

RIVERINA AND MURRAY JOINT ORGANISATION (RAMJO)

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities

2022 – 2026

A thriving region abundant in sustainable communities



Disclaimer

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About Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation

Membership

The Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) was proclaimed in May 2018 and became operational as of 1st July 2018. Membership is voluntary and consists of the following 11 Councils;

ALBURY CITY	BERRIGAN SHIRE	CARRATHOOL SHIRE
EDWARD RIVER	FEDERATION	GRIFFITH CITY
HAY SHIRE	LEETON SHIRE	MURRAY RIVER
MURRUMBIDGEE	NARRANDERA SHIRE	

The RAMJO board comprises the Mayors of the Member Councils (the voting members), as well as the Director Riverina Murray of Regional NSW (a non-voting member), the Riverina Murray Council Engagement Officer from the Office of Local Government (a non-voting member) and the General Managers of the Member Councils (also non-voting members). The board is supported by an Executive Officer.

Purpose

Joint Organisations (JOs) are legal entities legislated under the Local Government Act 1993. The JOs aim to transform the way local and state governments collaborate, plan, set priorities and deliver important projects on a regional scale across New South Wales (NSW) enabling our communities to thrive.

Functions

The NSW Local Government Act states the core functions for the Joint Organisations as:

- 1. Strategic Planning and Priority Setting** – to establish strategic regional priorities for the joint organisation area and develop strategies and plans for delivering these priorities.
- 2. Regional Leadership and Advocacy** – to provide regional leadership for the joint organisation area and to be an advocate for strategic regional priorities.
- 3. Intergovernmental Collaboration** – to identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation on matters relating to the joint organisation area.

The JOs may perform other functions, supplementary or ancillary to the core functions including:

1. Service delivery to Member Councils
2. Delivery of services to community
3. Sharing of resources
4. Enhancing the capacity of Member Councils

The RAMJO Region

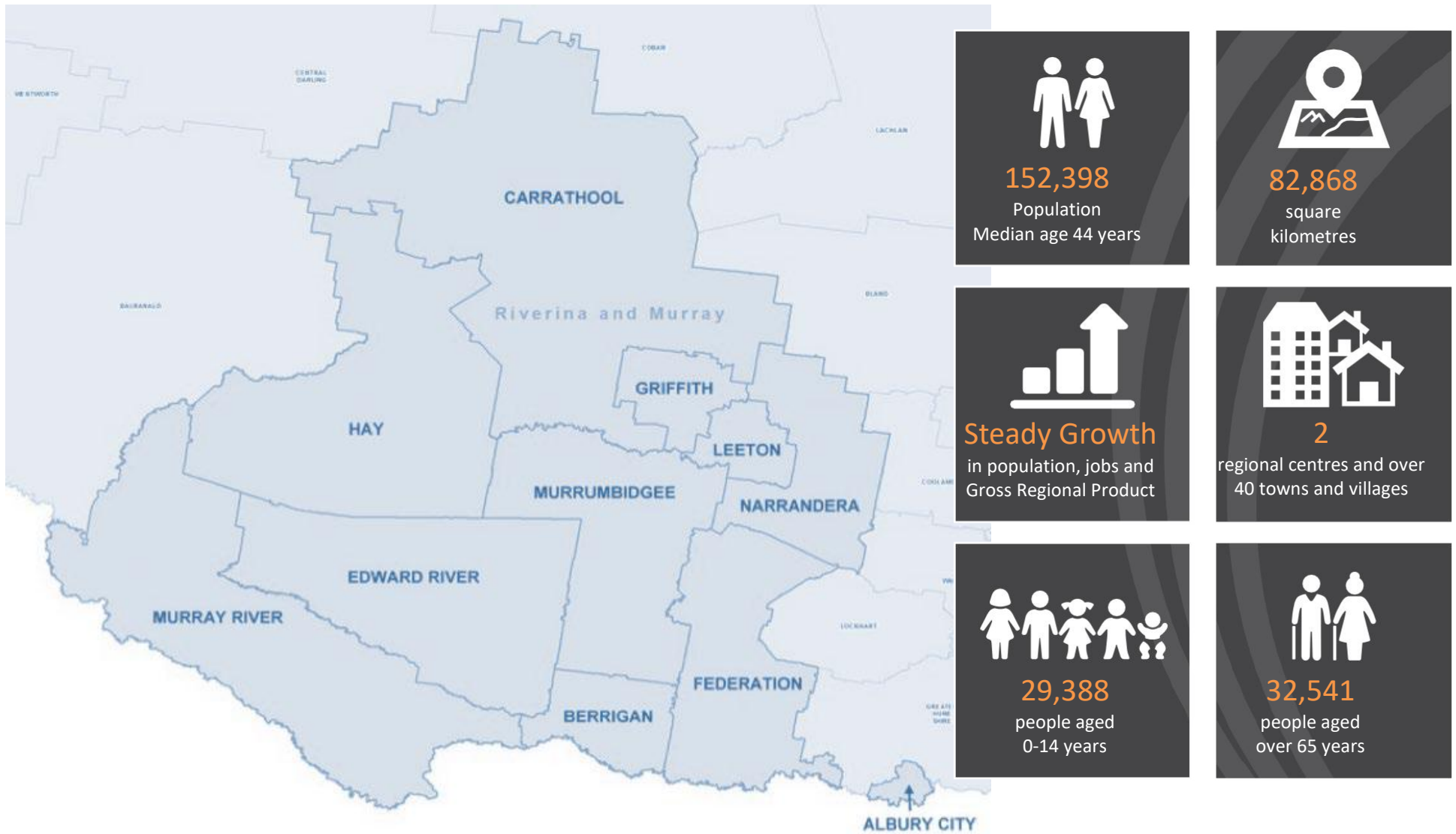


Figure 1 Map of the RAMJO Region

Source: ABS Stat (Estimated Resident Population by Local Government Area – Age and Sex – 2017 - collated) <http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/>

The Planning Process

Our Steps

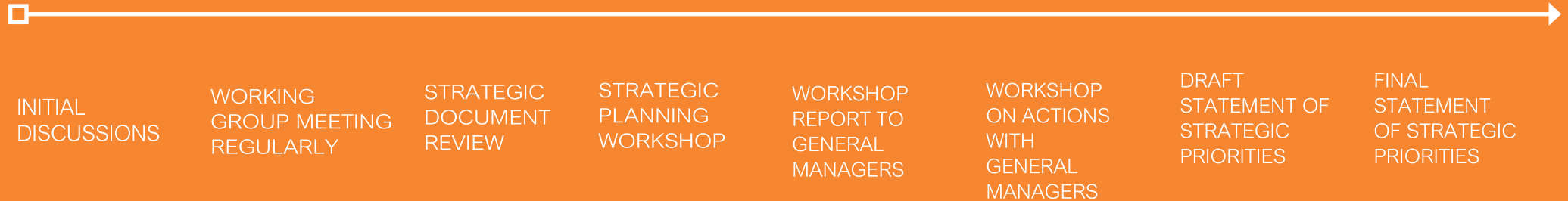
RAMJO reviewed the previous evidenced based Statement of Regional Strategic Priorities, and revised and updated this to ensure it reflected the changing context we operate in. We ensured it reflected the synergies and uniqueness of each member council as well as the trends, challenges and opportunities moving forward in a regional and state context.

The process included a review of local, regional and state strategic plans, and a strategic planning workshop. (See Appendix for a list of those interviewed and a list of documents reviewed – table 1).

Choosing the Priorities

Many issues and possible actions were identified as part of the strategic planning process. Those that have been included in the Statement of Strategic Priorities were selected using the following filtering questions:

1. What do you think the top three issues / risks are for the RAMJO region?
2. What needs to be done to meaningfully address these issues?
3. Who is already acting in these spaces and what are they doing?
4. What could the joint organisation do to address these issues?
 - Considering spheres of control, influence and concern
 - Considering gaps, leverage or value-add opportunities
5. What difference could RAMJO make?
6. Where can RAMJO have the biggest impact?
7. Would your council be willing to pay more to enable the JO to address more issues?



Key Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

The communities of RAMJO have a long list of diverse and enduring strengths which have contributed to an overall population growth in the region of 5.47% from 2001 (140,920) to 2021 (152,398) and a gross regional product of approximately \$9.5 billion p.a. (See figures 3 and 6).

Some of the strengths include enviable country living with beautiful rivers, lakes and forests, high quality educational facilities, specialist health and medical services, and excellent sporting and cultural facilities. The region has a highly productive and diverse agricultural and manufacturing industry that benefit from being located on major transport routes between Melbourne and Sydney. The diversity of the agricultural sector includes major production of sheep, grains (especially wheat, barley and rice), beef and dairy cattle, poultry, cotton, citrus, grapes, canola, vegetables, almonds and wool.

The region also has many large scale private and government employers and well-established tourism (particularly in the south and emerging in the north). Further details of these strengths can be viewed in the four Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) for the RAMJO region (the 2018-2022 strategies are being refreshed as this SSRP has been prepared, and RAMJO and the member councils have participated actively in their consultation and preparation).

RAMJO aims to build on these strengths and support its communities to grow and thrive in modern times, assisting them to cater for changing needs and expectations.

Some of these changes include a shift in the size and structure of the population. Whilst a collective population growth is predicted for the region over the next 20 years, this is made up of an anticipated growth in four (4) of the eleven (11) local government areas and a predicted decline in the other seven (7). Much of this is due to the outward migration of young people as they leave the region to study and/or seek employment. (See tables 5 and 6)

Additionally, like all of Australia, RAMJO communities are generally predicted to age, with people over 65 years increasing from an overall 21.35% to 31.91% of the total population by 2036. (See figure 4, tables 5 and 6)

A change in population size and structure presents both challenges and opportunities. Declining populations often result in a loss of services which can cause a snowball effect of further isolation and decline. The fact that the RAMJO region is full of strengths and opportunities means the declines experienced elsewhere will not be the case for us because our capital cities have the opposite issue of over population and an inability to keep up with growth demand. We will work together with government to support rural settlement and growth choices.

Ageing populations require services and infrastructure to meet their changing needs. Health Care and Social Assistance is already the largest and fastest growing employment industry in RAMJO. Improved scale and capacity can enable the provision of infrastructure and services in a cost-effective manner.

Population stabilisation and growth have therefore been identified as the overarching goal of RAMJO. For this to occur there is a need to address the key underlying issues affecting the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of RAMJO communities (the triple bottom line – see figure 2).

These include the following and will be priorities for action by RAMJO:

- Water Security
- Energy Security and Affordability
- Transport Connectivity
- Digital Connectivity
- Health Services
- Industry/Workforce/ Jobs growth
- Housing (new in 2022)

RAMJO acknowledges many of the issues to be addressed will require cross border/cross region strategies and therefore a need to work in partnership with many different stakeholders. These collaborations will strengthen both our capacity to attract funding and economic development activity in the region as well as the potential impact.

Successful implementation of the RAMJO priorities, strategies and actions in this Statement will likely require additional resourcing. Resourcing may be sourced via a range of potential avenues, such as additional State government funding, specific grant programs, collaboration with stakeholders and partners, or through the RAMJO Councils contributing resources monetarily or in-kind.

To act effectively, RAMJO will need to build the capacity of the JO and the member councils. The biggest issues for the councils being:

- the ability to attract and maintain a robust workforce particularly engineering, surveying, planning, finance and project management
- the ability to attract contractors for infrastructure maintenance and construction
- reducing duplication and optimising synergies to unlock and redirect funds and skills to ensure better services and outcomes

Triple Bottom Line and Key Issues for RAMJO

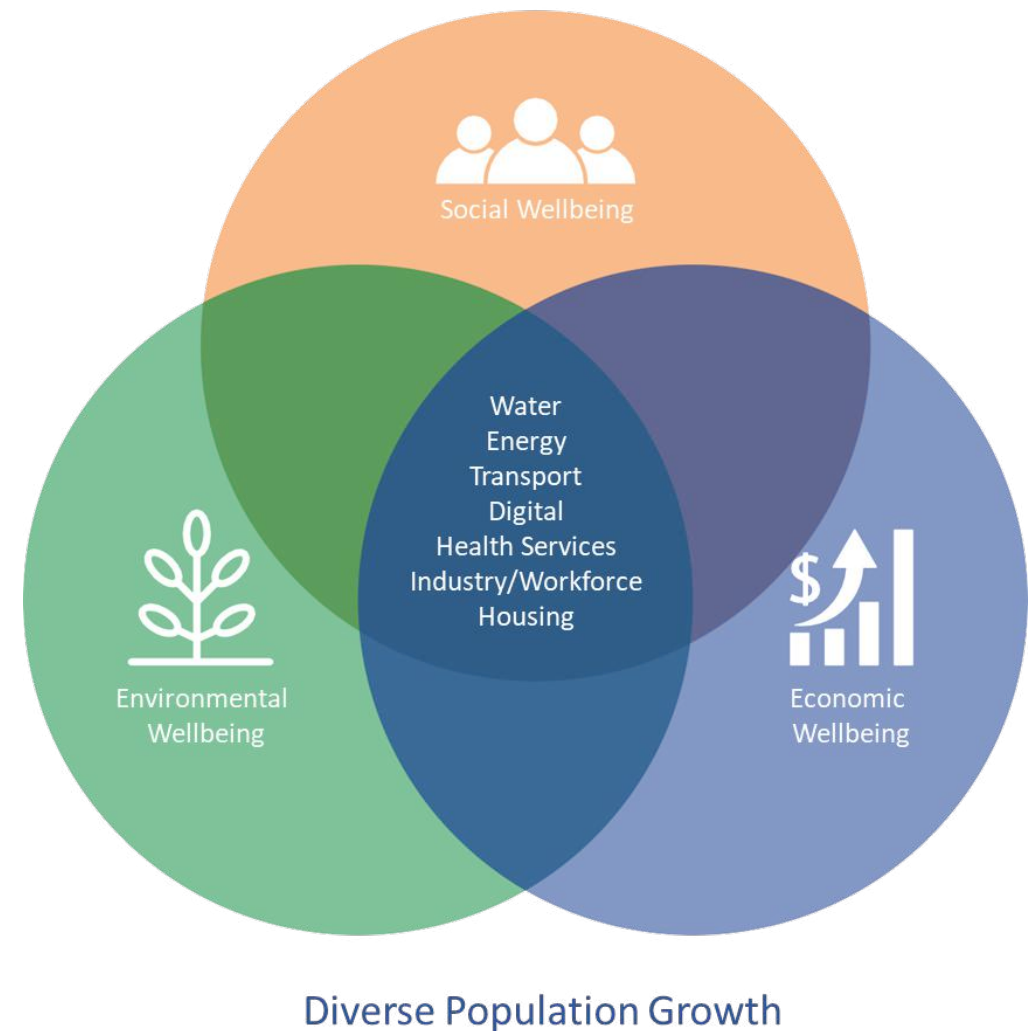


Figure 2 Triple Bottom Line and Key Issues for RAMJO

RAMJO Population Growth and Projected Population (Structure) Change

Figure 3 RAMJO Population Growth 2001 - 2021

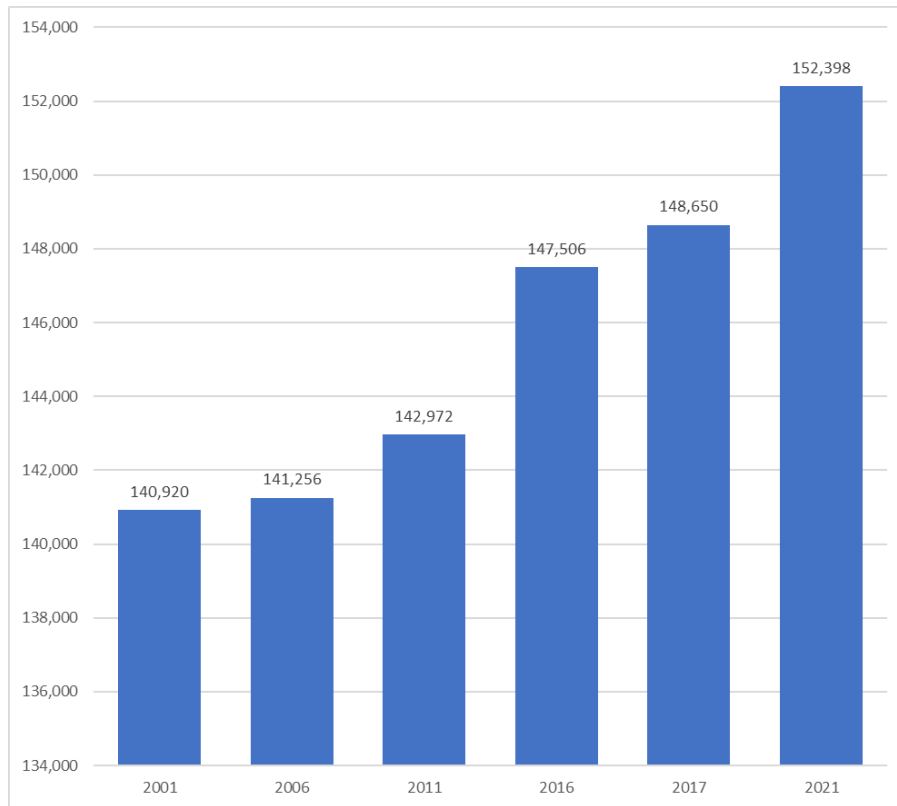


Figure 4 Projected RAMJO Population Structure Change

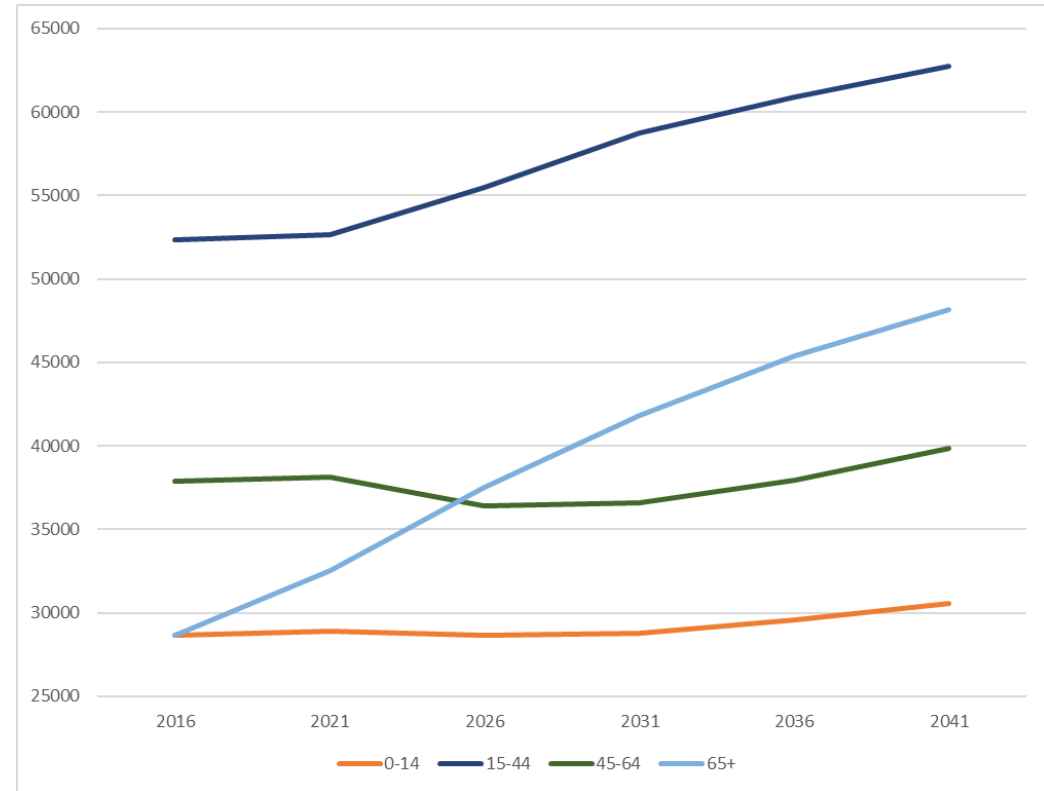


Figure 3 shows the RAMJO population increase between 2001 – 2021. There was a significant growth in the 5-year period between 2016 – 2021.

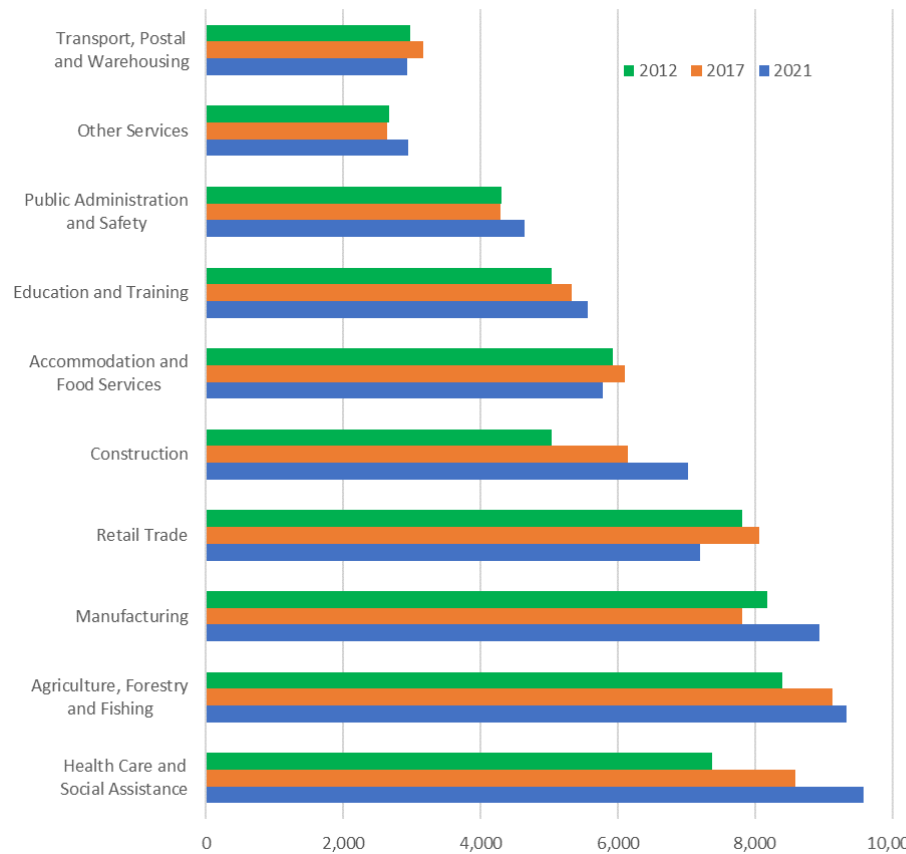
Source: Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Regional Population Growth, Australia (3218.0)*. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions) <http://www.id.com.au>

Figure 4 shows the predicted population decline of people aged in the 0-14 years and 15-44 years and a significant increase of those aged over 65 years. This pattern of population structure change is similar to most rural and regional areas across Australia.

Source: NSW Department of Planning and Environment 2018 (2016 Census) <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Research-and-Demography/Demography/Population-projections>

RAMJO Employment by Industry and Gross Regional Product

Figure 5 Top 10 Employment by Industry: 2012, 2017 and 2021

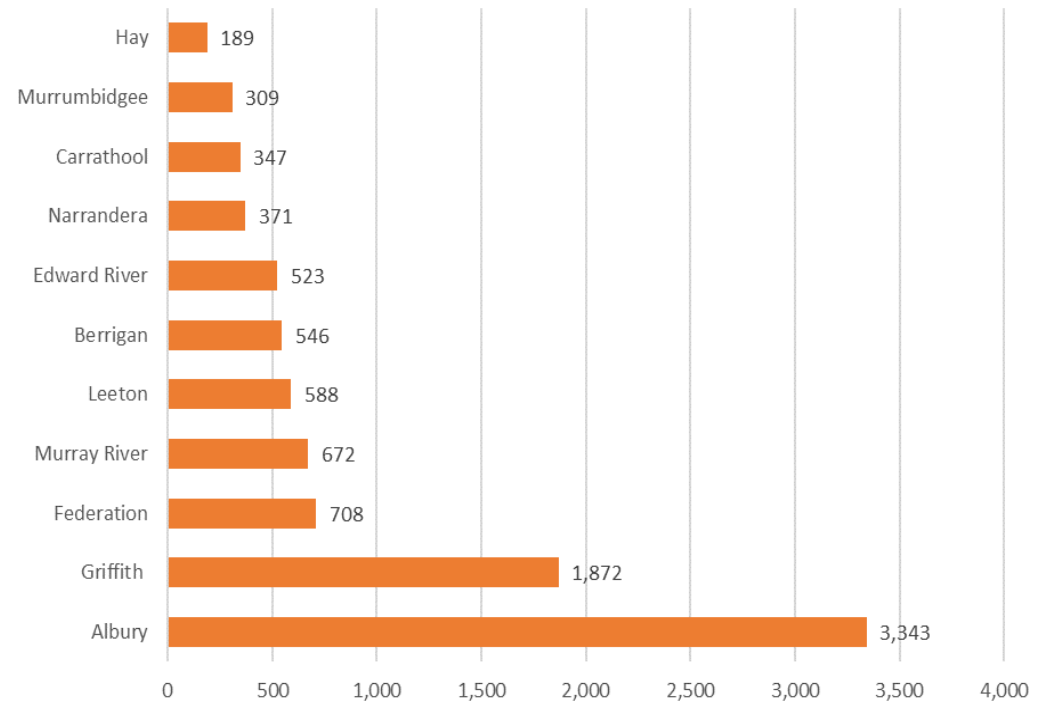


There was an overall growth of employment by industry from 62,304 to 63,143 between 2006 and 2021. Figure 5 highlights the steady growth in the largest employment sector; Health Care and social assistance, as well as the smaller employment sectors.

See appendix for data table

Source: ProfileID

Figure 6 Gross Regional Product (2021) \$ Millions



The total gross Regional Product was \$9.47 billion in 2021. Figure 6 highlights the comparative across the RAMJO councils. (NSW Gross State Product of \$632.882 billion.)

See appendix for data table

Source: ProfileID,



Our Vision

A Thriving Region Abundant In Sustainable Communities

Our Mission

To collaborate effectively through strategic planning, priority setting, advocating, engaging with governments and key stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability, wellbeing and liveability of the region's communities.

Our Principles

RAMJO will;

1. Be owned by and accountable to the Member Councils
2. Not impose significant red tape cost or risks on Member Councils
3. Ensure benefits delivered for the region outweigh any costs and risks
4. Work collaboratively with other levels of government, other partners and stakeholders
5. Enable significant projects and initiatives, with associated funding and assets, to be managed regionally, where doing so is consistent with the shared vision for the region
6. Ensure good governance
7. Serve the best interests of the region and its communities

Our Values

RAMJO is built on a commitment to collaboration (and not competition). For this to be effective it is essential that we operate with the following values:

Communication	We are honest, transparent, clear, robust, respectful and timely with our communication.
Authentic	We harness our diversity and work to our strengths by inviting and respecting our unique perspectives, talents and feedback.
Cohesive	We are committed to reaching our common goals together, so we speak with one voice on regional issues.
Evidenced based	Our decisions are based on evidence and are aligned with local, regional and State strategies and policies.
Reliable	We trust each other to be consistently reliable.
Visionary	We focus our attention on the big picture and challenge and support each other to be visionary and innovative in our thinking.

Our Strategic Priorities

Our goal:

To increase diverse population growth within RAMJO.

Our Strategic Priority Pillars:

1. Improve water security
2. Improve energy security and affordability
3. Improve transport connectivity for freight and people
4. Improve digital connectivity
5. Better match health services to our changing needs
6. Boost industry, workforce and jobs
7. Improve housing in our region

Our Foundation for Action:

Strengthen our capacity to act as a Joint Organisation and as individual Councils.



Figure 7: Our Strategic Priorities

A Snapshot of Key Data for Our Strategic Priority Pillars

Water

- 3 Major Rivers
- 6 Water Storages
- 11 Waste Water Treatment Facilities
- 3 Major Irrigation Systems

Transport

- 9 Major Highways
- 1 Major Railway Line
- 5 Branch Lines
- 6 Airports
- 4 Intermodals

Health

- 2 Major Hospitals
- 7 Health Services
- 5 Multipurpose Services
- 1 Cancer Centre
- 79.69 Aged Care Places (Per 1,000 People over 70 Years)
- 2 Medical/Clinical School Campuses

Industry

- Employment by Industry (Top 5 Making up 54%)
1. Health Care and Social Assistance
 2. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
 3. Manufacturing
 4. Retail Trade
 5. Education and Training

\$9.467 Billion Gross Regional Product (2021)

76,000 Jobs

4.6% Unemployment

62.2% of resident worker weekly income lower than \$1,250

12 Higher Education Facilities

Housing

- 62.2% of people live in an owned house
- 48.46% of privately owned dwellings were low-income households.
- 9.5% of RAMJO region mortgage holders were making high loan repayments.

Energy

- 3 Solar Farms
- 1 Hydro
- No Wind Farms
- 35.97% Dwellings with Solar Power
- 2 Electricity Suppliers

Digital

- Progressive NBN Coverage
- Ongoing Reported Black Spots
- 2 Telecommunication Providers



Priority Pillar 1: Improve Water Security

Context - Why is this important?

Much of the RAMJO region economy is heavily dependent on access to water that is consistent, reliable, affordable, good quality and sustainable. These communities are built on irrigated agriculture, horticulture, and viticulture. Almost 80% of food production in NSW comes from the Riverina Murray region. Water based tourism is also an important feature thanks to the region's beautiful rivers, lakes and wetlands.

The effects of climate change are being felt across the region and many have been impacted by the decisions made as part of the Murray Darling Basin Plan. Some areas have experienced businesses choosing not to invest in the region and of business closures due to water issues. The flow on effects of this being a loss of jobs, population and services, which may lead to broader social effects. Further, many communities, particularly along the Murray River, have experienced inconsistent recreational and tourism opportunities due to fluctuating river levels and damage to river banks.

Regional strategic documents recognise water (like energy) is a critical enabling factor for economic growth and outline a need for a multifaceted approach with modernisation and global (market) thinking as themes. Key advocacy messages need to include a call out for no more productive water buybacks; a common sense approach to Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism projects to allow new ideas and more flexible timeframes (especially given the La Nina events of recent times which relax the need for environmental watering); more timely water allocation notification to boost sowing confidence, improved agricultural productivity and resilience through diversification, value adding and innovation, a reduced reliance on high water use crops, improved storage capacity (on and off river); investment in on-farm efficiency projects and improved water trading literacy to better manage risk and optimise outcomes for farmers.

It is acknowledged that water policy is complex and difficult to navigate and that it is imperative RAMJO operates from an informed position.

Separately, maintaining high quality urban water supply and waste water management is core business for the RAMJO councils. However, many have ageing infrastructure that is no longer fit for purpose. Maintaining and growing our population and industry would benefit from a regional approach to improving urban water.

Key Stakeholders - Who will we work with?

- Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA)
- Government and relevant Ministers – Federal and State
- National Federation Reform Council (NFRC)
- Water NSW and Department of Primary Industries Water
- Murray and Murrumbidgee Customer Advisory Groups
- Other Joint Organisations
- Irrigators and irrigation companies – local, state and national
- Commonwealth/State Water holders
- Murray Darling Association (MDA)
- Murrumbidgee Environmental Water Advisory Group
- One Basin CRC

State and Regional Document Links

- RAMJO Water paper
- NSW Water Strategy
- NSW Govt – Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041
- Regional Economic Development Strategies – Western Murray, Western Riverina, Murray and Albury Wodonga
- Murray Darling Basin Plan 2012
- Water Sharing Plans for NSW (under development)
- Murrumbidgee Regional Water Strategy (still in draft ??)
- Murray Regional Water Strategy (still in draft ??)

Outcomes – What difference will we make to Water Security?

RAMJO will achieve:

- An up to date shared Strategy and a shared Implementation and Resourcing Plan (I&R Plan) for water Security in the region
- Genuine engagement, transparency, accountability and commitment with the Murray Darling Basin Authority, governments and government agencies, including meaningful submissions to the review of the Murray Darling Plan.
- Increased infrastructure funding to the region for improved water security
- Regional water security



Actions – What we are going to do?	Core Function	Success Measures – How will we know we have succeeded?	
		Indicator - What will we measure?	Tool - how will we measure it?
1. Water sub-committee continues to lead collaboration, planning and action on water security.	Strategic planning and priority setting	A representative committee functioning well.	Observational
2. Continue to keep RAMJO's water position paper up to date, including :	Strategic planning and priority setting	Strategy and I&R Plan developed, supported by key stakeholders and implementation commenced.	Report
a. maintaining relationships with Murray-Darling Basin Authority, CEWH and local Irrigation companies and their associations	Regional leadership and advocacy	Representation achieved, and contributions/requests acted on.	Observational
b. Advocate and work with governments for long term infrastructure projects to address water security for the region (both for farming and urban).	Intergovernmental collaboration	Infrastructure funding for key projects achieved.	Review
c. Continue to be a meaningful advocate to all levels of government regarding the Murray Darling Basin Plan, including DPE Water, NSW Water, Federal Dept Agriculture	Regional leadership and advocacy	Advocacy and outcomes	Review
d. Advocate meaningfully during the Murray Darling Basin Plan review process.	Regional leadership and advocacy	Advocacy and outcomes	Review
3. Participate in the WaterNSW Customer Advisory Groups	Regional leadership and advocacy	Advocacy and outcomes	Report to Board



Priority Pillar 2: Improve Energy Security and Affordability

Context - Why is this important?

The need for affordable and clean energy is important for both economic prosperity and environmental sustainability. Currently our region is faced with several energy challenges;

- Ageing infrastructure
- Gaps in infrastructure meaning demand outstrips supply (particularly for manufacturing growth)
- Generators are used in some areas because energy supplies are unreliable
- Lack of natural gas infrastructure
- Rising energy costs and high costs of connecting to energy
- Pressure to be more environmentally friendly with renewable energy generation

Our current circumstances have meant a loss of investment growth in some of our areas as the energy requirements cannot be met. While progress has been made on many fronts with solar farms being established in the region for example, much more could be done.

The retirement of ageing coal-fired generators over the next 20 years combined with increasing demands, especially at peak times, will put enormous pressure on an already struggling system. The NSW government recently released a plan to establish “energy Zones” across NSW to support a transition to a modern energy system. The Hay area is identified as one of the three zones. RAMJO will need to work with government on this strategy as well as the NSW Renewable Energy Action Plan.

The need for improved access to clean energy has been highlighted in many strategic documents and generating energy from waste is an emerging opportunity.

RAMJO has been lucky enough to work with the NSW government to have our Regional Energy Strategy funded during the last SSRP, and we aim to implement the strategy over the coming years.

Key Stakeholders - Who will we work with?

- Essential Energy, Energy Companies, Gas Providers
- Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART),
- Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC)
- Relevant State and Federal authorities
- Existing RAMJO NSW government partner Office of Energy and Climate Change
- Renewable energy operators
- Research partners, CSIRO, Australian Renewal Energy Agency (ARENA), Centres for excellence
- Other Joint Organisations e.g. Southern Lights project
- Clean Energy Finance Corporation (Federal) and NSW Agencies
- Communities / social enterprises

State and Regional Document Links

- RAMJO Regional Energy Strategy (to be adopted November 2022)
- NSW Energy Strategy
- NSW Net Zero Plan Stage 1 : 2020-2030
- NSW Government – A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW (February 2021)
- NSW Government – Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041
- Regional Economic Development Strategies – Western Murray, Western Riverina, Murray, Albury Wodonga

Outcomes – What difference will we make to Energy Security?

RAMJO will achieve:

- Adoption of the RAMJO Regional Energy Strategy
- Increased funding and development of local and regional energy infrastructure
- Improved energy access and transmission (extraction and feeding into the grid)
- Increased local generation of clean energy to become more self-reliant AND improved value for money
- Regional energy security



Actions – What we are going to do?	Core Function	Success Measures – How will we know we have succeeded?	
		Indicator - What will we measure?	Tool - How will we measure it?
1. Energy sub-committee meets regularly, to lead collaboration, planning and action on energy security.	Strategic planning and priority setting	A representative committee functioning well.	Observational
2. RAMJO Regional Energy Strategy adopted by the Board.	Strategic planning and priority setting	Report completed and supports strategy development.	Report
3. Actions and outcomes from the RAMJO Regional Energy Strategy advocated for, member councils supported in their work.	Strategic planning and priority setting	Strategy and I&R Plan developed, supported by key stakeholders and implementation commenced.	Annual Review
4. Advocate for improved energy solutions such as lower energy prices, subsidies and other incentives for renewable energy projects, research into new technologies.	Regional leadership and advocacy	Representation achieved, and issues acted on.	Annual Review
5. Advocate and work with governments and energy providers for long term infrastructure projects to address energy security for the region. Examples such as electric vehicles and network capacity constraints.	Intergovernmental collaboration	Representation achieved, and issues acted on.	Review



Priority Pillar 3: Improve Transport Connectivity

Context - Why is this important?

Transport connectivity is a key driver of economic and social wellbeing and incorporates two key areas that need addressing: freight and public transport.

Some of the issues for freight transport in the region include:

- Road - Whilst well connected with major highway corridors, many of the local roads that link to the highway corridors or major freight intermodals are unsealed or subject to constraints and do not meet permit standards for High Productivity Vehicles i.e. the last leg of the supply chain (or first leg as it is from farm gate) is compromised.
- Air – Limited scheduling, limited loads, expensive and difficult to access
- Rail – Single track configurations limit freight transport and cause blockages. Inflexible scheduling.
- Interchanges - Lack of freight and logistics interchanges that enable transitions of loads between large and small trucks.
- Councils have large maintenance backlogs for basic infrastructure and are challenged to fund and attract contractors to complete necessary works.

During the term of the previous SSRP RAMJO developed a Regional Freight Transport Plan detailing a list of road constraints and necessary freight infrastructure projects. The resultant RAMJO Freight Priorities Report 2022, identifies investment priorities for the region, including Sturt Highway Corridor, Cobb Highway Corridor, Federation Way Corridor, Kidman Way Corridor, Ettamogah Intermodal Hub, Tocumwal Intermodal Freight Strategy, and WRConnect Intermodal Freight Terminal.

Public transport issues are diverse across our RAMJO area. Some communities have a complete lack of public transport while others have varying degrees of access and issues with schedule connections. A regional public transport strategy would specifically address the needs of our ageing population, young people, people with disabilities, backpacker/ itinerant workers, those on low incomes and visitors. It would seek to improve connections between our towns and villages as well as to capital cities and consider technology and innovative service models.

Key Stakeholders - Who will we work with?

- Freight Industry and Producers
- Other JOs
- Victorian/NSW/Federal Government incl. Heavy Vehicle Regulator
- Regional Development Australia – Murray and Riverina
- Ports – Melbourne, Botany, Kembla, Newcastle
- Train and air freight operators
- Transport NSW
- Cross Border Commissioners
- Community

State and Regional Document Links

- NSW Government – Future Transport Strategy
- NSW Government - Future Transport Technology Roadmap 2021-2024
- NSW Government – A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW
- NSW Government – Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041
- RDA Murray Regional Plan 2022-2025
- Regional Economic Development Strategies – Albury Wodonga, Western Murray, Western Riverina, Murray
- RAMJO Regional Freight Plan, RAMJO Freight Priorities Report 2022

Outcomes – What difference will we make to Transport Connectivity?

RAMJO will achieve:

- Shared Strategies and shared Implementation and Resourcing Plans (I&R Plans) for Freight Transport Connectivity and Public Transport Connectivity in the region
- Increased funding and action for priority transport infrastructure within the region
- Increased liveability within our smaller communities with increased access to education, employment and health services etc



Actions – What we are going to do?	Core Function	Success Measures – How will we know we have succeeded?	
		Indicator - What will we measure?	Tool - How will we measure it?
1. Transport Sub-committee meets quarterly to lead collaboration, planning and action on transport connectivity (both freight and people).	Strategic planning and priority setting	A representative committee functioning well.	Observational
2. Support provided to the RAMJO Engineers forum, who meet quarterly and feed into the Transport Sub-committee.	Strategic planning and priority setting	Engineers’ forum functioning well	Observational
3. Regional Freight priorities updated annually.	Strategic planning and priority setting	Report completed and supports strategy development.	Report
4. Regional Freight Strategy updated during the term of the SSRP.	Strategic planning and priority setting	Strategy and I&R Plans developed, supported by key stakeholders and implementation commenced	Annual Review
5. Advocate and work with governments to progress priority infrastructure projects that address freight efficiencies and safety across the region..	Intergovernmental collaboration and advocacy	Funding received and projects completed.	Annual Review



Priority Pillar 4: Improve Digital Connectivity

Context - Why is this important?

Our world is becoming more and more reliant on digital technology and its reliable supply affects our capacity for economic growth, environmental sustainability and liveability.

Digital technology is used by every industry and particularly benefits rural areas with such things as water management (telemetry), enabling online/ distance education, decentralised employment, supporting close to home health service models, assisting irrigators with remote water testing and pump controls, and farmers with stock control through such things as livestock scanning and facial recognition. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic reiterated the importance of digital connectivity in our lives.

A lack of digital connectivity is a major problem for the RAMJO area. The issues include mobile phone blackspots, slow, unreliable or patchy internet connections, poor national broadband network (NBN) coverage, and poor satellite coverage. Additionally, with the asymmetric digital subscriber line (ADSL) services being phased out, some RAMJO communities are at risk of being without service unless they are prepared and able to move to the NBN or newer satellite service providers where they are available.

These issues are affecting everyday transactions as well as limiting the implementation of new technologies including self-monitoring analysis and reporting (SMART) technology and placing our rural communities at a disadvantage.

The challenges are the exponential growth in demand and expectations by community and business matched with the large geographical size of the RAMJO area.

Our lack of ability to keep up with demand means we are at risk of losing industry investment and population growth. Improving digital connectivity is noted in multiple strategy documents as crucial for economic growth as well as our health and safety. However, there is a lack of strategies detailing or proposing solutions.

A key role for RAMJO is to work with community, business, government and service providers to facilitate the development of key infrastructure to improve performance and attract economic growth in the region.

Key Stakeholders - who will we work with?

- NSW Government - including local Members of Parliament
- Federal Government – including Members of Parliament
- Telecommunications providers
- National Broad Band Network – Review Board
- Private sector
- Community (baselines, advocacy, feedback) – social enterprises, community collaboration
- Regional Development Australia – Riverina and Murray

State and Regional Document Links

- RDA Murray Regional Plan 2022-2025
- Regional Economic Development Strategies – Albury Wodonga, Western Murray, Western Riverina, Murray
- Australian Government Regional Telecommunications Review “2021 Regional Telecommunications Review - A step change in demand”

Outcomes – What difference will we make to Digital Connectivity?

RAMJO will advocate for:

- Increased funding and action for priority digital communication infrastructure and services within the region
- Comprehensive and reliable digital coverage across the region, free of blackspots
- Increased liveability within RAMJO with increased digital access and reliability for education, employment, health services, industry etc



Actions – what we are going to do?	Core Function	Success Measures – How will we know we have succeeded?	
		Indicator - what will we measure?	Tool - how will we measure it?
1. Digital Connectivity sub-committee collaborates with key stakeholders (including RDA Riverina and Murray) to ensure regional changes and developments are identified.	Strategic planning and priority setting	A representative committee functioning well.	Observational
2. Advocate and work with governments and digital communication service providers to fund and deliver on agreed infrastructure and service projects to address digital connectivity needs for the region.	Intergovernmental collaboration	Priority infrastructure projects funded and delivered.	Annual Review



Priority Pillar 5: Better Match Health Services to Our Changing Needs

Context - Why is this important?

The health of rural Australians is poorer than for individuals living in the cities and regional centres and even worse for our indigenous populations. How can we change that for the residents of the RAMJO area?

The major challenges facing the smaller communities in the RAMJO area is maintaining basic health services and addressing the changing needs of the ageing population (e.g. supporting ageing in place) and the increased demand for mental health services both for young people and adults. The loss of health services (such as general practitioners, dentists, allied health professionals, and specialist medical services such as obstetricians) results in further population decline as people relocate to be close to these important services.

Successful strategies for maintaining health services to date include Councils providing housing and medical facilities and the provision of GP training locally. However, gaps still exist, and innovative solutions are required to address these shortfalls.

The direction for NSW Health is to create self-reliant regions where people can get the best possible services close to home. Self-reliance involves developing regional centres of excellence such as Albury Wodonga Health with its Cancer Centre, regional health hubs and developing new models of care to take the pressure off major hospitals e.g. establishing systems and supports to utilise smaller hospitals for recovery and rehabilitation pre or post treatment at a major centre. These strategies require improvements in transport, digital connectivity (e-health), infrastructure, workforce training and new place-based service provision.

RAMJO has a role in working with health service providers (and training organisations) to ensure the needs of the communities are met (and are affordable) with consideration given to the broader underlying supports/enablers required and to identify the potential role of Councils.

Key Stakeholders - Who will we work with?

- NSW Department of Health
- Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD)
- Primary Health Networks (PHN)
- NSW Ambulance Service
- Albury Wodonga Health (AWH)
- Local Health Advisory Committees (LHACs)
- Australian Medical Association (AMA)
- Rural Doctor Network (RDN)
- General Practitioners, Nurses, Allied Health Providers
- Universities and other health training providers
- Community and Patient Transport Services
- Aboriginal Health Services
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) / Providers

State and Regional Document Links

- NSW Premier’s Priority “Improving service levels in hospitals” and “Improving outpatient and community care”
- RDA Murray Regional Plan 2022-2025
- Murrumbidgee Local Health District Strategic Plan 2021-2026
- Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network Strategic Plan 2023-2027
- Albury Wodonga Health Master Plan
- Regional Economic Development Strategies – Albury Wodonga, Western Riverina, Murray, Western Murray
- NSW Government “Health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales”
- Clinical Services Plans

Outcomes – What difference will we make to better match Health Services to our changing needs?

