



SHAPING MURRINDINDI'S FUTURE

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

In 2019 the Victorian Government announced the transition away from commercial native timber harvesting and identified eleven communities for transition support via a Local development Strategy (LDS) Grant.

The LDS Grant helps communities to undertake long-term planning and identify opportunities for innovation and economic diversification to:

- **support the local economy to grow and adapt to changing industry trends,**
- **create new job opportunities,**
- **and bring long-term economic and social benefits to the area.**

The LDS process is a two year project. Project Manager Allisha Milestone is working closely with the community to identify the area's existing strengths, assets, challenges and opportunities for innovation and economic development.

The process involves several stages to ensure that the initiatives are truly reflective of the community's values, hopes and vision for a thriving and vibrant community in which to live and work.

This project is funded through the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, and supported by RMIT University and Murrindindi Shire Council

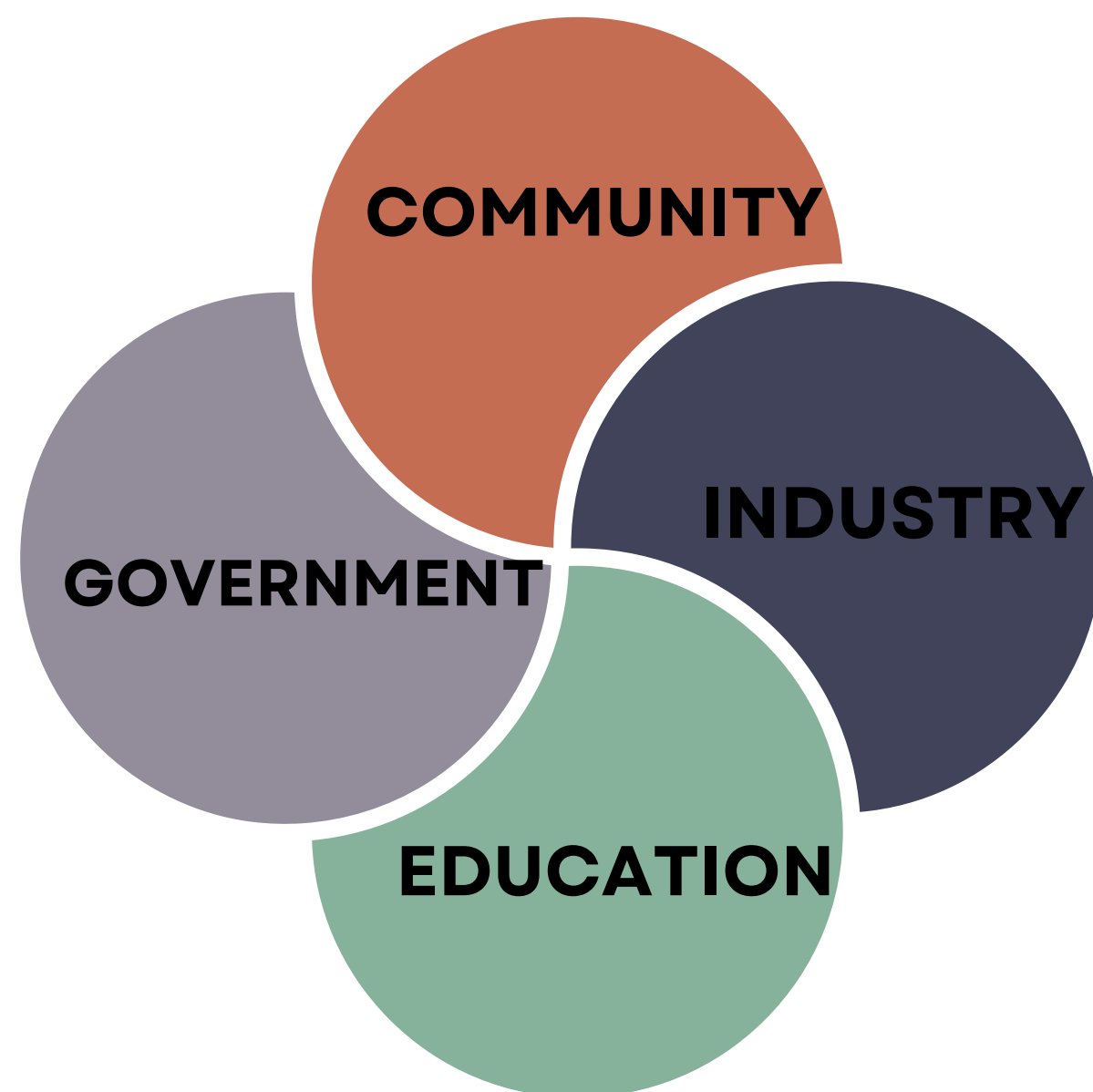


Energy,
Environment
and Climate Action



2.PROJECT STAGES

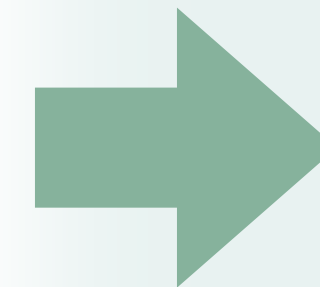
The project utilises Smart Specialisation (S3), collaborative policy approach that promotes innovation, economic transformation and sustainability by focussing on an areas assets and strengths. This concept is underpinned by the understanding that the greatest knowledge of a regions and its commitment to its prosperity, is possessed by the people and organisations that are based there.



S3 used a quadruple helix model to ensure that all those necessary in the area for successful adoption of initiatives, are actively involved. The quadruple helix model involves representation from community, industry/business, government and academia/research.

