

Regional Circular Economy Plan

Grampians Central West



October 2022



Thank you to all organisations that contributed to the development of the Grampians Central West Regional Circular Economy Plan.



Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre; APCO; Australian Biofert; Ballarat City Council; BioGro Pty Ltd; Biomix; Central Goldfields Shire Council; Close the loop; GDP Industries; Geelong Chamber of Commerce; Grampians Central West Waste and Resource Recovery Group; Hindmarsh Shire Council; Repeat Plastics Australia Pty. Ltd.; SENVIC - Social Enterprise Network Victoria; Tetra Pak; Van Schaik's Bio Gro Pty. Ltd.; Visy

This reports photos were taken on Country of the Gunditjmarra People, Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk Nations, Eastern Maar People, Wadawurrung People, Dja Dja Wurrung People and Wurundjeri People.

Acknowledgment

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.



Message from the Minister

From waste to value - A regional approach to growing regional Victoria's circular economies

Victoria is transitioning to a circular economy, with government, business and community looking for new ways to reduce waste, recycle and reuse more.

Regional Victoria is integral to tackling this broad and complex issue - just as it is integral to the state's economic success, its rich social and cultural heritage, and its stunning landscapes and ecosystems.

The Regional Circular Economy Plans (RCEPs) have been developed by regional Victorians, for regional Victorians, with over 125 organisations contributing to their development.

Each region is unique, with its own strengths to build from, and challenges to consider. The plans are statements of intent for where each region would like their circular economy to be by 2030, and the path to achieving this.

Moving to a circular economy opens exciting opportunities for each region to strengthen their local economies, develop new markets, attract investment, and create jobs - supporting their communities and protecting their environments into the future. The plans have been developed as an accessible resource for all to use, to support collaboration, strategic planning, and investment. I look forward to the plans being used to progress circular economy outcomes across regional Victoria.

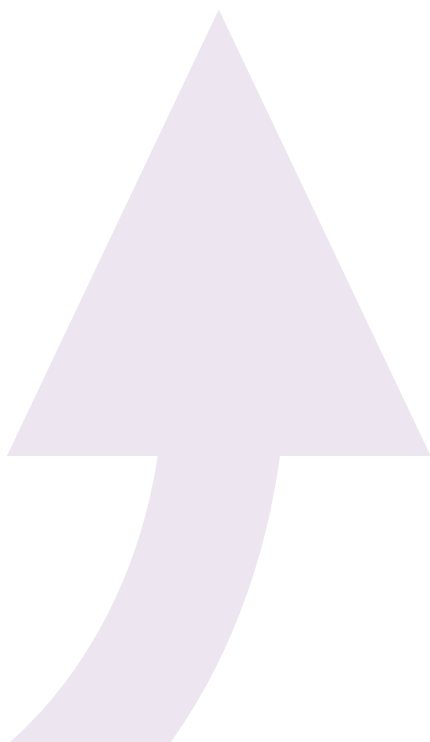
The Victorian Government is investing over \$515 million to transform Victoria's waste and recycling industry. The RCEPs support the delivery of the \$380 million Recycling Victoria: A new economy plan - Victoria's 10-year circular economy plan to reduce waste, increase recycling, and creating more value from our resources. This will help divert 80 per cent of all material away from landfill, create nearly 4,000 new jobs and boost Victoria's economy by up to \$6.7 billion by 2030.

