

Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership
Level 1, 56 – 60 King Street
Bendigo Vic 3550

2 November 2017

Thank you for your ongoing interest in the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership and in our 2017 Regional Assembly which took place in Bendigo on 17 August, 2017.

We had over 200 community members attend the 2017 Regional Assembly and it is important that we keep our community up to date with the developments and our work.

With that in mind, I am taking this opportunity to write to you as Chair of the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership.

The 2017 Assembly in summary

The 2017 Loddon Campaspe Assembly was the culmination of six months of consultation and engagement with the community.

Not only did we have a wealth of local residents, businesses and representatives of organisations in the room, our Assembly was also attended by local Members of Parliament; Maree Edwards, Mary-Anne Thomas and Mark Gepp. Also present were four Victorian Government Ministers; the Minister for Regional Development Jaala Pulford, the Attorney General Martin Pakula, the Minister for Planning Richard Wynne and the Minister for Transport Jacinta Allan, and Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria Danielle Green. Minister Pulford reinforced that she and other Ministers were in Bendigo to listen to regional voices and to hear about our vision for the future of our region.

While the 2016 Assembly was a first chance to explore priorities for the region, 2017 gave us the chance to explore issues in more detail. Discussions at the 2017 Assembly were focused on seven themes: Health, Digital Connectivity, Transport, Environment and Renewable Energy, Support for Early Years, Skills and pathways to employment and a Growing Economy.

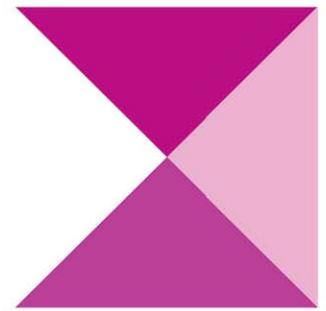
We were particularly interested in hearing the voice of our youth and I am very pleased to say that each theme discussed on the night had at least one young person present.

The evening was full of lively conversation which generated many ideas which the Partnership will review. Some of the emerging ideas that received strong support from the community and were heard across themes include:

- Expansion of a youth mental health prevention program across the region
- Ensuring Maternal Child Health has more funding at an LGA level to assist early years development
- Bringing educators and business together to create authentic employment and career opportunities and options for young people
- Co-located new business parks and industrial estates with renewable energy sources and investments
- Build a regional logistics hub
- Work with traditional owners to learn how to manage our environment and increase our wellbeing from a healthy environment
- Provision of extra rail services between Bendigo and Melbourne, with reliable access to mobile connectivity
- Creation of digital community hubs
- Council planning to enforce a 'green energy requirement' on all new developments.

Some key messages were heard regarding the need for increased train services, not only between Bendigo and Melbourne, but also for the Echuca and Swan Hill lines to Bendigo as these are important for helping people access services, employment and educational opportunities. Discussion about growing our economy and attracting businesses to the region to grow employment opportunities was particularly pertinent to the community.

A graphical snapshot of the 2017 Loddon Campaspe Assembly is also attached.



Next Steps

As a Partnership, our role is to take the messages from our 2017 Assembly, distil them down into a handful of tangible priorities and present them to the Rural and Regional Ministerial Committee.

Over the course of the next few months, we will look to host further focus groups around our themes to sharpen ideas, progress and identify our priorities and to hear from groups we feel have been absent from our conversation to date.

We will of course also keep you abreast of announcements relevant to our region, via email and also on our Partnership Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/LoddonCampaspeRP>

Again, thank you for giving your time and insight over the past year, whether by attending the Assembly, a regional workshop, a meeting or being active on our Engage page. Your views are valuable and this process means our region is heard right at the heart of Government.

I look forward to keeping the conversation going,

Regards

Nigel McGuckian
Chair
Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership