

Championing a better tomorrow

Mildura Rural City Council Advocacy Priorities

Adopted March 2025



Mildura Rural City Council



Acknowledgment of country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land which now comprises the Mildura Rural City municipality. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures and acknowledge the memories of their ancestors.



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Our liveable people-friendly region

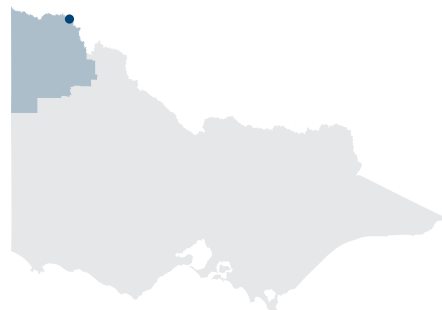
Mildura Rural City is located in the north-west of Victoria and covers an incredible 10 per cent of the state of Victoria.

22,082km²
Land area

The local landscape boasts vegetation unique to the Mallee, while also being famous for broad acre grain properties, fresh fruit production (citrus, avocado, table grapes and wine grapes) and vibrant and welcoming townships.

The municipality shares borders with both NSW and South Australia, making it a regional service centre for all three states.

The jewel in the municipality's crown is its connection to the Mighty Murray River, which winds its way through much of the region. It's a focal point for visitors and those who call the region home.

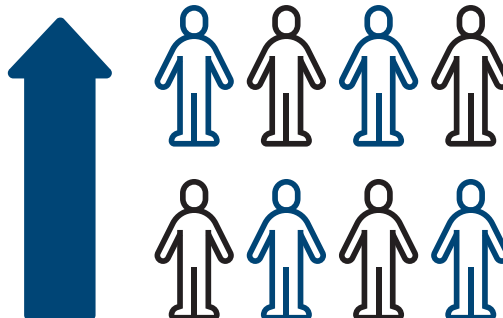


57,544

2023 estimated resident population

62,600

2031 projected resident population



Key industries

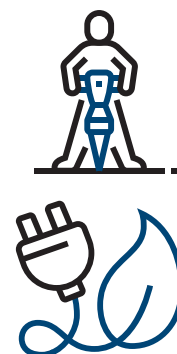
Dryland farming, irrigated horticulture (table grapes, wine grapes, dried grapes, citrus, vegetables and nuts), tourism, food and beverage manufacturing, transport and logistics, retail, health and community services.

Our towns

Cabarita	Merbein	Ouyen
Cardross	Meringur	Red Cliffs
Colignan	Mildura	Underbool
Cowangie	Murrayville	Walpeup
Cullulleraine	Nangiloc	Werrimull
Irymple	Nichols Point	