RAMJO will achieve:

- Meaningful advocacy for improved health and health service provision in the region, including cross border concerns
- Increased funding for health infrastructure and services
- Improved access to health and medical services closer to home – locally and regionally



Actions – What we are going to do?	Core Function	Success Measures – how will we know we have succeeded?	
		Indicator - what will we measure?	Tool - how will we measure it?
1. Continue the Health sub-committee to lead collaboration, planning and action on health service provision.	Strategic planning and priority setting	A representative committee functioning well.	Observational
2. Effectively collaborate and advocate on Health Care provision to improve health service provision for the region.	Intergovernmental collaboration	Input into Regional Health Strategy outcomes provided.	Annual Review
3. Partner with key stakeholders to identify work already taking place in this space, including RDAs, Regional Health organisations and Peak Bodies.	Strategic planning and priority setting	Report completed and supports strategy development	Report
4. Advocate and work with governments to fund and deliver on agreed health infrastructure projects for the region e.g. telehealth, aged care facilities, fit for purpose operating theatres etc.	Intergovernmental collaboration	Priority infrastructure projects funded and delivered	Annual Review



Priority Pillar 6: Boost Industry/Workforce/Jobs

Context - Why is this important?

Industry growth has a significant impact on population growth e.g. 20 new jobs can mean an increase of 60-80 people as they bring their families with them to the region. However, there are many underlying issues preventing industry growth and these vary across RAMJO. Identified issues include; poor transport connectivity, digital connectivity, water and energy security, and a lack of suitable housing and lack of a skilled workforce.

Solutions to preserving and enhancing productivity in the face of a more changeable environment is critical to our economic future, particularly as we aim to gain access to overseas markets. The RAMJO region is well placed to lead innovations in this space.

The Regional Economic Development Strategies recommend a need to support a more diverse and resilient economy by attracting industries that are not impacted by seasonal conditions. They also recommend growing “value-adding” opportunities such as bringing processing to the region to complement production. Growth areas are highlighted as agriculture, manufacturing, health and aged care.

A significant issue for RAMJO is the outward migration of young people as they leave the region to gain training, education and employment. Attention must be given to improving access to education, traineeships and job pathways across the region. This will require better relationships with schools, TAFEs, universities (including Country University Centres) and employers.

Some of the other solutions to industry, jobs and employment growth may include stronger regional marketing strategies to industry, the removal of red tape, a reduction in costs and other enabling factors mentioned throughout the other priorities.

Key Stakeholders - Who will we work with?

- Member councils
- Federal and State Governments both NSW and Victorian
- Registered Training Authorities (RTO's) including Uni and TAFE
- Key industry groups
- Business Enterprise Centres (BECs) and Local Business Chambers
- Local Members - Federal/State
- Cross Border Commissioners and Victorian Councils
- Energy/water corporations
- Other Joint Organisations (and Councils)
- Regional Leadership Executive (Premiers and Cabinet)
- Education/Schools
- Industry
- Regional Development Australia (RDA) – skilled migration and grow your own programs
- Country University Centres

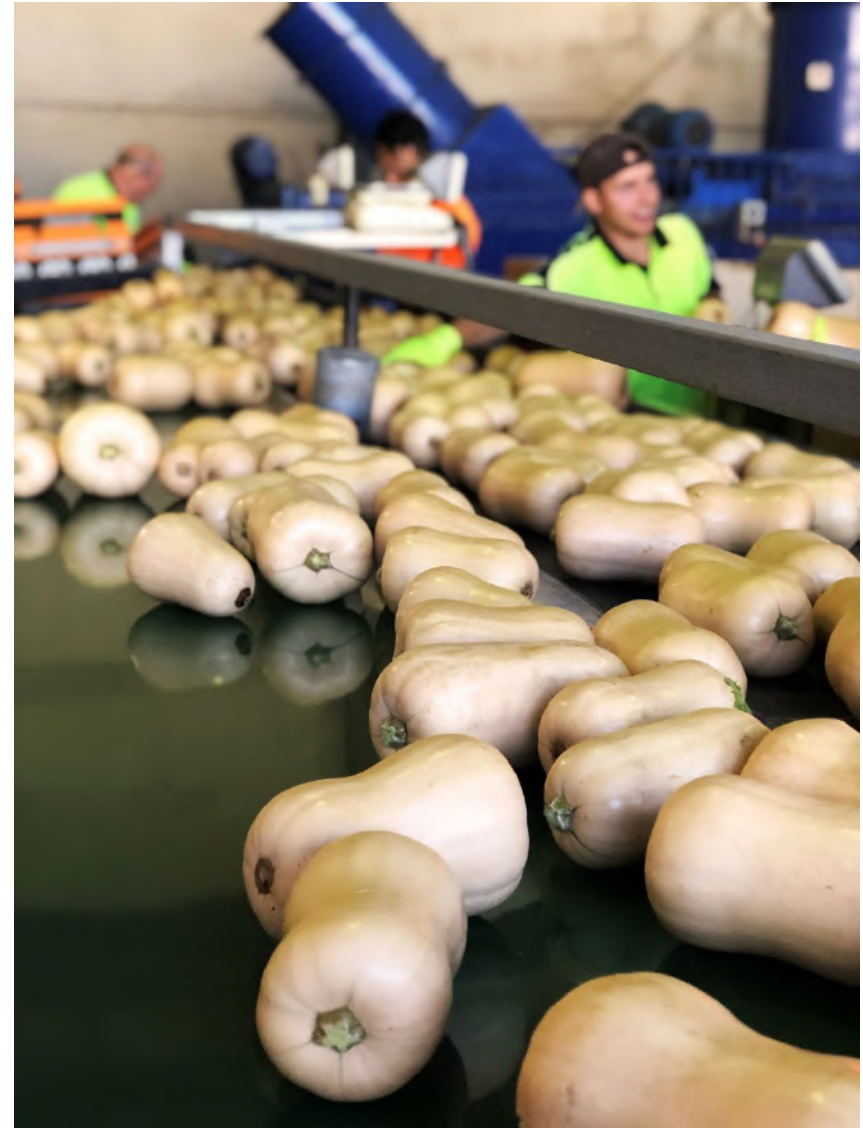
State and Regional Document Links

- NSW Government – A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW
- NSW Government – Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041
- RDA Murray Regional Plan 2022-2025
- RDA Riverina – Riverina Plan and Strategic Priorities 2022-2023
- Regional Economic Development Strategies – Albury Wodonga, Western Murray, Western Riverina, Murray

Outcomes – What difference will we make to boost our industry/workforce/jobs?

RAMJO will achieve:

- A shared Strategy and a shared Implementation and Resourcing Plan (I&R Plan) for industry, workforce and jobs growth in the region
- Local training pathways, incentives and supports established to meet workforce gaps



Actions – What we are going to do?	Core Function	Success Measures – How will we know we have succeeded?	
		Indicator - what will we measure?	Tool - how will we measure it?
1. Partner with key stakeholders to identify work already taking place in this space, including RDAs, JOs /ROCs, and state and federal strategies in workforce development.	Strategic planning and priority setting	Report completed and supports strategy development.	Report
2. Work with our key stakeholders to develop and implement an evidenced based and prioritised Strategy and an implementation and Resourcing Plan to boost industry, workforce, and jobs growth for the region. Considerations will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Understand gaps in RAMJO areas. b. Work with training providers to develop training pathways to address workforce gaps. c. Work with the RDAs and settlement support initiatives (such as GROW; SSI and ROA) to support skilled migration. d. Understand the connections with Housing and Health pillars. e. Explore opportunities for early retirement of HECS / HELP debt for people working in regional areas (similarly to zone taxation rebates). 	Strategic planning and priority setting Regional leadership and advocacy	Annual review	Report
3. Advocate and seek funding opportunities based on the Industry and Workforce Regional Strategy.	Strategic planning and priority setting	Advocacy / Funding applications	Report



Priority Pillar 7: Housing

Context - Why is this important?

Consistently a top issue identified across RAMJO Councils as part of their Community Strategic Plans and the 2022 SSRP planning process was Housing.

There are growing issues in housing supply and affordability in Regional NSW, and even RAMJO Councils without significant population growth are facing critical housing concerns in their communities.

The NSW State government has released their first State Housing Strategy, and the Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041 (draft) has a renewed focus on Housing. This reflects the seriousness and long term nature of the issue and the collaborative approach needed.

There are issues not just in straight supply volumes, but also the type and accessibility of available homes. COVID-19 has also changed the makeup of people moving to and from the regions, which has further affected available housing supply.

The Housing supply issue touches upon other areas of RAMJO's pillars, as it affects both Jobs and Workforce, through the ability to attract people to an area where they can't afford to live, and through Health, as, for example, key worker housing shortages will require working with Local Health Districts, and our ageing communities will require different housing solutions to be able to age in place.

The NSW government's Riverina Murray Regional Plan estimates the region will grow by 43,300 people by 2041.

Key Stakeholders - Who will we work with?

- Member councils
- Federal and State Governments both NSW and Victorian
- Social Housing providers
- Regional NSW
- NSW Regional Housing Taskforce
- Key industry groups
- Local Members - Federal/State
- Other Joint Organisations (and Councils)
- Regional Leadership Executive (Regional NSW)
- Regional Development Australia (RDA)

State and Regional Document Links

- Premier's Priorities
- NSW Regional Housing Taskforce
- NSW Housing Strategy
- NSW Government – A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW
- NSW Government – Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041
- Regional Economic Development Strategies – Albury Wodonga, Western Murray, Western Riverina, Murray
- Existing RAMJO council Housing strategies

Outcomes – What difference will we make to Housing in our region?

RAMJO will achieve:

- Supporting our member councils' development of their Housing strategies
- A shared Strategy and a shared Implementation and Resourcing Plan (I&R Plan) for Housing in the region
- Advocate and support development of enough housing supply to meet the housing needs of the growing workforce



Actions – What we are going to do?	Core Function	Success Measures – How will we know we have succeeded?	
		Indicator - what will we measure?	Tool - how will we measure it?
1. Establish a sub-committee to lead collaboration, planning and action on Housing in the RAMJO region.	Strategic planning and priority setting	A representative committee established and functioning well.	Observational
2. Work with member councils to support every participating council developing an up to date Housing Strategy, identifying a comprehensive assessment of constraints, impacts and opportunities for improving housing.	Strategic planning and priority setting	Participating councils have an up to date Housing Strategy.	Report
3. Work with our key stakeholders to develop and implement evidenced based and prioritised Housing Strategy for our region. This should include consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Key worker housing needs b. Community and social housing c. Crown Lands d. Aboriginal Land claims e. Land use planning at a state and council to support key growth areas and demand. f. Constraints to Housing supply, including Cross Border issues. 	Strategic planning and priority setting Regional leadership and advocacy	RAMJO Regional Housing Strategy	Report
4. Review work already taking place and partner with other organisations, eg RDAs, LHDs, other JOs / ROCs, Community Housing	Strategic planning and priority setting	Report completed and supports strategy development.	Annual Review
5. Advocate and seek funding opportunities based on the Regional Housing Strategy.	Strategic planning and priority setting	Advocacy / Funding applications	Annual Review

Priority Foundation: Strengthen Councils' Capacity and Capability



Context - Why is this important?

The biggest limiting factors preventing progress on all the Priority Pillars are workforce and council financial capacity and sustainability. Our eleven councils all experience difficulty recruiting skilled staff, specifically in engineering, land use planning, finance, surveying, project management and so forth. Some also experience difficulty attracting contractors to tender for works, particularly in the more isolated locations.

All our councils operate on a tight budget and many have a declining rate base while also having to manage increasing costs and expectations.

We need smarter ways of working together to address these issues, reducing duplication and maximising synergies that then unlock and redirect resources to where they are needed.

With RAMJO being an incorporated organisation, there is an opportunity to optimise the benefits that can be gained through scale and capacity and redesign how services are delivered. For example, RAMJO could:

- provide a collective tendering service
- provide a business unit with brokerage services (such as internal auditing, planning and building services, back of house operational roles, library services, visitor information services, regional waste management) etc.
- provide support for a region wide workforce strategy

RAMJO could also facilitate the establishment of decentralised centres of expertise and the sharing of resources and skills. It could also facilitate improved planning and community engagement.

Opportunities for building capacity should be explored both within and outside the region particularly with metropolitan councils.

The focus of RAMJO will be to strengthen the capacity of RAMJO member Councils to act individually and collectively for the benefit of the region.

Key Stakeholders - Who will we work with?

- Member Councils
- Federal and State Governments both NSW and Victorian
- Office of Local Government (OLG)
- Registered Training Authorities (RTOs) including Universities and TAFE
- RDA Riverina and Murray
- Other Joint Organisations

State and Regional Document Links

- NSW Joint Organisation Guidelines

Outcomes – What difference will we make to strengthen our capacity to act?

RAMJO will achieve:

- Council workforce gaps addressed
- Advocacy for member council financial sustainability
- Improvements in project delivery
- Improved staff skills and retention



Actions – What we are going to do?	Core Function	Success Measures – how will we know we have succeeded?	
		Indicator - What will we measure?	Tool - How will we measure it?
1. Continue to work with member councils regarding Shared Services, especially in areas of skills shortages. Engineering, planning, surveying, certification etc <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engineering, planning, surveying, building certification etc b. HR, financial management, payroll 	Enhancing the capacity of Member Councils	Services identified, and benefits gained from implementation.	Member council satisfaction and cost saving report to RAMJO board.
2. Investigate a collective tendering / procurement process, using other JO experience and the BPAP project.	Service delivery to member councils	Increase in tendering, contractor engagement particularly for projects in more isolated locations.	Member council satisfaction report to RAMJO board.
3. Facilitate resources, systems and skills sharing across the Member Councils particularly to support delivery of the priority pillars, including potential for decentralised provision of services at more remote councils.	Sharing resources	Systemisation and standardisation of processes, cost savings and increase in skill development	Member council report to RAMJO board. Case studies
4. Advocacy function - financial sustainability of councils	Strategic planning and priority setting	Submissions made	Report to RAMJO Board
5. Investigate/activate expansion of Council membership base / associate members / key business partners (including associate memberships / non council entities / cross border)	Regional leadership and advocacy	Number of new members/ partners Additional member fees/ partnership projects/ growth in financial capacity	Report to RAMJO Board

Review and Reporting

The RAMJO Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to reflect the RAMJO direction, as well as progress on its priorities and strategies. A complete review will be carried out at the end of the four-year cycle.

Reporting on progress will include the following:

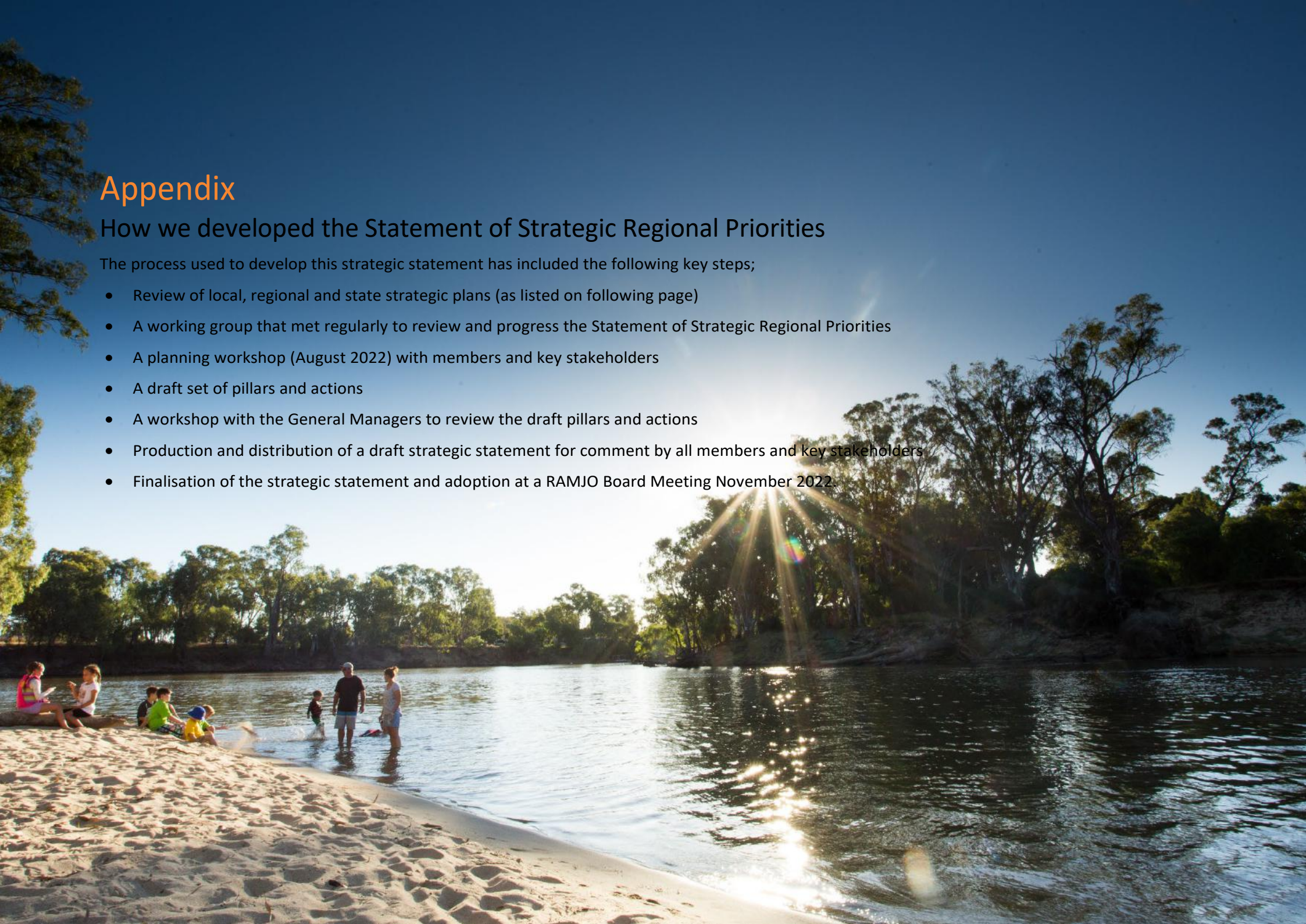
To Whom	Document / Format	Method	Timeframe
Member Councils	Progress Reports	Email	As required
	Annual Reports	Email	30 November (annually)
Regional NSW	Progress Reports	Email	As required
	Annual Report	Email	30 November (annually)
Office of Local Government	Progress Report	Email	As required
	Annual Report	Email	30 November (annually)
RAMJO Communities	Project Progress Updates	RAMJO and Council: website / Social Media / Media / Council newsletters	As projects reach notable milestones
	Annual Report	RAMJO and Council: website / Social Media / Media / Council newsletters	Annually
Key Stakeholders	Progress Report	Email	As required
	Annual Report	Email	30 November (annually)

Appendix

How we developed the Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities

The process used to develop this strategic statement has included the following key steps;

- Review of local, regional and state strategic plans (as listed on following page)
- A working group that met regularly to review and progress the Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities
- A planning workshop (August 2022) with members and key stakeholders
- A draft set of pillars and actions
- A workshop with the General Managers to review the draft pillars and actions
- Production and distribution of a draft strategic statement for comment by all members and key stakeholders
- Finalisation of the strategic statement and adoption at a RAMJO Board Meeting November 2022.



