

Championing a better tomorrow

Advocacy priorities for the
next Victorian Government
State Election 2026



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.

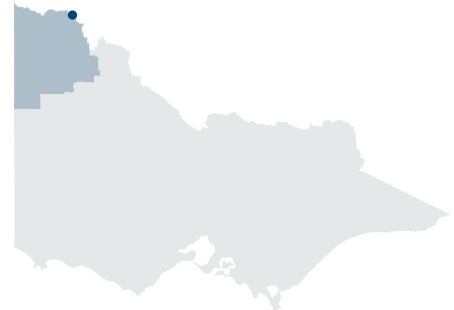
22,082km²

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.

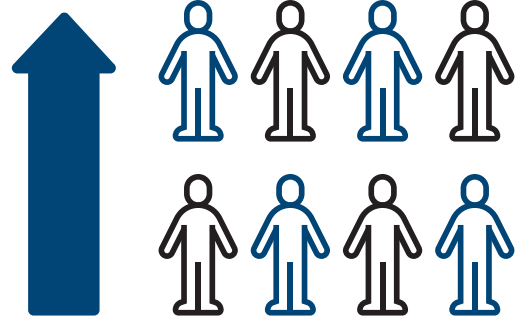


57,309

2026 estimated resident population

66,365

2046 projected resident population



Key industries

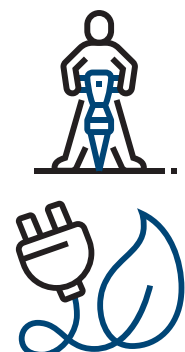
Dryland farming, irrigated horticulture (table grapes, wine grapes, dried grapes, citrus, vegetables and nuts), tourism, food and beverage manufacturing, transport and logistics, retail, health and community services.

Our towns

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

Emerging industries

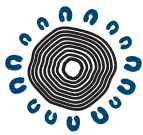
Renewable energy generation, aquaculture, mineral sands mining and recycling





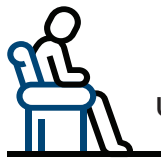
\$8.5 billion
Annual economic output

13.63%
Born overseas



4.6%
Aboriginal or
Torres Strait
Islander

5,492
Businesses



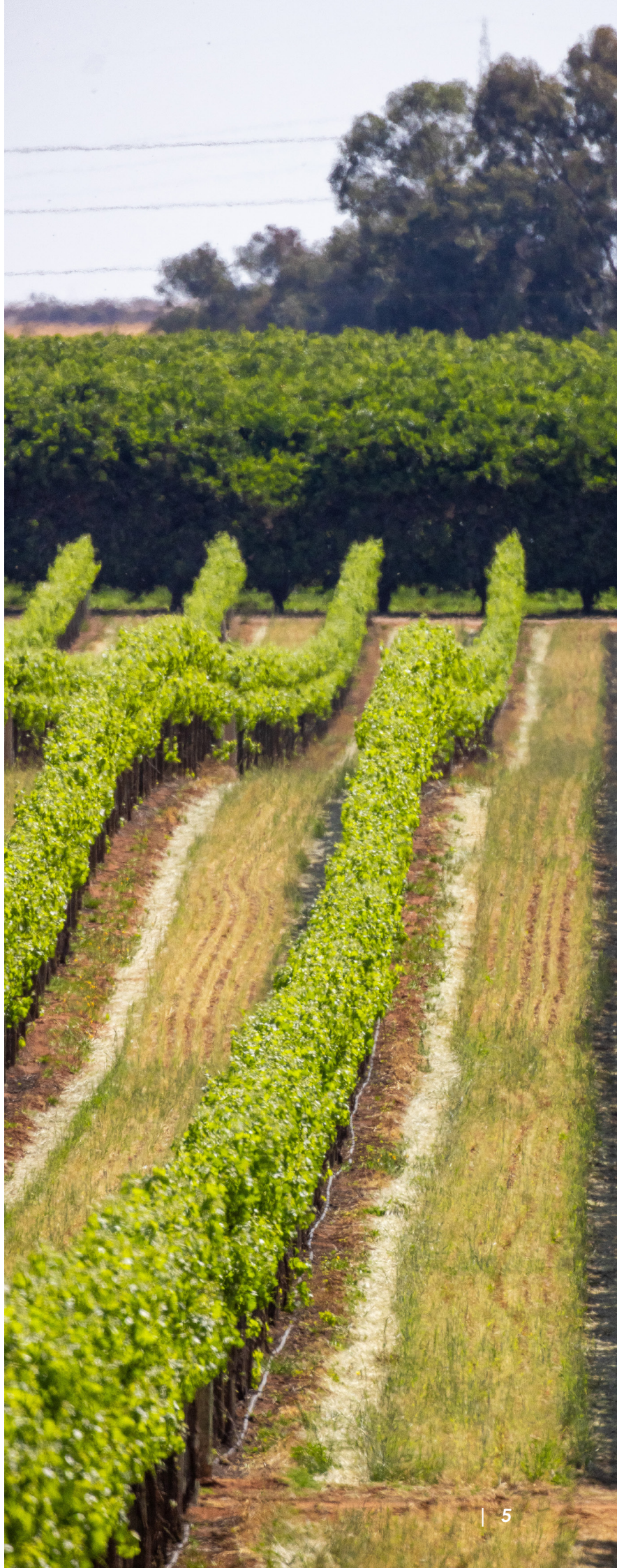
2.2%
Unemployment rate

7.64%
Need assistance
with core
activities



26,617
Jobs

13.5%
Speak a language
other than English
at home





Introduction

Families across our region are facing increasing cost-of-living pressures and are seeking safe, affordable places to spend time together, stay active and connect with their community.

That is why Mildura Rural City Council is advocating for projects that will make a real and lasting difference to local families. The upcoming State Election presents a significant opportunity to partner with Victoria's next Government to deliver transformational initiatives that will enhance liveability, support community wellbeing and strengthen our region for future generations.

Council has identified three key advocacy priorities that will deliver long-term social, economic and community benefits. These projects will create accessible, family-friendly spaces and opportunities that residents can enjoy for decades to come, while supporting our vision of becoming Australia's most liveable and people-friendly municipality.

These priorities have been selected from Council's broader Cost of Living Advocacy Roadmap, a comprehensive program of initiatives and projects designed to ease cost-of-living pressures, improve community wellbeing and support a sustainable future for Mildura Rural City.

We look forward to working in partnership with the next State Government to bring these projects to life and deliver meaningful outcomes that benefit our entire community.



Cost of Living Advocacy Roadmap 2026

A comprehensive list of Initiatives and Projects that aim to reduce cost pressures on residents and create a sustainable future for the Mildura Rural City Community.

Key advocacy priorities

Sustainable Futures



Reduce cost pressures on our community.

Growth through Infrastructure



To enable strategic infrastructure projects that build economic sustainability.

Connected, Affordable Transport



Invest in transport infrastructure to boost economic growth with connected freight routes and affordable passenger links.

Homes for a Growing Community



Housing development initiatives that create more homes and attract more working families.

Advocate For Enabling Projects and Initiatives

- Reduce cost shifting from government for services – Policy Reform:
 - Maternal & Child Health
 - Library
 - School Crossing Supervisors
 - EPA Levy
- Initiate Tri-State Economic Zone – Policy support
- Financial Sustainability Strategy actions – innovation and service improvement

- Mildura Airport Upgrade - \$30M
- Riverfront Master Plan Stage 2 - \$25M
- Mildura Arts and Culture Development Plan
- Motorsports Infrastructure Development
- Mildura Gov and Industry Initiative - \$2M business case
- Mildura CBD Revitalisation - \$20M
- Mildura Weir Replacement - \$250M

- Deliver the Mildura Benetook Freight Link - \$200M
- Northwest Vic Regional Passenger Transport Study actions - \$700k feasibility and demand study
- More Freight on rail – seed funding for business case
- Monak Bridge- \$300K to support business case
- Support RCV Regional Roads Improvement Fund

- Trunk infrastructure initiatives: \$40M
 - Mildura East Growth Areas (MEGA)
 - Irymple Structure Plan
 - Drainage and stormwater upgrades
 - Roads and sewer infrastructure
- Short-stay budget accommodation – strategy delivery and policy support
- Housing Task Force Initiatives

Create Funding Pathways for Regional Communities

Mildura Rural City Council calls on the State Government to targeted regional investment funding pathways that reduce housing, transport and service costs for Mildura residents.

