Warrnambool, Southern Grampians, Glenelg). (Source: ABS – Wages and Payroll, Week Ending 5 June 2021, 2021)
4. All municipalities across Barwon and Great South Coast have experienced increases in the proportion of the population on JobSeeker since the start of COVID-19. Currently (December quarter 2020). Glenelg LGA has 12.6 per cent of all those aged between – the highest across GSC and Barwon (REMPLAN – JobSeeker Explorer, 2021)
5. In calendar year 2020, there were an estimated 5,270,000 visitor trips to the Barwon region, 49.5% less / 5,170,000 fewer than in 2019. All types of visitation have declined, particularly international overnight and interstate overnight stays. In calendar year 2020, visitors stayed an estimated 6,240,000 nights in the region, 39.4% less / 4,060,000 fewer than in 2019.
6. In calendar year 2020, visitors spent an estimated \$1.1 billion in the region, 45.3% / \$900 million less than in 2019.
7. In calendar year 2020, there were an estimated 1,960,000 visitor trips to the GSC region, 36.0% less / 1,100,000 fewer than in 2019. All types of visitation have declined, particularly international overnight and interstate overnight stays. In calendar year 2020, visitors stayed an estimated 3,120,000 nights in the region, 21.5% less / 850,000 fewer than in 2019.
8. In calendar year 2020, visitors spent an estimated \$620 million in the region, 11.8% / \$80 million less than in 2019. Interestingly, spend from intrastate overnight stays has actually increased by 14.0%.

In the year leading up to the pandemic (March 2019 – March 2020), 65.3% of visitors to Barwon and 54.2% of visitors to the Great South Coast were domestic daytrippers. If these daytrippers became an overnight visitors, annual tourist expenditure would increase.

9. Housing availability - Apollo Bay's Chamber of Commerce conducted a survey and found there were 85 permanent positions and 113 seasonal positions not being filled because of a shortage of affordable housing, causing some businesses to reduce hours of opening by 50 per cent just so their staff can have a day off. They say it's created an \$11 million loss for the economy.

10. Regional Partnerships: [Barwon Regional Digital Plan](#) and [Great South Coast Regional Digital Plan](#).

11. The [Key and Essential Worker Housing Supply Action Plan](#) by the Victorian Planning Authority last year found almost 4,000 jobs were being filled by people living outside the Great South Coast and Barwon regions, and another 2,600 jobs were expected to be created over the next three years. The report made a range of recommendations to boost housing supply including by reducing stamp duty for over 65s, making it easier for visa holders to purchase property, creating another bus network between Geelong and Surf Coast towns, and creating a trust for any land rezoned residential to be earmarked for worker housing.

12. Deakin University has seen a decrease in international student enrolments in 2020 of 12% and in 2021 current estimates are a decrease of 37%. This has a further flow on effect to the local economies across BSW as the spend by international students decreases. Visits by their families has not taken place which is normally another economic contributor. A further impact is the reduced number of international students that provide capacity to the local workforce.

13. The *Hycel Technology Hub* in Warrnambool will be the nation’s first regional hydrogen hub. It will develop and manufacture hydrogen fuel technology, with a focus on transport and heavy vehicles, storage and industry applications.

As part of the project, Deakin aims to transition its Warrnambool campus from gas to hydrogen and will convert the Warrnambool Bus Lines fleet to clean energy.

Together, the *Hycel Technology Hub* and the *Battery Technology Research and Innovation Hub 2.0* (at Deakin’s Burwood campus), will accommodate 290 jobs in research, manufacturing and the energy sector and foster learning and research opportunities for school groups, university students, community and industry. Construction is expected to begin next year and will create about 78 local jobs.



The new \$10.1 million, 440 metre Wave Attenuator, named **Wangim Walk** was launched in December 2020, it officially opened to the public in February 2021. This project was delivered as part of the Geelong City Deal, a collaborative project to transform Geelong and the Great Ocean Road by the Australian Government, Victorian Government and City of Greater Geelong.
Photo credit: AW Maritime



RDA BSW regularly provides advice to the Australian Government and is committed to working with stakeholders across the region on critical development issues positively and negatively affecting the region.

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