The project is being conducted in four distinct stages.

Stage 1: Discovery Phase - Regional Context Analysis



- Desktop Analysis
- Conduct community interviews
- Information collated and Innovation
- Opportunities identified.
- Regional Context Analysis Report published

Stage 2: Entrepreneurial Discovery Phase

- Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) workshops to review, refine & assess viability of identified innovation opportunities.
- Innovation working groups established

Stage 3: Innovation Working Groups

- Innovation working groups test propositions
- Seek technical/specialist advice as required
- Preparation and implementation of project scope

Stage 4: Local Development Strategy

- Local Development Strategy finalised
- Ongoing governance arrangements established
- Potential sources of government and private investment identified.

3. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Phase 1: Discovery Phase

Desktop Analysis on:

- History of the area
- Demographic data (age, education, employment, income)
- Geographic information
- Local and projected industry trends

Community Interviews

110 interviews were conducted over four months with local business owners, residents, volunteers and representatives from government agencies and industry bodies.

The geographic scope of this project covers the townships of Alexandra, Taggerty, Marysville and Buxton.

“The people are the biggest asset within our community”

Local Resident

We heard that it is the people who are at the heart of small regional towns which make the towns tick, and the creates a sense of community. This fosters a strong sense of belonging within the communities. These are towns where people know each other, look out for each other and support each other.