- **Infrastructure Enablement:** A **\$1 billion Regional Fund** will unlock housing supply, essential infrastructure and workforce capacity in high-growth regional centres.

- **Fix the Roads Fund:** A **\$2 billion Regional Roads** package will improve safety, cut travel and freight costs, and support local productivity.
- **Fair Funding:** Sustainable outcomes require fair rates settings, reduced cost shifting and fit-for-purpose grants so costs aren't passed on to communities.

A vibrant, modern playground scene. In the background, a tall, cylindrical blue tower with a silver lattice top and a red panel stands against a blue sky with clouds. A black slide curves down from the tower. In the foreground, a wooden ship-themed play structure with orange railings and red accents is visible. Two people are sitting on the grass in the immediate foreground, looking towards the playground. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny.

***Creating safe family spaces for
youth to play, connect and belong***



Mildura Riverfront Development – Jaycee Park Adventure Playspace

The Opportunity

The Mildura Riverfront Adventure Playspace will transform Jaycee Park into a regionally significant family destination within the Mildura Riverfront Precinct, delivering inclusive play, youth recreation and tourism infrastructure that benefits local families and visitors alike.

Designed to celebrate Mildura's unique Murray River identity, the Playspace will feature quality adventure play elements, inclusive facilities and improved riverfront activation, strengthening Mildura's position as Victoria's leading inland river city.

Why It Matters

The Mildura Riverfront Adventure Playspace will transform Jaycee Park into a regionally significant family destination, delivering much-needed recreation infrastructure that supports youth wellbeing, social connection, active lifestyles and regional liveability.

Located within the award-winning Mildura Riverfront Precinct, the project will strengthen Mildura's appeal as a leading visitor destination, attract families from across north-west Victoria and neighbouring states, and encourage longer visitor stays.

Shaped by extensive community consultation and backed by strong community support, the project will create a safe, inclusive and welcoming space where children, young people and families can gather, connect and participate in healthy outdoor recreation, aligning with Victorian Government priorities around community wellbeing, preventative health, youth engagement and regional development.

With concept design complete, a preferred site identified, Council committed to a \$1.8 million contribution and more than 1,500 community engagements informing the project, the Adventure Playspace is funding-ready and capable of being delivered by 2028.

Election Commitment Sought: \$3.2M

Council Contribution: \$1.8M
Total Project Value: \$5M

Economic Impact (construction only)*: \$10.6M and 19 Jobs

Project Status Construction-ready

Delivery by 2028

What issues are being addressed / solved?

- Youth wellbeing and social connection
- Inclusive recreation infrastructure
- Regional liveability
- Community Health and Wellbeing
- Public space activation
- Visitor economy growth
- Tourism development
- Regional economic growth

Policy / Priority plan alignment

- Plan for Victoria (2025)
- Victorian Economic Growth Statement (2024)
- Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy 2030
- Experience Victoria 2033
- Victorian Infrastructure Strategy
- Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) Regional Essentials 2026 Advocacy Agenda

*Total output including all direct, supply-chain and consumption effects based on the estimated construction cost and jobs during construction
Source: REMPLAN Economy Impact Summary
Non-Residential Building Construction

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Perth, Australia, showing a dense urban area with a mix of residential and commercial buildings. A prominent road runs vertically through the center of the image. In the foreground, there is a large green park area with a circular building and a body of water. The sky is blue with some clouds.

*Unlocking more homes for
families and workforce growth*



Trunk Infrastructure for Priority Growth Areas

The Opportunity

Mildura has the land capacity to meet the Victorian Government's target of 8,500 new homes by 2051, but critical trunk infrastructure is needed to unlock development across priority growth areas.

Investment in stormwater drainage, drainage basin land acquisition, road upgrades and sewer infrastructure across the Mildura East Growth Area (MEGA), Mildura South, Irymple and Red Cliffs will enable more homes to be delivered sooner, helping to relieve pressure on renters, first-home buyers, key workers and local employers while supporting long-term regional economic growth.

This investment will unlock significant residential development opportunities across Mildura's priority growth areas, and assist Mildura in achieving its forecast 6,625 additional jobs by 2046*2. These additional jobs created will add a direct economic benefit of almost \$2 billion to the local economy.

Why It Matters

Investment in enabling infrastructure will support affordable, social and worker housing, while helping address housing affordability challenges, rental pressures and workforce shortages across key sectors including healthcare, education, agriculture, transport and hospitality.

Council cannot fund this infrastructure alone, and without State Government co-investment housing delivery will be significantly delayed, constraining regional economic growth. Council has identified priority growth areas and infrastructure requirements, with delivery able to be staged to align with developer demand and housing provider investment.

The project is expected to generate approximately \$77.4 million in economic output during infrastructure construction alone, supporting local jobs, businesses and supply chains while creating the foundations for thousands of future homes.

Election Commitment Sought: \$41.6M

- \$30M Mildura East Growth Area (MEGA)
- \$4.5M Mildura South
- \$7.1M Irymple and Red Cliffs

Economic Impact

(construction) *1: \$77.4M and 147 Jobs
Direct additional economic benefit at 2046
*2: \$1.95 billion per annum

Project Status:

Mildura South, Irymple and Red Cliffs are shovel ready.
MEGA in final stages of design.

Delivery by 2030

*1Total output including all direct, supply-chain and consumption effects based on the estimated construction cost and jobs during construction. *2 Direct additional economic impact is calculated at 2046 compared to 2021 based on REMPLAN employment forecast and direct impact from additional jobs created.
Source: REMPLAN Economy Impact Summary

What Issues are being addressed / solved?

- Housing supply
- Rental affordability and availability
- Workforce shortages
- Development bottlenecks
- Social and affordable housing needs
- Growth infrastructure
- Amenity, compliance and safety issues
- Regional population growth
- Economic productivity

Policy / Priority plan alignment

- Victorian Housing Statement (2023)
- Plan for Victoria (2025)
- Infrastructure Victoria 30-Year Strategy
- Victorian Economic Growth Statement (2024)
- Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan



***Cleared for Take-Off: Investing in
Connectivity, Tourism and Regional Growth***



Mildura Airport Essential Rejuvenation

The Opportunity

Mildura Airport requires critical upgrades to modernise ageing aviation infrastructure. Investment in runway rejuvenation and taxiway/apron upgrades will future proof this critical regional asset, maintaining safe and reliable operations while enabling larger aircraft, greater route diversity and future passenger growth.

These priority projects represent the first stage of the Mildura Airport Masterplan and provide the foundation for long-term regional growth.

Why It Matters

Mildura Airport is a critical regional gateway that underpins access to healthcare, education, business, tourism, freight and emergency services across north-west Victoria, southern New South Wales and eastern South Australia.

As one of Australia's busiest regional airports, it plays an essential role in supporting community connectivity, workforce mobility and regional economic growth. The runway upgrade would strengthen that role by enabling larger aircraft, increasing seat capacity per flight and improving the commercial case for airlines to service Mildura.

Larger aircraft support more efficient operations, greater route viability and stronger competition, which can place downward pressure on ticket prices.

For a geographically isolated regional economy, more competitive and higher-capacity air services make Mildura easier to visit, easier to invest in and easier to do business from; enabling regional growth.

Election Commitment Sought: \$30 million

Economic Impact

(construction only)*:
\$37.2M and 71 Jobs

Project Status

Shovel-ready

Delivery

Commencement within 12 months
of funding approval

What issues are being addressed / solved?

- Ageing infrastructure
- Aviation safety and operational risks
- Regional connectivity
- Workforce mobility
- Emergency response capability
- Freight and logistics capacity
- Regional investment opportunities
- Future-proof critical transport infrastructure

Policy / Priority plan alignment

- Victorian Infrastructure Strategy
- Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy
- Victorian Economic Growth Statement (2024)
- Victorian Freight Priorities
- Plan for Victoria (2025)
- Infrastructure Victoria 30-Year Strategy
- Regional Development Victoria (RDV) Priorities

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