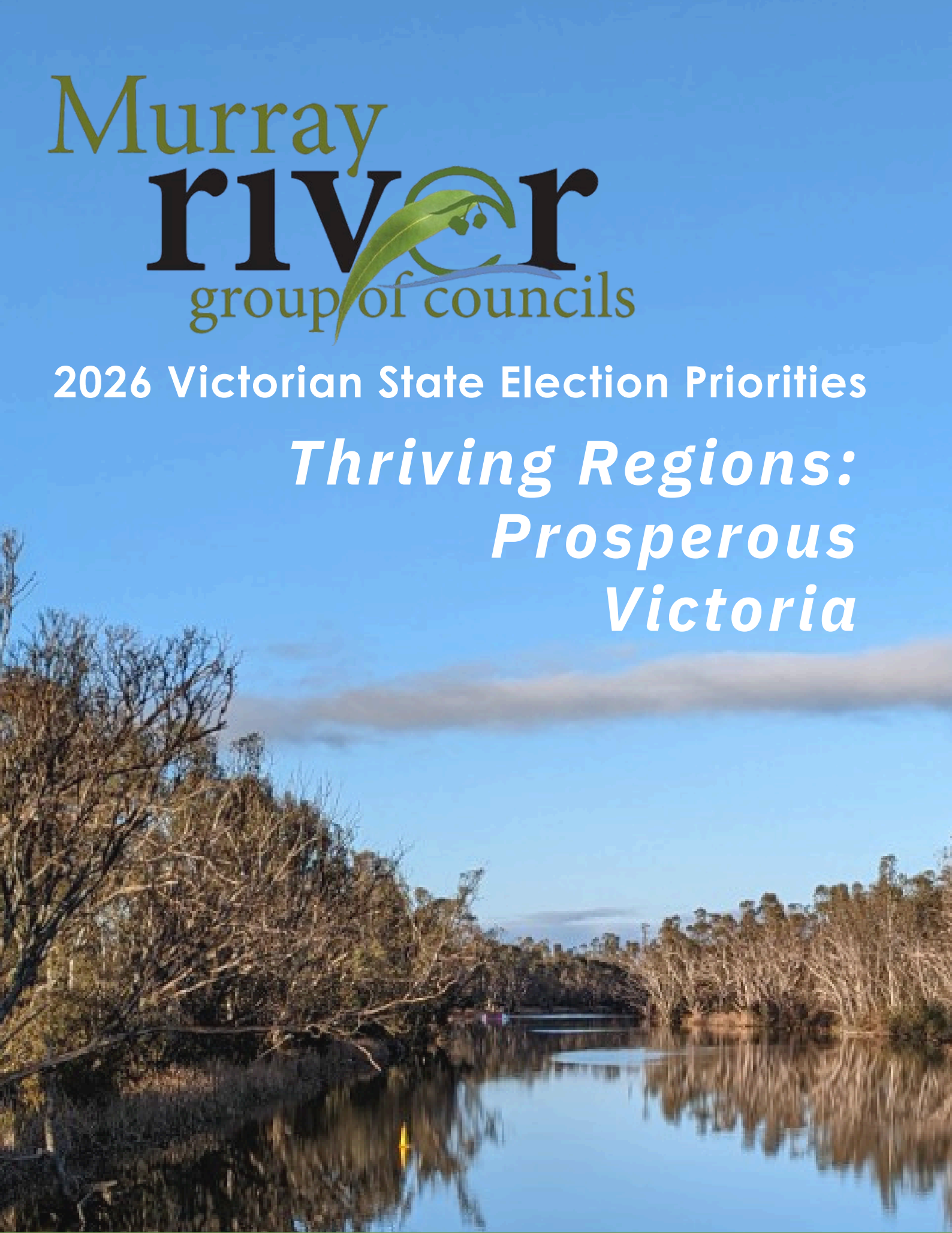
Murray river group of councils

2026 Victorian State Election Priorities

Thriving Regions: Prosperous Victoria



Six Councils | One Region | One Voice

Our Region Delivers for Victoria

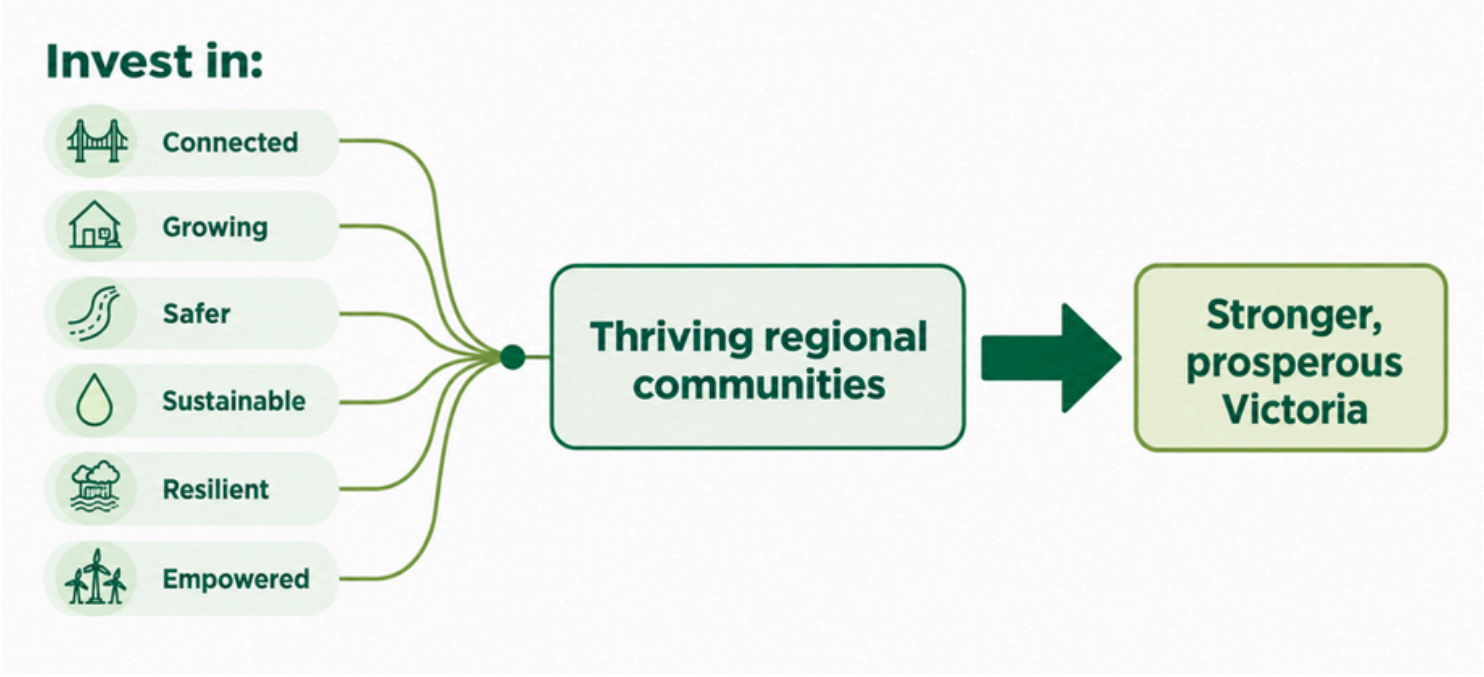
It's Time to Invest in Us



The Murray River region is one of Victoria's great economic engines.

Home to major agricultural and food-processing industries, efficient irrigation, nationally significant transport routes, new opportunities in renewables and mining and unique tourism offerings. Our six councils represent communities that provide the workforce and land that underpin regional growth; central to Victoria's future prosperity.

The Murray River Group of Councils' region, delivers for Victoria.



Mildura Rural City Council SWAN HILL GANNAWARRA Shire Council LODDON SHIRE Campaspe Shire Council moira SHIRE

Why invest in the Murray River region?



Because, our region delivers for Victoria.

The Murray River region:

Grows food: Victoria's agricultural and food economy depends heavily on productive northern irrigation districts.

Moves freight: Our roads and bridges connect communities with tourists, farms with processors and exporters with markets.

Creates jobs: Regional businesses and industries contribute directly to Victoria's economic growth and have room to grow.

Hosts critical infrastructure: Our communities are increasingly hosting infrastructure that serves the whole State.

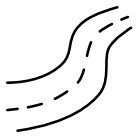
Attracts visitors: The Murray River, our lakes, food, wine, nature and regional towns are major tourism assets.

Can grow: With the right infrastructure, northern Victoria can accommodate more people, businesses, investment and jobs, powering Victoria's future.

At the 2026 State Election, we are asking every party and candidate for practical, targeted investments that will unlock growth, improve safety, strengthen regional resilience and deliver a stronger return for the whole of Victoria.

Northern Victoria needs investment.
Victoria needs northern Victoria to succeed.

Priorities at a glance

Priority	Problem | Solution | Benefit
 **Murray crossings**	**Problem:** Ageing and inadequate Murray crossings constrain safety, freight, tourism and economic connection; **Solution:** State Government investment to provide a long-term program beginning with $100m for Swan Hill Bridge. **Benefit:** Investment and certainty will secure the future of Victoria's critical economic connections.
 **Regional housing**	**Problem:** Councils have land and demand but enabling infrastructure costs are restricting housing supply. **Solution**: State government co- investment and planning reform to secure Commonwealth funding in housing infrastructure to increase regional supply. **Benefit**: Investment in enabling infrastructure will unlock more homes, business investment and workforce growth; building stronger regional economies for a more competitive and prosperous Victoria.
Road Safety 	**Problem**: Regional road trauma death and injury rates are significantly higher than the Victorian average. **Solution**: Targeted safety investment beyond routine maintenance. **Benefit**: Measurable road trauma reduction; this investment will save Victorian lives.
 **Basin communities**	**Problem**: Buy backs have caused long-term economic and social impacts. **Solution**: Basin Sustainable Communities funding invested regionally according to local priorities, creating lasting jobs, diversification and resilience in affected communities. **Benefit**: Thriving, growing regional communities contributing even more to Victoria and to our national food security.
 **Flood resilience**	**Problem**: Floods are repeatedly damaging the same roads and bridges across our region. Public funding is being wasted rebuilding them to a standard that does not stand up. **Solution**: Change the rules and apply funding to enable construction of resilient infrastructure that will last. **Benefit**: Victoria reduces its long-term disaster recovery bill, keeps freight routes and communities connected during future floods.
 **Energy**	**Problem**: Northern communities are hosting major renewable and transmission infrastructure but are missing out on lasting benefits. **Solution**: A fair share of the benefits: specifically, cheaper and more reliable energy. **Benefit**: a fairer energy transition will boost regional growth which benefits all Victoria.





CONNECT THE MURRAY

WHY IT MATTERS

The Murray River is an economic connection, not a border.

Ageing and inadequate Murray crossings constrain safety, freight, tourism, emergency access, economic connection and growth.

Right now, the Swan Hill Bridge needs construction funding. Yarrawonga - Mulwala, Tooleybuc and Mildura are at different stages but all require planning or early works funding. Victoria needs to put a long term Murray River Crossings Investment Plan in place to guide the efficient progress of these vital crossings.

THE PAYOFF FOR VICTORIA

Methodically planning and fixing the crossings will provide investment certainty, safeguarding the future of Victoria's critical freight, agricultural and regional economic corridors delivering ***connected communities***.

Our ask

Commit to a 10-year Murray River Crossings Program.

Provide Victoria's $100 million share now for the construction of a replacement Swan Hill Bridge.



UNLOCK REGIONAL HOUSING

WHY IT MATTERS

Regional communities cannot grow without housing. Housing shortages are limiting workforce expansion across northern Victoria, restricting economic growth. Councils have land, demand and growth opportunities but the cost of trunk infrastructure including roads, water, sewerage and power, makes development unviable.

The Commonwealth is investing in housing infrastructure across the nation. Regional Victoria will have to compete for funding against every other region in Australia. A Victorian co-contribution and faster planning pathways would put Regional Victoria in the best possible position to deliver new housing, for working families.