ALEXANDRA

DISTRICT PROFILE & MAP

LAND AREA

7,943
HECTARES



POPULATION

2,480

48.6% MALE 51.4% FEMALE



MEDIAN AGE

52

ALEXANDRA
38 VICTORIA COMPARISON

MEDIAN WEEKLY INCOME

\$616

ALEXANDRA
\$803 VICTORIA COMPARISON

WORKFORCE

50.2%

ALEXANDRA
62.4% VICTORIA COMPARISON

VOLUNTEERING

22.9%

ALEXANDRA
13.3% VICTORIA COMPARISON

HIGHEST EDUCATION ATTAINMENT LEVEL

COMPLETED YEAR 12
CERTIFICATE LEVEL
DIPLOMA & BEYOND



ALEXANDRA

11%
19.2%
24.6%

VICTORIA

14.9%
14.3%
39%

TOP 5 JOBS



19.1%
HEALTH CARE &
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE



15.1%
RETAIL TRADE



12.8%
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
& SAFETY



11.9%
CONSTRUCTION



10.5%
EDUCATION &
TRAINING

TOP 5 INDUSTRY OUTPUT



22.1%
CONSTRUCTION



12.8%
MANUFACTURING



12.5%
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
& SAFETY



9.2%
HEALTH CARE &
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE



8.1%
RENTAL, HIRING &
REAL ESTATE

TAGGERTY

DISTRICT PROFILE & MAP

LAND AREA

12,257
HECTARES



POPULATION

405

50.5% MALE 49.5% FEMALE



MEDIAN AGE

52

TAGGERTY
38 VICTORIA COMPARISON

MEDIAN WEEKLY INCOME

\$616

TAGGERTY
\$803 VICTORIA COMPARISON

WORKFORCE

52.7%

TAGGERTY
62.4% VICTORIA COMPARISON

VOLUNTEERING

27.5%

TAGGERTY
13.3% VICTORIA COMPARISON

HIGHEST EDUCATION ATTAINMENT LEVEL

COMPLETED YEAR 12
CERTIFICATE LEVEL
DIPLOMA & BEYOND



TAGGERTY

9.9%
22.2%
31%

VICTORIA

14.9%
14.3%
39%

TOP 5 JOBS



26.8%
CONSTRUCTION



26.8%
ACCOMMODATION &
FOOD SERVICE



17.1%
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY
& FISHING



7.3%
TRANSPORT, POSTAL
& WAREHOUSING



7.3%
OTHER SERVICES

TOP 5 INDUSTRY OUTPUT



31%
CONSTRUCTION



17.7%
RENTAL, HIRING &
REAL ESTATE



16%
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY
& FISHING



14%
ACCOMMODATION
& FOOD SERVICES



5%
TRANSPORT, POSTAL
& WAREHOUSING

MARYSVILLE

DISTRICT PROFILE & MAP

LAND AREA
19,627
HECTARES



POPULATION
501
52.3% MALE 47.7% FEMALE



MEDIAN AGE
59 MARYSVILLE
38 VICTORIA COMPARISON

MEDIAN WEEKLY INCOME
\$597 MARYSVILLE
\$803 VICTORIA COMPARISON

WORKFORCE
45.5% MARYSVILLE
62.4% VICTORIA COMPARISON

VOLUNTEERING
30.2% MARYSVILLE
13.3% VICTORIA COMPARISON

HIGHEST EDUCATION ATTAINMENT LEVEL	MARYSVILLE	VICTORIA
COMPLETED YEAR 12	10.8%	14.9%
CERTIFICATE LEVEL	22.5%	14.3%
DIPLOMA & BEYOND	34%	39%



TOP 5 JOBS



TOP 5 INDUSTRY OUTPUT



BUXTON

DISTRICT PROFILE & MAP

LAND AREA
6,136
HECTARES



POPULATION
591
50.9% MALE 49.1% FEMALE



MEDIAN AGE
53 BUXTON
38 VICTORIA COMPARISON

MEDIAN WEEKLY INCOME
\$698 BUXTON
\$803 VICTORIA COMPARISON

WORKFORCE
58.3% BUXTON
62.4% VICTORIA COMPARISON

VOLUNTEERING
22% BUXTON
13.3% VICTORIA COMPARISON

HIGHEST EDUCATION ATTAINMENT LEVEL	BUXTON	VICTORIA
COMPLETED YEAR 12	9.4%	14.9%
CERTIFICATE LEVEL	25.4%	14.3%
DIPLOMA & BEYOND	28.8%	39%



TOP 5 JOBS



TOP 5 INDUSTRY OUTPUT



4. Interviews Summary

During May 2023 - August 2023, 110+ interviews were conducted to understand the knowledge, vision and values of the community's within the corridor.

Interviews were conducted with Community (39%), Business (41%), Government (15%) and Education (5%)

THE PLACE

- The natural environment is a key asset to residents and tourism
- Strong community network/research in Farm Forestry with established trial plots
- Outdoor Recreation is important and there is opportunity for further investment
- Future management of State and Federal managed forest is a concern particularly for fire mitigation

THE PEOPLE

- Community spirit and attitude to help and support each other is highly valued
- High reliance on volunteering, and want to encourage new leaders
- More infrastructure would be encouraged to support connectiveness
- Growth in the community has been slow compared to other nearby regional areas
- While encouraging tourism and new residents, the community want to keep the rural lifestyle and feel
- Many small family owned businesses that might not want to expand
- Education and youth leaving and not returning is a big concern
- Families would support more high school and subject offerings for students
- Businesses are finding it difficult to find and retain suitable or suitably skilled staff
- 70% of those interviewed stated there is limited suitable housing
- Limited public transport has been raised as a major concern for locals

