

# Regional Circular Economy Plan Hume



October 2022



Thank you to all organisations that contributed to the development of the Hume Regional Circular Economy Plan.



Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre; APCO; Australian Biofert; Biomix; City of Wodonga; Close the loop; Foott Waste; GDP Industries; Geelong Chamber of Commerce; Goulbourn Valley Water; Goulbourn Valley IWM; Goulbourn Valley Waste & Resource Recovery Group; Greenchip Recycling; Mansfield Shire Council; National E-Waste Alliance; North East Waste and Resource Recovery Group; Repeat Plastics Australia Pty. Ltd.; Rural City of Wangarratta; SENVIC - Social Enterprise Network Victoria; SPE-ANZ; Tetra Pak; Van Schaik's Bio Gro Pty. Ltd.; Visy; Wadonga City Council; Western Composting Technology.

This report's photos were taken on Country of the Yorta Yorta People, Taungurung People, Gunaikurnai People, Wurundjeri People and Dja Dja Wurrung 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.

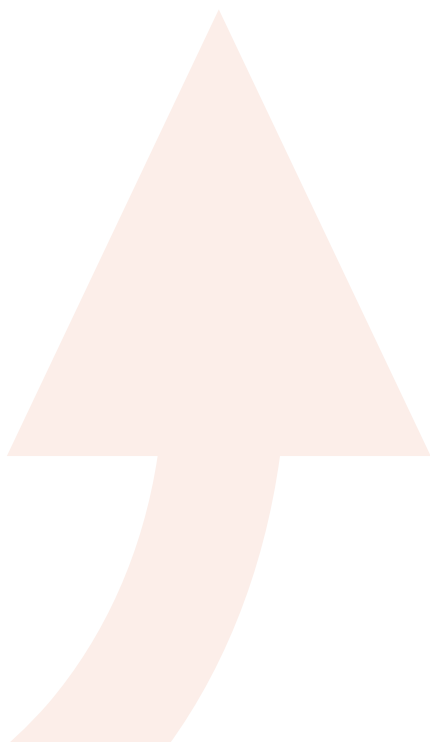
The Victorian Government is investing over \$515 million to transform Victoria's waste and recycling industry. The RCEPs support the delivery of the \$380 million Recycling Victoria: A new economy plan - Victoria's 10-year circular economy plan to reduce waste, increase recycling, and creating more value 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.