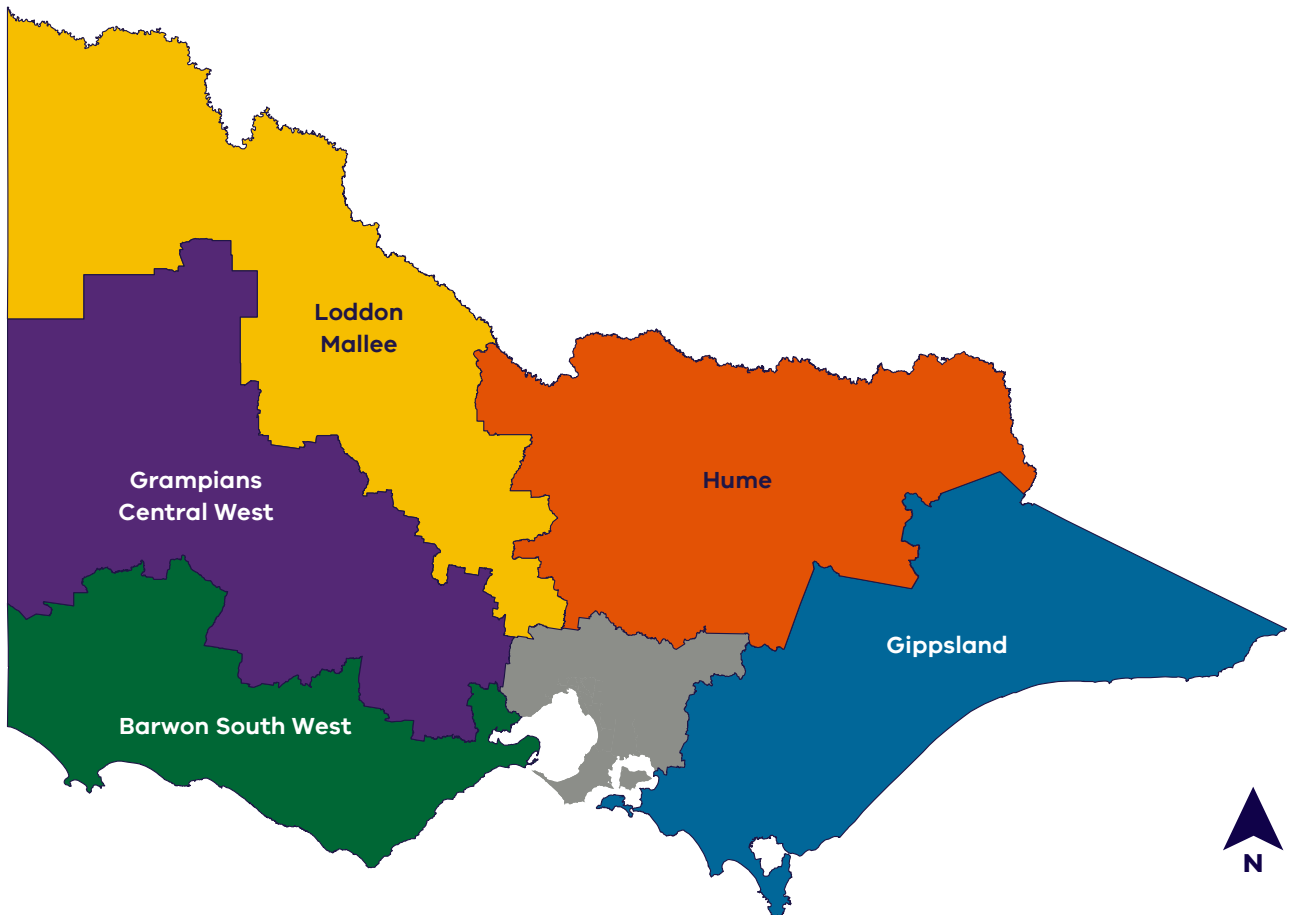


A blue ink signature of Lily D'Ambrosio.

The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy
Minister for Environment and Climate Action
Minister for Solar Homes