4. Interviews Summary Continued

THE ECONOMY

- Agriculture is strong in the region, and community want to buy and support locally grown produce
- Businesses and community are looking into ways to address energy/waste challenges using sustainable circular economy model
- Community/ business and high school trialing food dehydrator to address food waste
- Waste is not processed in the Shire - there is opportunity to explore recycling models further
- 1000T of fruit waste produced each year and not reused
- Cluster of advanced manufacturing businesses with capacity to expand
- Limited available and serviced industrial land
- Growing retirement age and pressure on current providers
- Limited Health and wellbeing services locally
- Businesses have expressed they are unable to find and recruit skilled staff, and are looking at overseas professionals to fill staff shortages

5. IDENTIFIED INNOVATION OPPORTUNITES

The data from the desktop analysis, in conjunction with community interview data, identified the following innovation opportunities which have been recommended for further investigation

Farm Forestry.

"We believe that in marginal hill county - the type of agricultural land prevailing in the Murrindindi Shire area - farm forestry could play an important role in assisting a successful transition for the local forestry sector" - Taggerty Resident

Basic Proposition

- Bring together small & medium scale plantations
- Environmental benefits - land restoration and regeneration
- Small harvest equipment manufacturing
- Multiple income steams - timber, firewood, oils/native food etc

Strategic Competitive Advantage

- Existing network of researchers and scientists
- Competitive market for high quality hardwood timber and firewood
- Demand for small harvesting equipment

Key Assets

- Extensive local expertise and local interest from farmers
- Available farm land
- Willingness in community to diversity
- Climate and location

Key Challenges

- Climate Change
- Livestock farming
- Slow return on investment/ Cost of initial Investment
- Fire risk to community

Sustainable Agriculture & Horticulture

"I would like to see a centre for agriculture innovation linking education to leverage our large agriculture base and increase agriculture tourism by creating experiences around local food" Alexandra Resident

Basic Proposition

- Farm to plate concept
- High value add & specialist opportunities Environmental sustainability
- Circular economy - reuse of agriculture biproducts

Strategic Competitive Advantage

- Regional and international markets Proximity to market
- Growing conditions
- Niche agricutlure offerings

Key Assets

- Demand for local produce
- Significant economic industry & export markets Link to education opportunities
- Good farming land & water supply

Key Challenges

- Climate change
- Logistics & Transport
- Recruitment & retention of workforce Disposal of organic waste products

5. IDENTIFIED INNOVATION OPPORTUNITES

Advanced Manufacturing

"Murrindindi Shire Council through its network of towns has many bespoke industrial and manufacturing businesses and there is significant opportunity to grow and expand specialised manufacturing" Council

Basic Proposition

- Build on existing expertise in applied engineering and manufacturing
- Small harvest machine manufacturing, powder coating, laser cutting
- Support development of new industries and products
- Combine skills and trades

Strategic Competitive Advantage

- Current businesses exporting nation and international
- Proximity to market
- Further capacity to expand

Key Assets

- Alexandra - growing service town
- Industry expertise
- Businesses wanting to grow
- Key skilled trade and qualified staff

Key Challenges

- Limited industrial/commercial land available
- No local education providers for industry recognised training
- Recruitment and retention of workforce
- Affordable housing

Health, Aged Care & Social Assistance

"We need to find ways to attract qualified professional health care workers to regional areas" - Alexandra Resident

Basic Proposition

- Develop care models and physical infrastructure to support ageing in our community.
- Innovative solutions to workforce capabilities
- Explore community collaboration to improve support services & encourage health and active ageing

Strategic Competitive Advantage

- Existing providers ready to innovate to address challenges associated with service delivery and workforce shortages.