Emerging industries

Renewable energy generation, aquaculture, mineral sands mining and recycling



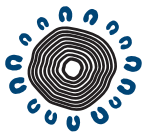


\$8.157 billion

Annual economic output

9.4%

Born overseas

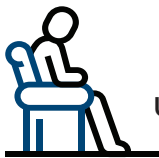


4.6%

Aboriginal or
Torres Strait
Islander

5,386

Businesses



4.1%

Unemployment rate

7.5%

Need assistance
with core
activities

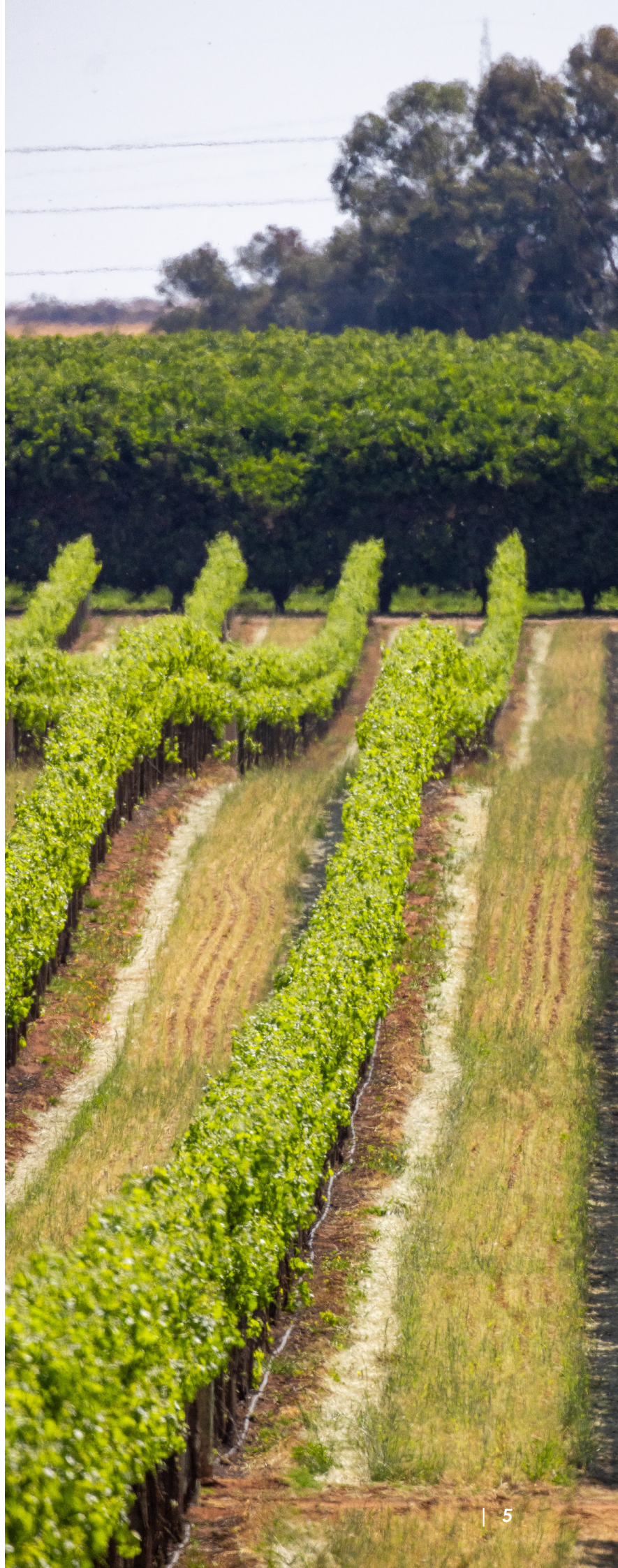


25,016

Jobs

12.3%

Speak a language
other than English
at home





Mayor's message

Mildura Rural City Council is constantly advocating to all levels of government to support major initiatives or projects that will produce transformative outcomes for our community.

We have identified six advocacy projects that will not only be transformative for our community but produce positive outcomes for decades to come, helping us achieve our vision of making our municipality home to the most liveable, people-friendly community in Australia.

By advocating on behalf of our community to make these projects a reality it will address real needs and priorities identified in our region across a raft of areas, including community wellbeing, financial sustainability and infrastructure development.

We look forward to working side-by-side with all levels of government to realise these projects and the benefits that flow through to our community.

Cr Helen Healy
Mayor
Mildura Rural City Council

Mildura Rural City Council Advocacy Priorities



Monak Bridge

Alleviate congestion and improve freight transport efficiency across the Murray River.



Financial Sustainability

Ensure financial viability of regional councils amid funding challenges.



Freight on Rail Investment

Shift freight transport from road to rail to reduce road congestion and improve safety.



Asset Renewal Gap

Address funding gaps for maintaining ageing community assets.



Building a Healthy Active Community

Address health risks through community recreational facilities.



Mildura Riverfront Development - Stage 3

Enhance tourism and community recreation opportunities along the riverfront.





Monak Bridge

Development of the business case will provide justification for a second bridge in the Mildura region, at Monak, examining in more detail the benefits, costs and risks. Mildura has only one bridge over the Murray River which is reaching capacity, leading to traffic congestion.

This congestion has impacts on both the efficient movement of freight into the region and interstate to New South Wales and South Australia.

Reliance on just one bridge exacerbates the impacts of bridge closures isolating townships on both sides of the river and disrupting supply chains. An additional bridge will improve efficiencies of freight transport through and to the region as well as reducing the impacts of traffic congestion on Mildura's CBD. It's projected to take about 1,000 trucks out of the CBD each day while shaving an hour from heavy freight travel times, which will save trucking companies an estimated \$65 million per year. It will also ensure emergency service access if one bridge is closed.

Why

- Alleviate congestion and improve freight transport efficiency across the Murray River.

How

- Advocate for funding to develop a business case for construction of a new bridge at Monak.

What

- Ensure emergency services access and supply chain resilience during bridge closures

**Government
support needed:
\$200,000**

Total cost: \$300,000

Category: Infrastructure

Status: Listed as a key enabler in the Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy (ITLUS) 2025.

Delivery timeframe: 36 months



Financial Sustainability

Our recent submission to the Federal Parliament's Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability highlighted the challenges of ensuring the financial sustainability of regional Local Government organisations.

We joined other rural and regional councils across Australia in calling on the Australian Government to restore a minimum allocation of 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue to Local Government.

Regional Local Governments such as Mildura face limited revenue options, a State government-imposed rate capping environment, and ongoing cost shifting from both Federal and State government. This is compounded by an ever-increasing remit of services to be delivered.

We call on the Federal Government to listen to the increasing concerns from Local Governments on their financial sustainability and to make meaningful change to the way Local Governments are funded and ensure their service delivery is sustainable into the future.

Why

- Ensure financial viability of regional councils amid funding challenges.

How

- Advocate for increased Financial Assistance Grants and review of cost-shifting impacts.