The five regions of Victoria that have developed Regional Circular Economy Plans

Circular economy plans for regional Victoria

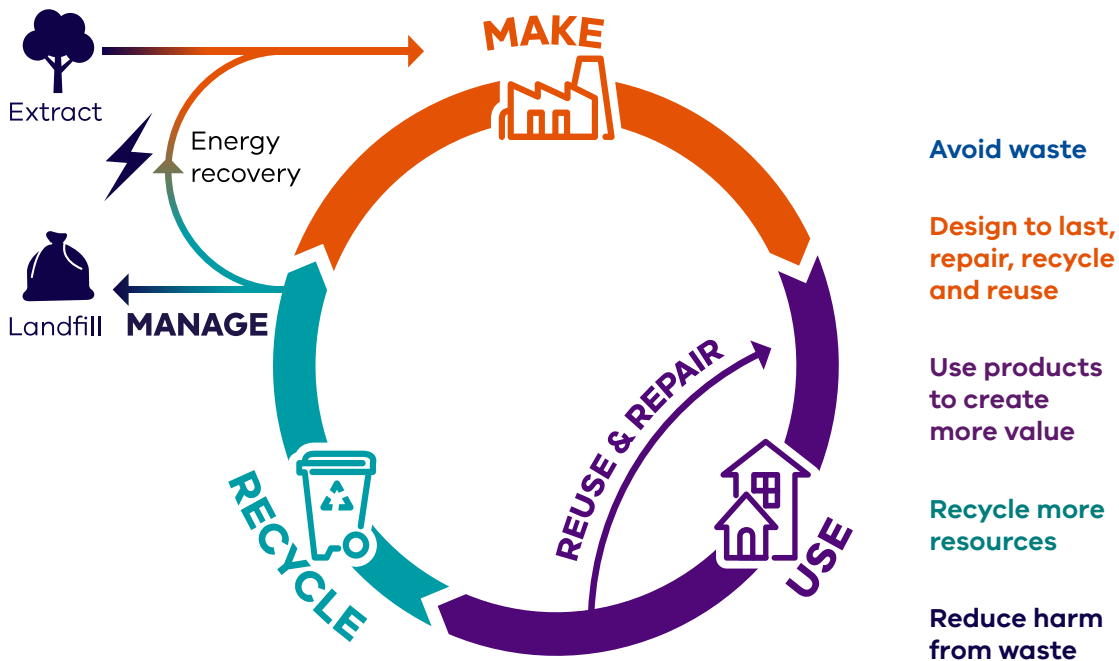
The Grampians Central West Regional Circular Economy Plan (RCEP) is one of five RCEPs that have been developed for Regional Victoria. RCEPs have also been created for Barwon South West, Hume, Loddon Mallee, and Gippsland.

Each RCEP is the result of broad consultation, engagement and collaboration with regional representatives who all have important roles to play in developing the region's circular economy. The plans represent a different approach to planning and are the first of their kind.

For a summary of the engagement program, refer to the [RCEPs Engagement Program Summary Report](#).

The RCEPs support the delivery of Victorian Government's circular economy policy, Recycling Victoria: a new economy, specifically the goals to 'design to last, repair and recycle'; 'use products to create more value'; and 'recycle more resources'.

Resource flows in a circular economy



Grampians Central West's circular economy plan

This document sets out Grampians Central West's circular economy aspirations to 2030, and the priorities to help achieve these aspirations. It also provides an insight into the region's strengths and challenges, and how to support the development of a sustainable and thriving circular economy in the Grampians Central West region.

This is a strategic document, not a plan with set actions for individual participants to report on.

The document identifies the collective aspirations of representatives from across the region. The aspirations and priorities are to be considered by each reader within their own contexts and spheres of influence as they transition to a regional circular economy.

A plan by Grampians Central West, for Grampians Central West

Representatives from 46 organisations contributed to the Grampians Central West RCEP, including local government, the waste and resource recovery industry, businesses and business associations, manufacturers, social enterprise, research and education institutions, and the Victorian Government.

Representatives participated in robust discussions and workshops facilitated by the Victorian Government designed to encourage strategic thinking about their region, where they are now, where they want to be by 2030, and how they can work together to get there.

For further information on the engagement program, refer to the RCEPs Engagement Program Summary Report. The Report has made ten recommendations, which have been incorporated into this plan where possible, or are noted for future consideration.

Grampians Central West's aspirations for 2030

Together, representatives developed five circular economy aspirations for 2030, to guide the development of the region's circular economy.

Working together to achieve our aspirations

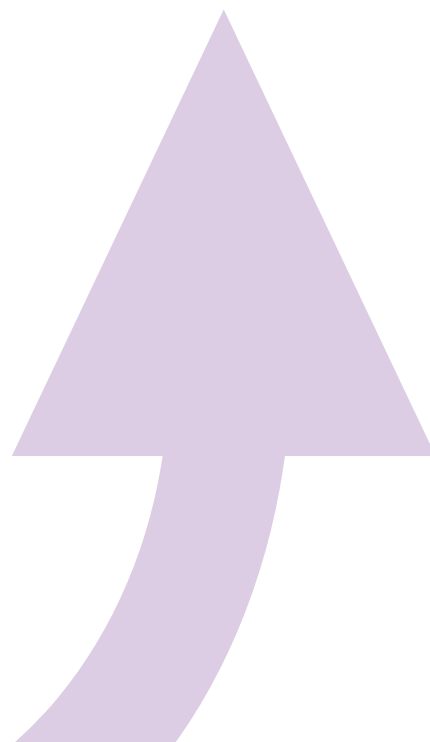
Building from local understanding of the region's strengths and challenges, region specific priorities have been identified to guide the development of Grampians Central West's circular economy.