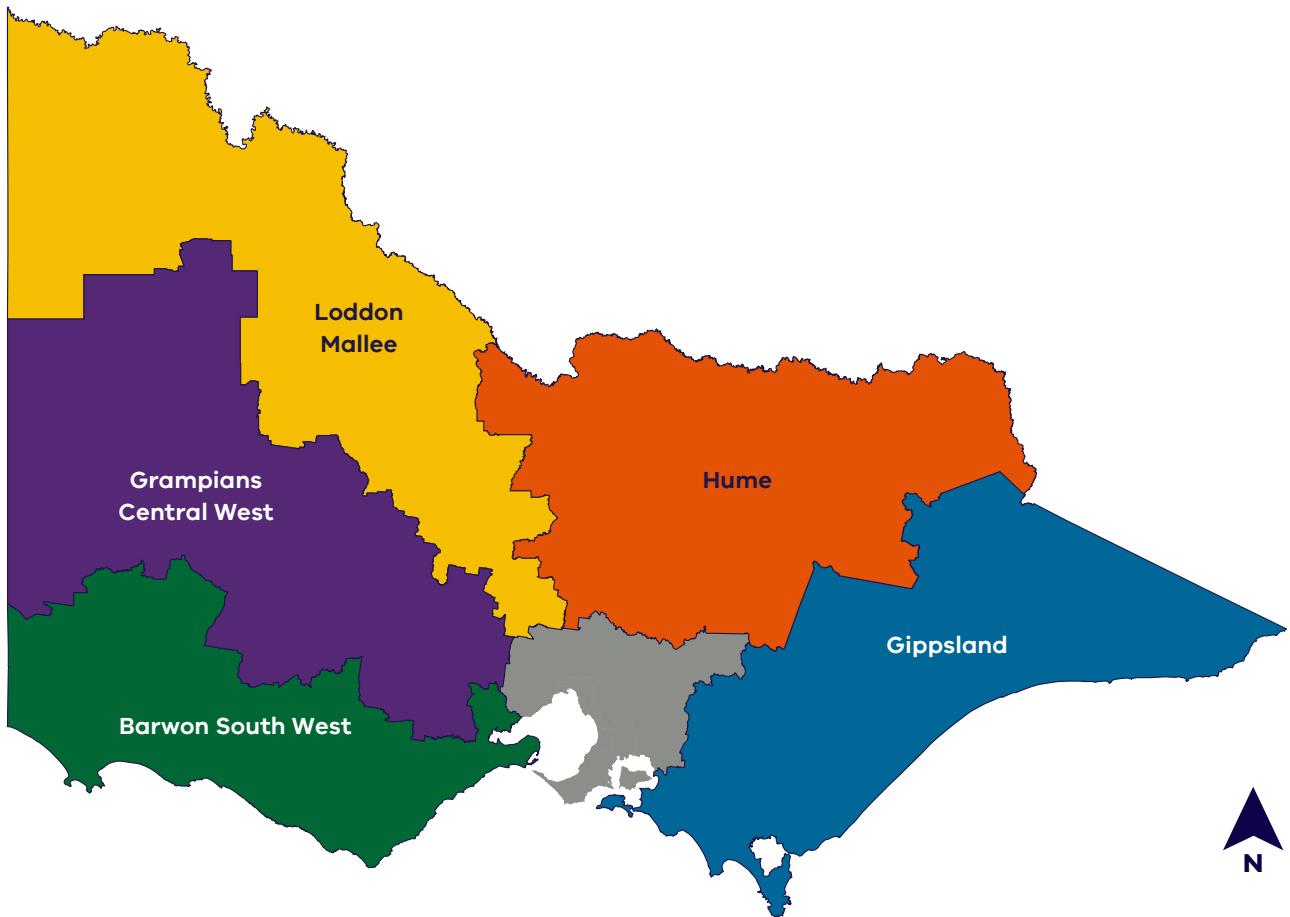


A blue ink handwritten signature of Lily D'Ambrosio.

**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

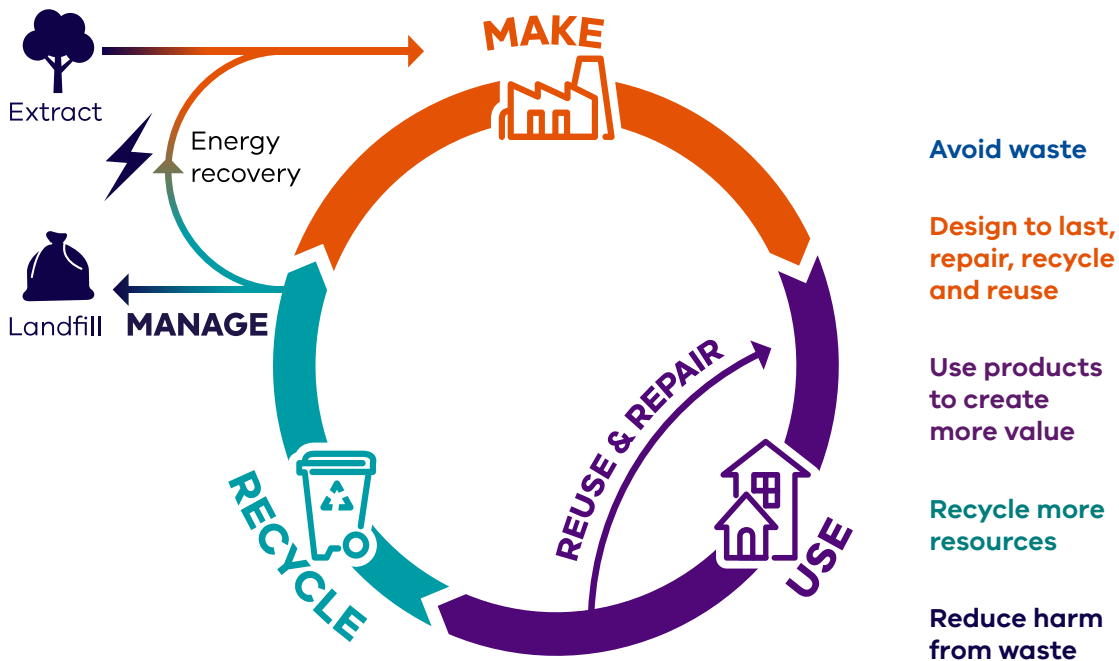
The Hume Regional Circular Economy Plan (RCEP) is one of five RCEPs that have been developed for Regional Victoria. RCEPs have also been created for Barwon South West, Grampians Central West, Loddon Mallee, and Gippsland.