What

- Push for fairer rating systems and sustainable service delivery models.

Government support needed: Fairer funding model for Local Government to reduce reliance on rate payers.

Category: Leadership

Delivery timeframe: Can commence immediately



Freight on Rail Investment

A business case will examine the viability of intermodals identified in the Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy 2025 (ITLUS) across the region in more detail, including at Merbein, Red Cliffs, Thurla and Ouyen, and provide justification for the development of such facilities. The report will also look at the options analysis, estimates and constraints for each location.

The current rail system is inefficient and does not incentivise the mode shift for freight transport from road to rail. Road freight is causing significant damage to road infrastructure and is congesting the road network, leading to increased road safety risks.

Improving the efficiency of freight transportation over long-haul distances by the use of rail will reduce the road safety impacts from the significant volumes of freight vehicles on the road network and will reduce the deterioration of road infrastructure.

Why

- Shift freight transport from road to rail to reduce road congestion and improve safety.

How

- Advocate for State government investment in rail infrastructure improvements.

What

- Develop a business case for intermodal facilities and support relocation of Seaway.

**Government
support needed:
\$200,000**

Total cost: \$250,000

Category: Infrastructure

Status: Listed as a key enabler in ITLUS

Delivery Timeframe: 18 months



Asset Renewal Gap

Council is projecting its asset renewal gap could grow to almost \$180 million over the next 10 years. We manage an asset base in excess of \$1.1 billion (based on replacement cost).

We are the stewards of these assets for the community, now and into the future. There are minimal, if any, funding opportunities available from State and Federal government to assist with asset renewal.

Focus is inevitable on new assets, which only increases Councils' asset bases and pressure on expenditure to service them, particularly in regional councils with limited growth and ability to leverage other sources of income.

The Federal Government should consider increased funding programs for asset renewal to support Local Governments aging infrastructure.

Why

- Address funding gaps for maintaining ageing community assets.

How

- Lobby State and Federal governments for increased funding in asset renewal programs.

What

- State and Federal governments to consider increasing funding for asset renewal.

Government support needed: Increased funding for asset renewal.

Total cost: Council faces an asset renewal gap of up to \$180 million over the next 10 years.

Category: Financial Sustainability

Status: Ongoing

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing



Building a Healthy Active Community

This suite of recreation projects provides significant health benefits to the community, whilst also enabling the ability to attract regional, state and national sport tourism events. The identified projects are:

Merbein Active Recreation Precinct

The Merbein Active Recreation Precinct has been designed in consultation with the community to provide a broad range of free recreation opportunities, catering for all ages and demographics.

The facility is located in one of the Mildura Local Government Area's most disadvantaged townships.

It will also create a feature entrance to the town of Merbein.

BMX Lighting and Starting Gate

This project will create a new starting gate in line with the peak sporting body's national competition standards, unlock the potential for millions of dollars in event tourism for the region annually, taking advantage of Mildura's unique location and weather conditions. It will also deliver competition-standard track lighting, extending the season for local riders and increasing participation in the sport throughout the year.

Hockey Pitch Renewal

The existing facility requires an urgent upgrade to meet the current Federation of International Hockey Standards and to accommodate local participation. Strong growth within the sport, across all ages and demographics makes this project a priority to ensure hockey's sustainability in Mildura.

Why

- Address health risks through community recreational facilities.

How

- Secure \$5 million funding for priority projects under local community plans.

What

- Implement Chaffey Park, Merbein Community Plan and Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex actions for active recreation.

Government support needed: \$5 million

Total cost: \$5 million

Category: Community, Tourism, Recreation

Status: Designed and costed

Delivery Timeframe: 24 months



Mildura Riverfront Development - Stage 3

The new adventure playground at Jaycee Park will strengthen the Mildura Riverfront precinct as a key destination, attracting visitors and enhancing local infrastructure.

As a central hub for both locals and tourists, Jaycee Park is known for its expansive green spaces and recreational facilities. It serves as the area's premier public open space, drawing hundreds of thousands annually.

Part of the broader Mildura Riverfront Development, this exciting addition will solidify the park's status as a must-visit spot. It will offer families, children, and outdoor enthusiasts more opportunities for fun, further revitalising the region and enriching daily life for the local community.



Concept image of the adventure playground at Jaycee Park

Why

- Enhance tourism and community recreation opportunities along the riverfront.

How

- Secure funding for adventure play experience under Public Open Space Strategy.

What

- Allocate \$1.8 million for project implementation.

Government support needed: \$1.8 million

Total cost: \$3.6 million

Category: Community, Tourism, Recreation

Status: Designed

Delivery Timeframe: 24 months

Deakin Avenue Service Centre
76 Deakin Avenue, Mildura

Madden Avenue Service Centre
108 Madden Avenue, Mildura

Ouyen Service Centre
79 Oke Street, Ouyen

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