Key Assets

- Existing aged care providers & hospital
- Active aging population with a wealth of knowledge and skills
- Connected communities

Key Challenges

- Recruitment & retention of workforce Affordable housing
- Increasing demand for services
- Projected increase in mature age demographic

6. IDENTIFIED INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Renewable Economy

“Buxton enjoys a position as a top potential site for pumped hydro with the hills, the valleys, and the Goulburn River providing geographical opportunity” Melbourne University

Basic Proposition

- Investigate innovative energy solutions such as waste to energy & hydro
- Potential for circular economy initiatives in a variety of industries eg agriculture, manufacturing
- Consider community energy/storage opportunities

Strategic Competitive Advantage

- Main power distribution lines run through Murrindindi Shire
- Recent research identified Buxton as having most location sites for pumped hydro within Victoria.
- Existing local business undertaking circular economy projects

Tourism

“The natural assets of the region support a range of popular visitor attractions which draw varying levels of visitation across the year” Council

Basic Proposition

- Leverage existing local assets to increase visitor economy
- Investigate new events and value added tourism opportunities
- Expanding visitor experience offerings.
- Support existing business and enable new business development

Strategic Competitive Advantage

- Proximity to Melbourne
- Existing tourist infrastructure
- Closed alpine resort to Melbourne
- Unique natural features

Key Assets

- Existing hydro power infrastructure - Rubicon, Eildon
- Murrindindi priority zone for hydro under Vic Grid entity
- Strong local willingness and interest in environmental sustainability
- Available energy sources: hydro, solar, wind

Key Challenges

- Skills and workforce availability
- Availability of housing
- Cost of investment and ongoing maintenance
- Establishing new markets for end products
- Climate change

Key Assets

- Natural environment is a key drawcard for tourists (Lake Mountain, Cathedrals, Goulburn River, Lake Eildon etc)
- Proximity to Melbourne
- Diverse range of outdoor recreation activities

Key Challenges

- Climate Change - impact natural environment (fires, flood etc)
- Limited quality accommodation options
- Recruitment & retention of staff
- Affordable housing
- Cohesion between businesses and organisations



SHAPING MURRINDINDI'S FUTURE

7. WHAT HAVE WE MISSED?

We listened. We heard. Did we get it right? What did we miss?

We started a conversation with our community, listened to your voices and gained valuable insights. We warmly welcome your input and feedback on this draft regional context analysis

Feedback must be received by

Sunday 15 October

ONLINE

To view the draft regional context analysis document & draft summary

OR

To submit feedback or an EOI
Please click on the link below

theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/transition

HARD COPY

Paper copies of the draft report, summary report, EOI and feedback forms are available from:

Alexandra Library, Alexandra Council office ,
MiRA Marysville and Taggerty Store

DROP IN EVENTS



Tuesday 26 September

Alexandra Library

3.30pm - 6.30pm



Wednesday 27 September

MiRA, Marysville

12.00pm - 2.30pm



Wednesday 27 September

Buxton Hall

3.30pm - 6.00pm



Tuesday 3 October

Alexandra Library

3.30pm - 6.30pm

Once the feedback has closed, the Shaping Murrindindi's Future Regional Context Analysis document will be published on our website in November 2023.

www.shapingmurrindindisfuture.org.au

8. NEXT STEPS

Stage 2. Entrepreneurial Discovery Phase (EDP)

The innovation opportunities will be reviewed in Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) workshops where the ideas will be examined, and initial viability assessed based on evidence.

Each EDP workshop will include representatives from:



Community



Industry expertise



Education & Research



Government

The ideas recommended for further investigation from the EDP workshops will progress to Innovation Working Groups, to further develop these projects.

HOW TO BE INVOLVED

Expressions of Interest (EOI) are currently being sought to participate in each EDP workshop.

If you would like to be involved in these workshops, please complete an EOI form - either online or paper copy.

theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/transition

Completed forms must be received by

Sunday 15 October

We will be hosting EDP workshops in early 2024



SHAPING
MURRINDINDI'S
FUTURE



Community Capacity Building

Through conversations and interviews during phase 1 of the project, we listened to community and heard that one of the most important assets in the community, is actually the community itself. The people who make up these unique townships provide essential services and resources both through work and volunteering. With a can do attitude, it is the people who make these towns vibrant and thriving places to live and work. By investing in people, we can support social and economic development, build community resilience and empower people to do what matters most to them.

Below are some of the suggestions you have given us to help build your capacity to get things done. Have we missed any?