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



# Hume's circular economy plan

This document sets out Hume'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 Hume 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 Hume, for Hume

Representatives from 59 organisations contributed to the Hume 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.

## Hume'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

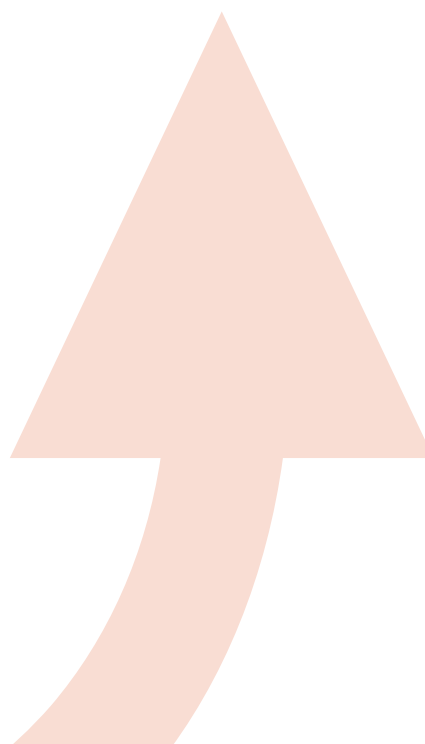
Building from local understanding of the region's strengths and challenges, region specific priorities have been identified to guide the development of Hume's circular economy.

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 Hume region to work together toward creating a sustainable and thriving circular economy.

