



# Tourism and Sustainable Economic Growth

World-class experiences delivering jobs for locals



The long-term sustainable growth of the visitor economy is increasingly a priority for the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments, and must be achieved in balance with the needs of local communities.

There continues to be a strong need to recover and strengthen tourism industries following the pandemic, and leverage competitive offerings for the economic benefit of local communities that were hit hard.

The Commonwealth Government's **THRIVE 2030** strategy, and the Victorian Government's **Experience Victoria 2033** both focus on diversifying markets – particularly in urban fringe and regional areas – including through First Nations and epicurean experiences.

Building on the unique strengths of our local industries, our communities and local businesses are well-placed to attract local, interstate and international markets, which in turn provide opportunities for jobs and economic growth.

## Yarra Ranges: Opportunities and Challenges

Sitting at the interface of Melbourne's metropolitan and regional areas – the gateway to the Yarra Valley – Yarra Ranges plays an important role in maintaining precious Green Wedge land, providing tourism opportunities to domestic and international visitors, and fostering agricultural industries.

There are more than 13,000 businesses across the Yarra Ranges, employing more than 41,000 people locally. By 2032, Council aims to **grow its economy to \$9.1 billion, supporting more than 57,000 local jobs**.

Visitors to the region are expected to double to over 9 million per annum in the next decade. This presents a significant opportunity, but it is one that must be supported and realised carefully and strategically to ensure that locals residents reap the benefits, and our precious environment is protected.

Yarra Ranges Council	Victoria Government	Commonwealth Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Plan 2021-25</li> <li>• Economic Development Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience Victoria 2033</li> <li>• Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan</li> <li>• Native Timber Harvest Transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THRIVE 2030</li> <li>• Ag2030</li> <li>• Plan Victoria</li> <li>• Local Government Financial Assistance Grants</li> </ul>

Investment in flagship precincts and projects, as well as workforce skills and accommodation, will be key to attracting and retaining both local and overseas workers, driving sustainable economic growth and developing competitive tourism offerings.

Critically, local industries on the urban fringe need certainty that government co-investments and grant opportunities will be available to them ongoing, in order to develop a pipeline of impactful projects and infrastructure.

Initiative	Requirements (Investment and Policy)
<p>★ <b>Ridges and Rivers world-class trail network</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Warburton Mountain Bike Destination</b> – with planning delays and escalating costs, ongoing support and investment of \$6.5 million is needed to deliver Stage 1 as scoped in funding agreements with the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments.</li> <li>• <b>Yarra Valley Trail</b> – ongoing collaboration to deliver on Stage 2A, with \$4.9 million being delivered through the Commonwealth Government’s Priority Community Infrastructure Program.</li> <li>• <b>ngurrak barring</b> (formerly RidgeWalk) – further investment to deliver car parks in hills townships to facilitate visitors to ngurrak barring trails and ease broader parking pressures for locals: Falls Road, Mount Dandenong \$240,000. Pound Creek, Sherbrooke \$420,000.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Regional Development Victoria</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide consistent access to Regional Development Victoria funds targeted to tourism, agricultural and cultural industries, to support diversification of local economies and transition of timber industries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Regional Centre of Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding to develop a feasibility study for a Centre of Excellence for food and beverages of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges, akin to industry-leading examples in the Barossa Valley. (To be developed and run by industry bodies).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Workforce skilling</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for local hospitality, wine growing and producing businesses to train and upskill existing and new workers. (Developed and delivered via industry bodies)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Workforce accommodation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in housing to address workforce accommodation needs, particularly across growing industries of health, aged care, hospitality and agriculture. This should include permit exemptions for Rural Worker Accommodation in the Green Wedge Zones, and release of other reforms from the Planning for Melbourne’s Green Wedge and Agricultural Land Review, as well as access to the Regional Worker Accommodation Fund.</li> </ul>

★ **Priority initiative**