The priorities cover a range of key themes including improving infrastructure, developing end use markets, improving collaboration and communication, supporting behaviour change, advocating for legislative reform, undertaking research and development, and providing opportunities for reskilling and job training.

How to use this Plan

This plan is to be used as a resource for the Grampians Central West region to work together toward creating a sustainable and thriving circular economy.

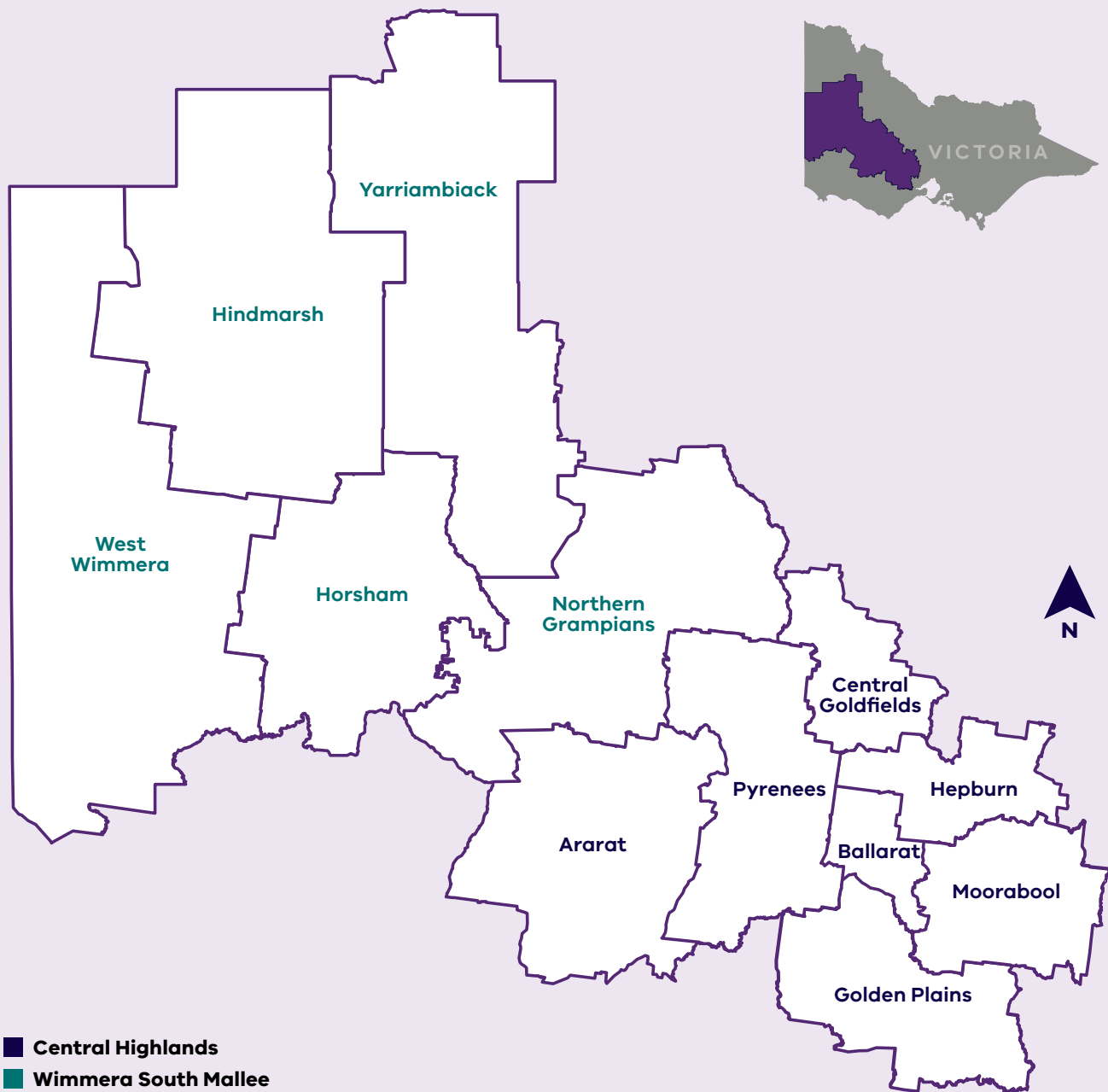
As a resource for all, the Plan has a broad number of potential uses including, but not limited to, regional planning, infrastructure planning, funding program design, business strategy development, community education program design, and product design.