THE PAYOFF FOR VICTORIA

Investing in enabling infrastructure will unlock more regional homes, securing more jobs, **growing communities** and delivering stronger regional economies for a more competitive and prosperous Victoria.

Our ask

Establish a dedicated $150 million Victorian Regional Housing Infrastructure Co-investment Fund and deliver planning reform to deliver housing infrastructure to increase regional supply.

SAFER COMMUNITIES





MAKE REGIONAL ROADS SAFER

WHY IT MATTERS

Country people die on country roads.

Our region's road trauma rate is approximately three times the Victorian average. Moira Shire's is the highest in the State.

We all know that additional investment in all Victoria's regional roads is essential, but maintenance and resurfacing alone will not fix what is actually killing people on our roads.

Crash data shows that run-off-road crashes and high-speed intersection crashes are the dominant causes of fatal and serious road trauma in the region. We need a targeted safety response.

A ring-fenced safety treatment program targeting run-off-road barriers, shoulder sealing and high-risk intersections will save lives.

THE PAYOFF FOR VICTORIA

Safer roads save lives. Investing in road safety targets spending at the roads statistically most likely to kill someone, delivering measurable trauma reduction and **safer communities.**

Our ask

Allocate an additional $150 million over four-years for a Rural Road Safety Treatment Program for the highest fatality-rate roads and intersections to save lives





BACK OUR BASIN COMMUNITIES

WHY IT MATTERS

Basin Plan Water Buy Backs have cost our towns jobs, farm output and community life for over a decade and the impact is compounding. Victoria's $140 million share of the Commonwealth Sustainable Communities Fund must be invested to help our communities adapt. Investment in the impacted communities should leave a lasting legacy, supporting economic diversification, jobs, investment and community resilience.

THE PAYOFF FOR VICTORIA

Victoria backs the people, the jobs and industries that produce the state's food supply, and supports northern Victoria's future prosperity and delivers **sustainable communities.**

Our ask

Direct Victoria's $140 million Sustainable Communities funding to Basin communities experiencing the impacts of water recovery with local government embedded in program design, allocation and delivery.

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES





BUILD FLOOD RESILIENCE

WHY IT MATTERS

MRGC communities have lived through repeated major floods, causing widespread damage to homes, roads, bridges and essential community infrastructure.

Current funding arrangements require infrastructure to be rebuilt to its previous standard, even when better and more resilient solutions are available. Time and again, the same assets are failing our communities.

Standardising betterment and backing it with a dedicated regional fund breaks the cycle of taxpayers repeatedly paying to rebuild the same road or bridge only for it to fail again. Resilient assets keep roads and communities open during disasters, and reduce the Commonwealth and State's own long-run recovery costs..

THE PAYOFF FOR VICTORIA

Every dollar invested in **resilient communities** before disaster strikes reduces the cost of repairing the same infrastructure after the next event. Victoria lowers its long-term disaster recovery bill, keeps freight routes open and communities connected during disasters.

Our ask

Make 'betterment' the default standard under Victoria's Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, backed by a dedicated $50 million Flood Resilience Fund to upgrade repeat-damage assets.

EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES





SHARE THE BENEFITS OF ENERGY INVESTMENT WITH HOST COMMUNITIES

WHY IT MATTERS

Northern Victoria is hosting the wind farms, solar projects and transmission lines that are powering Victoria's energy transition, while local households and businesses face rising energy costs. Our communities, carrying the visual, environmental and social impact of this infrastructure, must benefit tangibly.

Transmission and renewable energy infrastructure do not support the same ongoing local employment that the Latrobe Valley benefited from in the past. The payoff must therefore come from more reliable and critically – lower cost local energy: a guaranteed cheaper regional energy tariff or rebate for households and businesses in regions hosting generation and transmission infrastructure.

THE PAYOFF FOR VICTORIA

Empowering communities will build stronger regional support, will lift investment confidence, drive economic growth and safeguard existing industries like food manufacturing that underpin Australia's food security and Victoria's prosperity.

Our ask

Empower communities hosting renewable energy and transmission infrastructure with cheaper power, and improved reliability for residents and industry.

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