



20 November 2017

Thank you for your ongoing interest in the Goulburn Regional Partnership and in our 2017 Regional Assembly which took place in Seymour on 30 August 2017.

At that meeting, which was attended by more than 170 people from across the region, I pledged to keep all in the room, and those who had expressed interest in the Partnership, up to date with developments and abreast of time lines.

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

The 2017 Assembly in summary

The 2017 Goulburn Regional Assembly was the Partnership's second major opportunity to consult with the community.

Not only did we have a wealth of local residents, businesses and organisations in the room, our Assembly was also attended by six Victorian Government Ministers: Jaala Pulford, Minister for Regional Development; John Eren, Minister for Tourism and Major Events; Martin Foley, Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing; Gavin Jennings, Special Minister of State; Deputy Premier and Minister for Education James Merlino, and Attorney General Martin Pakula. Also present was Jaclyn Symes, Member for Northern Victoria. Minister Pulford was clear that she and other Ministers were in Seymour to listen to regional voices and to hear about our vision for the future of our region.

Where our 2016 Assembly was a first chance to explore priorities for the region, 2017 gave us the opportunity to dig deeper and to further refine these. We were able to hear in more detail from the community, either through the online Engage page, our pre-Assembly workshops, or the Assembly itself.

Discussions at the 2017 Goulburn Assembly were focused on the following four themes: opportunities for economic diversification; how we can better support our young people to be happy, healthy and productive; how we can better support peri-urban growth and improving our region's digital connectivity.

We were clear that we needed to look beyond high-level priorities to what change really meant for our communities. The evening was full of conversation and interesting discussions which generated many ideas which the Partnership is now filtering and reviewing.

Some of the "top ideas" from the evening included:

- Compulsory mental health component in Victorian high schools
- Multi-party engagement to make sure we have a long-term plan for passenger commuter movement
- Activating as many towns as possible across the region through "river connect" along the Goulburn River
- An intensive community service wrap-around for individual students
- Recognising Goulburn River Valley Tourism and linking in with workforce training and development
- Put together a regional cooperative approach to digital connectivity to influence providers and access to infrastructure
- Create "cherished communities" where people want to stay
- More supervised night-time activities for young people and free transport to get home safely afterwards

A graphical snapshot of the 2017 Goulburn Assembly is also attached.



Moving forward

As a Partnership, our role is now to take the messages and learnings from our 2017 Assembly to the Rural and Regional Ministerial Committee.

Last year, I spoke to that Committee about the need for better passenger rail solutions in our region, the importance of the Goulburn Valley Highway Shepparton bypass, and the need for better outcomes for our Indigenous community.

The Goulburn Partnership was pleased to see that the state Government's 2017/2018 Budget included \$43.5 million for new infrastructure to increase rail services between Shepparton and Seymour and additional coach services, \$10.2 million for the Planning and pre-construction of the Shepparton bypass, and funding to undertake a business case for the Munarra Centre of Excellence, a state-of-the-art indigenous sporting, cultural and education precinct in Shepparton. As you can see, our Partnership is already having an impact and the voice of the Goulburn region is being heard.

On-going consultation

Though our 2017 Assembly is now behind us, the Partnership is very keen to continue the consultation process and the ongoing engagement with the community.

With that in mind, our Engage page (www.engage.vic.gov.au/goulburn) will be open for further comment and we would encourage you to get on the page and let us know your thoughts and ideas for the region, or email us directly at goulburn.partnership@rdv.vic.gov.au

Over the course of the next few months, we may also look to hold further focus groups to further ideas, or to hear from groups we feel have been absent from our engagement to date.

We will let you know about such additional consultation either by direct email, or through the Engage page.

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

I want to take this opportunity to again thank you for giving of your time in August, whether by attending the Assembly, a pre-meeting or being active on our Engage page. Each of your views is incredibly valuable in this process and means our region is heard right at the heart of Government.

I look forward to keeping the conversation going,

Regards

David McKenzie
Chair
Goulburn Regional Partnership