Grampians Central West region

Map of Local Government Areas (LGAs)
in the Grampians Central West region



Aspirations and priorities

Grampians Central West’s five circular economy aspirations to 2030 are detailed below, along with six important changes, or ‘key enablers’, that have been identified to help realise these aspirations.

Aspirations to 2030

1 Local demand and supply of recycled materials is strong

Recycled materials have been collected, aggregated, sorted and processed within the Grampians Central West region and meet demand needs of the region.

2 Consumers and manufacturers are informed and empowered

They understand how to maximise the value of a product’s lifecycle and reduce waste in designing, producing and consuming products.

3 The circular economy is a key part of life in the region

All sectors of the community have clear roles in the circular economy and are supported to participate in it. The circular economy is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

4 There are clear legislative, policy and funding conditions to drive investment in recycling in the region

This results in higher uptake of the reuse, repair, repurposing and recycling of materials.

5 Regional research and development leads to innovation, pilots and new market entrants in the sector

A range of design, avoidance and alternative waste material uses has been developed to support new market entrants and pilot programs in Grampians Central West.

Key enablers

Important changes to strengthen our circular economy



Improved infrastructure
16%*
of priorities



Developing end use markets
7%*
of priorities



Improved collaboration and communication
16%*
of priorities



Behaviour change (industry and consumers)
13%*
of priorities



Legislation, regulations, or standards reform
29%*
of priorities





Other key changes including research and development, reskilling and job training
19%*
of priorities




* Percentage rounded to nearest whole percentage.

Priorities to achieve our aspirations

Grampians Central West has developed 31 priorities to achieve their circular economy aspirations to 2030. Each priority has been identified as contributing to one or more aspiration and has been grouped by Key Enablers. Many of the priorities align with current Victorian Government policy, whilst others will be for future consideration.

Key Aspirations			Alignment with Victorian Policy
<p>1 Local demand and supply of recycled materials is strong</p> <p>2 Consumers and manufacturers are informed and empowered</p>	<p>3 The circular economy is a key part of life in the region</p> <p>4 There are clear legislative, policy and funding conditions to drive investment in recycling in the region</p>	<p>5 Regional research and development leads to innovation, pilots and new market entrants in the sector</p>	<p> Aligns</p> <p> For future consideration</p>

Improved infrastructure

<p>Invest in local and regional processing and feedstock storage solutions to sort, clean and keep materials in the region, ready for industry use like the circular economy precinct Ballarat West Employment Zone.</p>	<p>1 3 4</p>	<p></p>
<p>Establish organics processing facilities across the region to facilitate implementation of mandated services, supply, and predicted demand for upcoming green technologies.</p>	<p>1 3 4</p>	<p></p>
<p>Expand soft plastic collection and processing capacity throughout the region to divert this resource from landfill.</p>	<p>1 3 4</p>	<p></p>
<p>Co-locate renewable energy infrastructure with resource recovery and manufacturing processes to support the facilities to operate at a low cost and low environmental impact.</p>	<p>1 3 4</p>	<p></p>
<p>Scale up collection, sorting, and processing for glass to take advantage of glass growth as a resource for this region (infrastructure projects).</p>	<p>1 3 4</p>	<p></p>

Developing end use markets

<p>Prioritise local demand for recycled resources before exporting recycled feedstock nationally or internationally to protect and support the local recycling system.</p>	<p>1 3 4</p>	<p></p>
<p>Invest in end market use identification programs to find ways to use and replace virgin materials in products.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p></p>