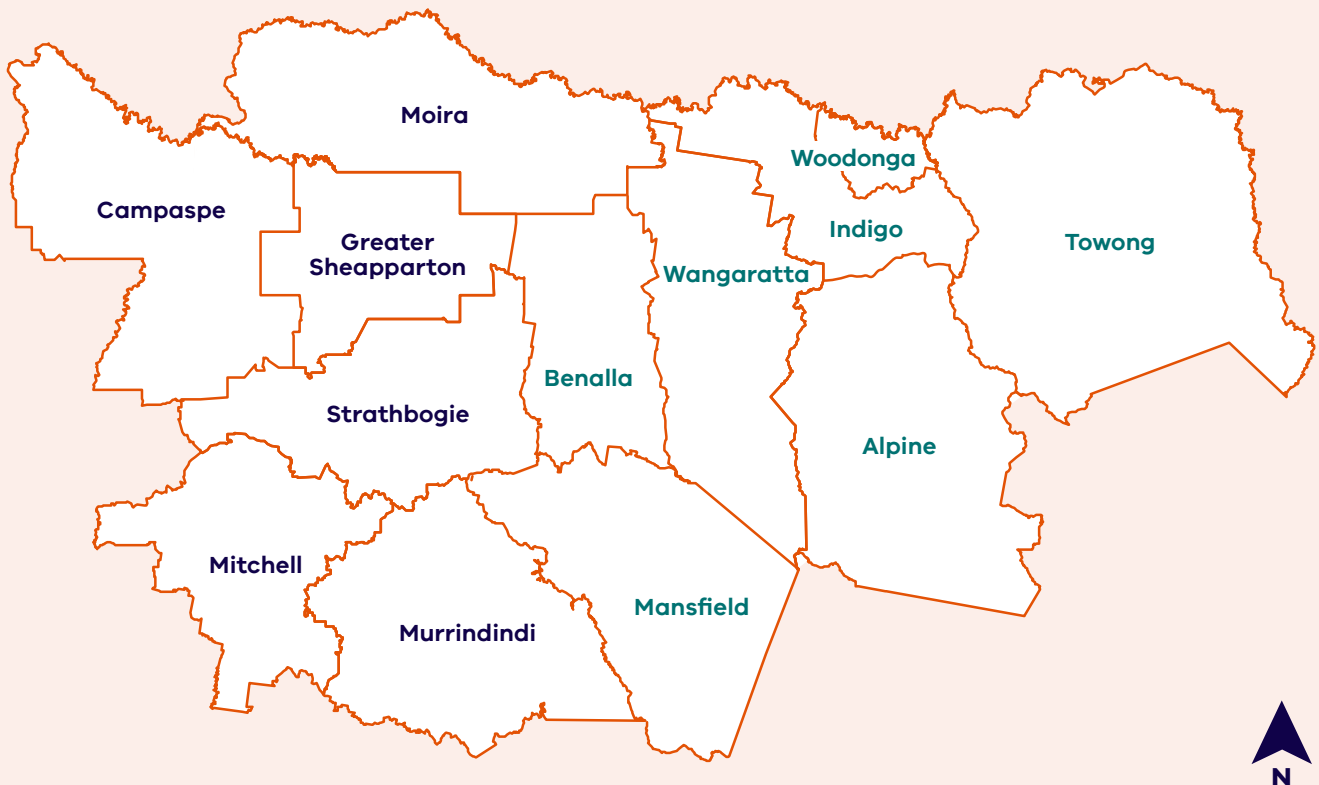
As a resource for all, the Plan has a broad number of potential uses including, but not limited to, regional planning, infrastructure planning, funding program design, business strategy development, community education program design, and product design.





# Hume region

Map of Local Government Areas (LGAs)  
in the Hume region



- Goulburn Valley
- North East



# Aspirations and priorities

Hume’s four 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 Product stewardship is paramount**  
All those involved in the product life cycle—manufacturers, retailers, users, and disposers share responsibility for reducing the environmental impacts of products.

**2 Best practice circular economy approaches are adopted**  
All levels of government, industry, education institutions, researchers and community work together to progress the circular economy in Hume.

**3 Hume’s consumers are active participants in the circular economy**  
All sectors of the community make decisions to avoid waste generation, encourage reuse and recycling of products to reduce their environmental impact.

**4 Our local circular economy is sustainable, self-sufficient and resilient to market changes**  
We collaborate to create and take up local circular economy opportunities.

## Key enablers

Important changes to strengthen our circular economy



**Improved infrastructure**  
**20%\***  
of priorities



**Developing end use markets**  
**4%\***  
of priorities



**Improved collaboration and communication**  
**4%\***  
of priorities



**Behaviour change (industry and consumers)**  
**32%\***  
of priorities



**Legislation, regulations, or standards reform**  
**36%\***  
of priorities



**Other key changes including research and development, reskilling and job training**  
**4%\***  
of priorities






\* Percentage rounded to nearest whole percentage.

# Priorities to achieve our aspirations

Hume has developed 25 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.

<p><b>Key Aspirations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="width: 30%; padding-right: 10px;"> <p><b>1</b> Product stewardship is paramount</p> <p><b>2</b> Best practice circular economy approaches are adopted</p> </li> <li style="width: 30%; padding-right: 10px;"> <p><b>3</b> Hume’s consumers are active participants in the circular economy</p> </li> <li style="width: 30%;"> <p><b>4</b> Our local circular economy is sustainable, self-sufficient and resilient to market changes</p> </li> </ul>			<p><b>Alignment with Victorian Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>  Aligns         </li> <li>  For future consideration         </li> </ul>
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## Improved infrastructure