Improved collaboration and communication

Establish partnerships between local councils to identify suitable locations for regional circular economy precincts to bring together resources and processes, streamlining logistics and building it into the local planning scheme.	1	
Facilitate existing and new local networks , to bring regional partners together to collaborate and create opportunities to stimulate circular economy advancement, while promoting best practice examples.	1 2 3	
Engage with manufacturers to advocate for a reduction in packaging within the local region.	2	
Bring together existing agency, industry, and community groups to further regional circular economy, climate, biodiversity, and economic recovery initiatives.	1 2 3	
Establish and coordinate a multi-agency response to deliver regional circular economy, climate, biodiversity, and economic recovery initiatives.	3 4	

Behaviour change (industry and consumers)

Engage with and raise awareness with consumers about products and packaging that contain recycled material and are easy to reuse, repair and recycle in their region, while restoring their trust in the recycling system.	1 2 3	
Implement behaviour change programs to embed an appreciation of the value of used materials and products, reduce contamination and increase materials separation.	1 2 3	
Expand and promote community uptake and access to product stewardship programs , both retailers and manufacturers to include problematic waste and collection of packaging.	2 3 4	
Establish accessible community collection points (or services) to collect separated recyclable streams (soft plastics, e-waste).	2 3 4	

Legislation, regulations, or standards reform

Prioritise the use of local recycled resources over virgin materials and products in procurement policies and engineering standards.	1 2	
Create economic stimulus to increase collaboration between manufacturing and construction businesses and incentivise replacing virgin materials with locally sourced recycled materials.	1 2 3	
Specify the use of recycled products through procurement assessment and policy , to increase the use of recovered content, over virgin materials.	1 3	
Improve funding program flexibility to support innovation and focus on outcomes, such as through the provision of ongoing funding support (e.g., evergreen funding), supporting multi-year programs, and re-evaluating, and, where possible, reducing new entrant requirements.	4 5	
Develop standards to guide manufacturers in the use of recycled and recyclable content to create demand for reuse, repurposing, repair, and recycling.	1 2 3 4	
Align policy and regulation to support circular economy outcomes and objectives, beyond recycling.	1 4	

Legislation, regulations, or standards reform continued

<p>Align the timing of state and federal funding programs with council's long term capital expenditure programs to strengthen regional investment potential.</p>	4	
<p>Advocate for the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to create a simpler and responsive approach to provide advice on projects in their pre-feasibility phase, to facilitate investment.</p>	3 4	
<p>Enact legislation to mandate the use or recycled products and materials in government procurement.</p>	1 4	
<h2>Other key changes including research and development, reskilling, and job training</h2>		
<p>Map material feedstock seasons and identify gaps, allowing impacts to be managed to ensure the businesses that rely on processed recovered materials, such as composted organics, have consistent supply.</p>	2 3 5	
<p>Provide local training opportunities to attract and retain a local workforce to support existing and new market entrants with access to a skilled workforce.</p>	1 3	
<p>Undertake a materials flow analysis to guide end user investment that the entire region will benefit from (e.g., Ballarat/Grampians model).</p>	1 2 3 5	
<p>Foster/facilitate collaboration between universities, vocational education and training providers, agricultural colleges, and agronomists (e.g., Longerenong) to train and upskill workers for the circular economy.</p>	3 5	
<p>Establish a centre of excellence to coordinate ideas, research, pilots and communication between industry and research institutions to develop local circular economy opportunities and address local issues.</p>	1 2 3 5	
<p>Conduct research between product designers, manufacturers, and the waste industry to understand the waste profile of products, to manufacture with recycled content and to design products that are easy to repair and recycle, and preferences for manufacturing.</p>	1 2 3 5	



Grampians Central West region today



270,807

Current Population (2020)¹



\$12.7 billion

Gross Regional Product (2020)²



20,254 tonnes

Kerbside Recycling Collected (2019-20)³

Central Highlands



223,700

Current Population (2020)¹



\$10.2 billion

Gross Regional Product (2020)²



16,265 tonnes

Kerbside Recycling Collected (2019-20)³

Wimmera Southern Mallee



47,107

Current Population (2020)¹



\$2.5 billion

Gross Regional Product (2020)²



3,989 tonnes

Kerbside Recycling Collected (2019-20)³

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)

² Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) – Regional Development Victoria (rdv.vic.gov.au)

³ Victorian Local Government Area Survey – Sustainability Victoria (sustainability.vic.gov.au)

Grampians Central West region

Grampians Central West's circular economy aspirations and priorities were developed with a local understanding of the region's strengths and challenges. The region's representatives considered 'where we are today' as a region, before projecting forward to 'where we want to be' in 2030 and beyond.

The process identified key strengths within the Grampian Central West region – unique characteristics that provide the region with a base from which to consider the circular economy priorities and work towards their aspirations for 2030.

The region covers a large geographic area, including the sub-regions of the Central Highlands and Wimmera Southern Mallee.

The Central Highlands' proximity to Melbourne is considered a strength, noting the high-capacity transport connections and access to end markets for recycled materials outside the region.

The standardisation of recycled material streams across the region's council areas was also valued as a key strength, with expected improvements in material quality, and opportunities to encourage end use markets. This includes increase access recycled organics, which is of interest to the region's large agricultural sector.

For in-depth economic analysis of the region, refer to [Victoria's Regional Economic Development Strategies \(REDS\)](#).

Strengths:

- **Size of the population and current household mix**, making it suitable for trialling projects due to the volume of waste stream availability.
- **Current trials and new projects underway demonstrate value of circular economy initiatives** e.g., Ballarat West Employment Zone.
- **Interest from the agricultural sector to increase the capacity of** recycled organics processing.
- Proximity to Melbourne with **high-capacity transport connections** to transport recycled products to markets outside the region.
- **Councils standardising waste streams** as per the new state government policy position will improve sorting and reduce contamination.

Grampians Central West region in 2030



306,809

Projected Population (2031)⁴



13% increase

Projected percentage increase (2021 to 2031)

Central Highlands



261,756

Projected Population (2031)⁴



17% increase

Projected percentage change (2021 to 2031)

Wimmera Southern Mallee



45,053

Projected Population (2031)⁴



4% increase

Projected percentage change (2021 to 2031)

⁴ Victoria in Future (planning.vic.gov.au)

In developing Grampian Central West's circular economy aspirations for 2030, as well as studying the region's strengths, the region's challenges were also considered. The region's circular economy priorities were developed to mitigate, or in consideration of, these challenges.

The region identified challenges with low economies of scale of some recycled material streams, noting difficulty accessing infrastructure, large distances between processing and manufacturing facilities and high costs of some small processing facilities.

Challenges relating to access to government funding, lack of council staff resources and existing long term government contracts, were noted as barriers for supporting investment in circular economy outcomes and encouraging innovation in the region.

By 2030, the Grampians Central West region is projected to be home to 306,809 people, increasing by 13 per cent from 2021 to 2031. However, this increase is concentrated in the Central Highlands with a 17 per cent projected increase. The Wimmera South Mallee sub-region has a projected 4 per cent decrease in population.

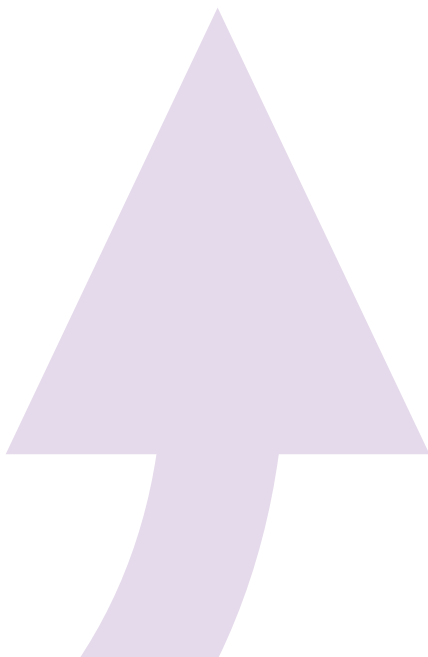
Population increase in certain areas is expected to lead to higher rates of waste and recyclable materials being generated, with increased demand for sorting, processing and storage infrastructure, or pressure on regional roads if this recyclable material is transported outside the region.

Where population is not expected to increase, volumes may continue to not require household collection, presenting a challenge for local councils and industry aiming to divert materials from landfill.

For in-depth economic analysis of the region, refer to [Victoria's Regional Economic Development Strategies \(REDS\)](#).