Invest in research and local collection and processing infrastructure to ensure continuity and supply of high-quality recycled or repurposed materials to support end use markets.	2 4	
Investigate the need for infrastructure and services <b>to support the conversion of low value waste resources to energy.</b>	2 4	
Integrate <b>the access to and use of renewable energy in infrastructure investment</b> for processing, manufacturing, and transport of products.	2 4	
Increase <b>access to recycling services, where required</b> , including municipal (glass or organics) and wider community services to reduce contamination and increase recycled feedstock supply.	1 3 4	
Invest in <b>local</b> resource recovery facilities to improve network resilience and encourage better access to recycled materials across the region.	4	

## Developing end use markets

Further develop <b>services to connect manufacturers, collectors, sorters, reprocessors, end markets, and local government</b> with each other, to share data and understand capability, resource availability and material requirements, such as <b>local concierge or business brokering services.</b>	1 2 3 4	
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## Improved collaboration and communication

**Support innovation and fledgling markets** to become established., through a range of means including private public partnerships.

2

4



## Behaviour change (industry and consumers)

**Engage with industry and manufacturers to increase the percentage of recycled materials used**, and include the lifespan of the product on packaging.

1

2

4



**Incentivise for-profit organisations, such as retailers and manufacturers, to facilitate returning used goods and packaging**, and providing refill opportunities for high volume products.

1

2

3



**Incentivise the use of the Australian Recycling Label** for products sold and supplied within the Australian market to support the consumer to dispose and recycle the product thoughtfully.

1

2

3



Promote **behavioural change through consumer engagement** campaigns to harmonise circular economy in everyday conversations and encourage avoidance, repair, reuse and best practice recycling.

1

2

3



Ongoing campaign to **support waste education and the avoidance of unnecessary and/or unrecyclable packaging and collective impact of changes (waste avoidance, impact on market)**.

1

2

3



Support, promote and develop enterprises to **encourage share, repair and reuse in Hume**.

1

2

3

4



**Collaborate with council, business industry** and others to work on regional circular economy opportunities.

2

4



Support the **establishment of local take back programs for the return of unwanted goods with high reprocessing or recycling value**.

1

2

3

4



## Legislation, regulations, or standards reform

**Implement regulations and incentives** that encourage the use of reused, recycled or reprocessed materials and products.

1

3



**Develop standards and guidelines to support manufacturers to use materials** that can be easily reused, repurposed, repaired and recycled.

1

3

4



Support **sustainable resource planning and design** to ensure the longevity of materials for use in the construction and demolition industries.

1

3



**Introduce legislation and explore price signals** to proactively encourage waste avoidance, reuse, repurposing, and recycling of material streams.

2

3



Set **clear regional targets** to divert resources from landfill, grow markets using recycled materials and reduce emissions to encourage a circular economy approach and investment.

2

3

4



Support **licensing, markets and regulation to enable and encourage the production of processed organics** to strengthen sustainable and regenerative agriculture practices.

2



## Legislation, regulations, or standards reform continued

Develop an agreed strategy with targets between government and industry to **encourage the use of recycled and repurposed materials over virgin materials**.

2 3 4



Support government policy and collaborative procurement and advocate for change to **incentivise the use of local recycled materials**. Collect information in the region to confidently approach the market and support current organic processors in the region.

2 3 4



**Simplify funding** to support local operators and solutions.

2 4



## Other key changes including research and development, reskilling, and job training

Undertake collaborative **research between manufacturers, waste industry and regulators to design and produce products** with an understanding of their full lifecycle and required conditions to overcome operation barriers including space for stockpiling, financial barriers (bond and insurance requirements) and regional distances.

1 2 3 4





# Hume today



**342,376**

Current Population (2021)<sup>1</sup>



**\$14.5 billion**

Gross Regional Product (2020)<sup>2</sup>



**34,277 tonnes**

Kerbside Recycling Collected (2019-20)<sup>3</sup>

## Goulburn Valley



**172,057**

Current Population (2021)<sup>1</sup>



**\$8 billion**

Gross Regional Product (2020)<sup>2</sup>



**19,912 tonnes**

Kerbside Recycling Collected (2019-20)<sup>3</sup>

## North East



**170,319**

Current Population (2021)<sup>1</sup>



**\$6.5 billion**

Gross Regional Product (2020)<sup>2</sup>



**14,315 tonnes**

Kerbside Recycling Collected (2019-20)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics ([abs.gov.au](https://abs.gov.au))

<sup>2</sup> Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) – Regional Development Victoria ([rdv.vic.gov.au](https://rdv.vic.gov.au))

<sup>3</sup> Victorian Local Government Area Survey – Sustainability Victoria ([sustainability.vic.gov.au](https://sustainability.vic.gov.au))

# Hume region

Hume'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 Hume 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 Hume region includes the sub-regions of Goulburn Valley and North East.

The region's existing accessible network of materials recovery facilities (MRFs) and resource recovery centres is considered a strength, along with its proximity and strong transport links to Melbourne. Two of Australia's nationally important transport routes – the Hume and Goulburn Valley transport corridors – traverse the region, linking supply chains to national and international markets through Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Canberra.

The increased concentration of major food manufacturers in the region is expected to increase supply of organics and the potential to increase the use of recycled materials. The region also benefits from the availability of land zones for storing and processing recyclables.

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

## Strengths:

- Existing accessible network of materials recovery facilities (MRFs) and resource recovery centres (RRC).
- Identified large capacity **for organics processing and plastics reprocessing**.
- **Strong multi-modal transport links**, proximity to Melbourne and access to the region's collection, sorting, processing and manufacturing precincts.
- Economic growth with a concentration of **major food manufacturers** –this helps with the supply of feed (organics) and use of recycled materials (glass).
- Business growth from **collaborative investment models**: public private partnership, joint venture, small social enterprise.
- Benefit from the availability of land appropriately zoned for storing and processing recyclables.
- High uptake and participation rates of food and organics waste collection service.

# Hume in 2030



**399,383**

Projected Population (2031)<sup>4</sup>



**17% increase**

Projected percentage change (2021 to 2031)

## Goulburn Valley



**212,865**

Projected Population (2031)<sup>4</sup>



**24% increase**

Projected percentage change  
(2021 to 2031)

## North East



**186,518**

Projected Population (2031)<sup>4</sup>



**10% increase**

Projected percentage increase  
(2021 to 2031)

<sup>4</sup> Victoria in Future ([planning.vic.gov.au](https://planning.vic.gov.au))



In developing Hume'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.

Large distances between recycled material sources and processing facilities were highlighted as a challenge affecting the economies of scales for reusing some materials, noting high transport costs and high relative costs of small processing facilities.

By 2030, the Hume region is projected to be home to 399,383 people, increasing by 17 per cent from 2021 to 2031.

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:


















































- Large distances between waste sources and processing facilities equate to low economies of scale for some waste streams, high transport costs and high relative costs of small processing facilities reduces cost effectiveness of recycling.
- Lack of local end markets and incentives, which discourages investment in resource recovery facilities or end-product manufacturing.
- Recycling industry dominated by large enterprises, which makes it harder for small MRFs to compete.
- Lack of legislative and financial incentives to encourage use of recycled material.
- Lack of financial incentives to innovate and red tape involved in sorting and processing.
- Fast growing population in the peri-urban areas of the region, such as Mitchell Shire, requiring infrastructure and services to meet growing demand.
- Significant organic materials being managed in Hume (Goulburn Valley) from other regions, including related biosecurity risks.

# 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 Hume's circular economy and the important role/s that can be played by each.

				
<b>Local Councils in the region</b>	<b>Researchers and educators</b>	<b>Commercial and industrial operators and industry associations</b>	<b>Water Industry</b>	<b>Businesses and business associations</b>
				
<b>Social enterprises and incorporated committees</b>	<b>Residential community/consumers</b>	<b>Waste and resource recovery industry</b>	<b>Victorian Government (departments, agencies)</b>	<b>Federal Government</b>

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 Hume 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 Hume'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 Plan (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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