Challenges:

- Low economies of scale of some waste streams, high relative costs of small processing facilities, which reduce the cost effectiveness of recycling.
- Issues with existing infrastructure, including power grid and transport distances to some districts discouraging investment in processing and manufacturing facilities.
- Lack of locations available for sorting and processing purposes, particularly for smaller projects.
- Lack of staff resources and high costs prevent councils from pursuing circular economy projects.
- Set up of current contract lengths, five-to-10 years prevent market competition could stifle innovation and the success of new projects.
- Current grant application process and approval framework for funding of new projects discourages interest and innovation.
- Waste streams such as food and garden organics waste are prone to contamination.






















































Everyone has a role to play in a circular economy

A circular economy is a collective responsibility requiring shared involvement, commitment, and action.

The table below highlights the various stakeholders involved in Grampian Central West's circular economy and the important role/s that can be played by each.



Introduce legislation, policy, and standards to support the circular economy system										
Collaborate, design and develop market ready products, packaging, and systems that eliminate waste and pollution and support natural processes										
Undertake research to understand stakeholder needs to support circular economy system										
Plan for circular economy infrastructure										
Provide funding opportunities to encourage investment in infrastructure, services, and programs										
Preference use of reusable or recycled products, products that support natural processes, and recycled materials										
Educate households, businesses, and commercial operators										
Support and participate in share economy and repurposing services										
Collect, sort, and manage recovered material and waste										
Participate in material recovery process										
Share data and information about collected waste, including material types and volumes										



How this plan can be used

The RCEP is to be used as a resource for all in the Grampians Central West region to work together toward creating a sustainable and thriving economy.

Some potential uses could include:

Local Councils in the region

- As an input into strategic waste management planning.
- To guide future procurement and purchasing
- To inform community education programs.
- To promote collaboration across local government areas, particularly in regional and rural areas where lower material volumes and reuse opportunities benefit from a regionally coordinated approach to be viable.
- To enter collaborative projects with other agencies, private businesses and research institutions.
- As a reference for future waste management community consultation programs and education programs
- To consider alongside the Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) for economic opportunities for circular economy in the region.
- To support applications for funding.

Researchers and educators (e.g., university sector, private researchers)

- To inform future areas of research.
- To inform education programs.
- To support applications for funding and proposals for the provision of goods and services.

Commercial and industrial operators and industry associations (e.g., designers, product manufacturers)

- To disseminate information and educate industry and consumers.
- To encourage private investment.
- To support the development of feasibility studies for new industry opportunities.
- To inform future plant expansion and re-use opportunities.
- To support applications for funding and proposals for the provision of goods and services.

Water Industry

- To support applications for funding.
- To support advocacy for regulations or legislation.
- To inform future research, such as between water industry, local government, and the university sector.

Businesses and business associations (businesses operating in the region, or their representative bodies)

- To identify potential end use markets.
- To support business case development.
- To support applications for funding and proposals for the provision of goods and services.

Social enterprises and incorporated committees (not-for-profit organisations)

- To understand the role/s that social enterprises could have in the circular economy and inform strategic planning.
- To inform education programs.
- To support applications for funding and proposals for the provision of goods and services.

Residential community/consumer

- To understand Grampians Central West's circular economy aspirations and priorities.
- To understand the role/s that individuals could have in the circular economy.
- To support applications for funding

The waste and resource recovery industry (e.g., material recovery facility operators)

- To identify potential waste management investment opportunities.
- To measure region specific information and potential levels of service strategies.
- To support applications for funding and proposals for the provision of goods and services.

Victorian Government

- As an input into policy planning, including the 30-year infrastructure program, the Victorian Recycling Infrastructure Program (VRIP).
- To inform the design and implementation of funding programs, including the Regional Recycling Fund Round 2.
- As an input into Recycling Victoria's work program for circular economy outcomes in regional Victoria.
- As an input into Sustainability Victoria's work program for circular economy outcomes in regional Victoria.
- To inform education programs, such as through Sustainability Victoria.

Federal Government

- To influence product stewardship across Australia.
- To inform design and implementation of national waste and recycling funding programs.
- To harmonise any future national circular economy legislation.

Where to from here?

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is the custodian of the RCEPs.

The RCEPs will be used as a valuable resource for the Victorian Government's future circular economy planning.

All readers are encouraged to consider the RCEPs within their own contexts and spheres of influence as they transition to a regional circular economy.

For more information about Victoria's circular economy plans and progress, see [vic.gov.au/building-victorias-circular-economy](https://www.vic.gov.au/building-victorias-circular-economy).





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