Documents Reviewed

Table 1: Documents Reviewed

Author	Title	Source / Web Address
Local Plans		
11 RAMJO Councils	Community Strategic Plans; Economic Development Strategies / Plans and Housing Strategies?	11 x Council websites
Albury City Council and Wodonga City Council	“Two Cities One Community Strategic Plan 2017-2021” “2021-2022 Operational Action Plan”	http://alburywodonga.gov.au/plan
	“Albury Local Housing Strategy –Evidence Paper” February 2022	Albury Local Housing Strategy (amazonaws.com)
Berrigan Shire	“Housing & Homelessness Briefing to council October 2021 “	https://www.berriganshire.nsw.gov.au/files/council/october/2021/Appendix%207.12-B%20-%20Housing%20Paper%20Briefing%20-%2020.10.2021.docx.pdf
Regional Plans		
Regional NSW	“Riverina Murray”	https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/our-regions/riverina-murray
NSW Department of Planning and Environment	Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041	https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/Riverina-Murray/Riverina-Murray-regional-plan
Regional NSW	Regional NSW Investment Attraction Strategy 2022-2027	https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/invest-regional-nsw
Murray Regional Tourism	“Murray Region Tourism Destination Management Plan”	www.murrayregionaltourism.com.au/research-resources/strategies-plans
Destination Riverina Murray NSW	“Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2018”	https://riverinamurray.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Riverina_Murray_DMP_April_2018_DigitalLQ.2.pdf
NSW Department of Planning and Environment	“Draft Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041” (2022)	www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/Riverina-Murray
NSW Government	Regional Housing Taskforce Recommendations Report (October 2021)	Regional Housing Taskforce Planning Portal - Department of Planning and Environment (nsw.gov.au)

Regional NSW	Regional Economic Development Strategies 2018-2022 (REDS), refresh process and workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Albury Wodonga - Murray - Western-Murray - Western Riverina 	www.nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/regional-economic-development-strategies
Regional Development Australia	Murray (2022) “Regional Plan 2022 – 2026” Riverina – “Riverina Plan and Strategic Priorities”	www.rdamurray.org.au www.rdariverina.org.au
NSW Government	Regional Housing Taskforce	https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/regional-housing

Documents reviewed

Table 1: Documents Reviewed ... continued

Author	Title	Source / web address
State Plans		
NSW Government	NSW Premier's Priorities	https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/premiers-priorities
NSW Government	"A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW" (February 2021)	https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-02/20%20Year%20Vision%20for%20RNSW_0.pdf#:~:text=20-Year%20Economic%20Vision%20for%20Regional%20NSW%20Our%20vision,further%20specialise%20in%20innovation%20and%20technology%20focussed%20industries.
NSW Government Department of industry	NSW Connectivity Strategy	https://www.digital.nsw.gov.au/policy/nsw-connectivity-strategy
NSW Government	"Health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales" (May 2022)	https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/2615/Report%20no%2057%20-%20PC%202%20-%20Health%20outcomes%20and%20access%20to%20services.pdf
NSW Government	NSW Water Strategy (August 2021)	https://water.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/409957/nsw-water-strategy.pdf
NSW Government	NSW Energy Strategy	Electricity Strategy Overview (nsw.gov.au)
NSW Government	NSW Net Zero Plan Stage 1 : 2020-2030	https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-08/net-zero-plan-2020-2030-200057.pdf
Federal		
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts	2021 Regional Telecommunications Review - A step change in demand	2021 Regional Telecommunications Review - A step change in demand Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Population Data

Table 2: LGA by Population Time Series: 2001 - 2021

Estimated Resident Population	2001	2006	2011	2016	2017	2021	Data Notes
Albury	45,265	47,655	49,451	52,171	52,949	56,036	<p>There has been an increase in the estimated resident population of the RAMJO region of 11,478 people between 2001 – 2021.</p> <p>Whilst Albury, Berrigan, Federation, Griffith and Murray River LGA’s have experienced a steady increase in population others have experienced fluctuations over the 16-year period.</p> <p>However, since 2011 these communities have shown signs of recovery, particularly Carrathool, and Leeton.</p> <p>It is noted that many agricultural workers in the region are itinerant and aren’t generally captured by the Census.</p>
Berrigan	8,075	8,160	8,297	8,609	8,664	8,612	
Carrathool	3,290	2,863	2,671	2,793	2,796	2,871	
Edward River	10,074	9,287	8,888	8,991	8,949	8,437	
Federation	12,121	12,479	12,509	12,445	12,444	12,821	
Griffith	24,412	24,583	25,395	26,356	26,586	27,182	
Hay	3,620	3,394	3,085	2,984	2,979	2,883	
Leeton	11,832	11,502	11,406	11,407	11,417	11,481	
Murray River	10,997	11,082	11,257	11,872	11,956	12,780	
Murrumbidgee	4,548	4,109	3,888	3,929	3,952	3,564	
Narrandera	6,686	6,103	6,115	5,949	5,931	5,731	
Total RAMJO ERP	140,920	141,217	142,962	147,506	148,623	152,398	

Source: ABS Stats <http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/>

Population Data

Table 3: LGA Population by Age 2017 and 2021

Estimated Resident Population by LGA by Age	2017					2021				
	0-14	15-44	45-64	65+	Total	0-14	15-44	45-64	65+	Total
Albury	10,289	20,451	9,931	12,318	52,989	10,712	20,966	10,029	13,962	55,669
Berrigan	1,475	2,503	2,229	2,460	8,667	1,408	2,464	2,217	2,680	8,769
Carrathool	572	1,046	779	401	2,798	596	964	760	450	2,770
Edward River	1,614	2,902	2,458	1,981	8,955	1,598	2,916	2,365	2,194	9,073
Federation	2,165	3,430	3,442	3,413	12,450	2,076	3,402	3,342	3,775	12,595
Griffith	5,614	10,388	6,398	4,208	26,608	5,485	10,562	6,415	4,602	27,064
Hay	551	927	895	608	2,981	508	919	821	613	2,861
Leeton	2,414	4,122	3,449	1,439	11,424	2,325	4,002	3,427	1,548	11,302
Murray River	2,143	3,479	3,261	3,080	11,963	2,230	3,399	3,293	3,503	12,425
Murrumbidgee	828	1,366	1,081	680	3,955	738	1,337	1,052	769	3,896
Narrandera	1,218	1,827	1,618	1,272	5,935	1,203	1,734	1,554	1,297	5,788
TOTAL	28,777	52,432	37,992	29,422	148,725	28,014	52,551	38,567	33,186	152,212

Source: ABS Stats 2021 Census <http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/>

Predicted Population Change 2021-2041

Data Limitations

At the time of writing, the only official available projection data for the 11 local government areas of RAMJO was that from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE). This data is based on the 2020 ABS base data. Updated data (based on the 2021 Census) is due for release in late 2022 / early 2023.

The DPE data has been included as a guide, however caution should be applied when referring to this data because it under estimates the growth that has been experienced as at 2021 by 186 people.

There are some notable differences between the DPE 2021 predicted population and the actual 2021 ABS Census data. A comparison of the two data sets is shown in table 4.

Table 4: 2021 estimated resident Population compared with Projected Population for 2021 by LGA

Local Government Area	ABS Estimate Resident Population 2021	Dept P&E Projected Population 2021	Difference	Data Notes
Albury City	56,036	55,670	-366	Comparing the ABS estimated Resident Population (2021) with the Projected Population for 2021 shows many discrepancies between the two data sets. In many cases, it demonstrates an under-estimation of population growth in the LGAs, the exceptions being of Federation, Leeton. The estimate for Narrandera and Hay were almost exact. Overall, the RAMJO population was underestimated by 186 people.
Berrigan	8,612	8,768	156	
Carrathool	2,871	2,771	-100	
Edward River	8,437	9,073	636	
Federation	12,821	12,594	-227	
Griffith City	27,182	27,063	-119	
Hay	2,883	2,862	-21	
Leeton	11,481	11,302	-179	
Murray River	12,780	12,426	-354	
Murrumbidgee	3,564	3,895	331	
Narrandera	5,731	5,789	58	
TOTAL	152,398	152,212	-186	

Table 5: Predicted Population Change 2016 - 2036 by LGA

Local Government Area	Total Population		% Under 15 years		% Over 65 years	
	2016	2036	2016	2036	2016	2036
Albury City	55,670	76,341	19.24%	16.62%	17.41%	23.97%
Berrigan	8,768	9,897	16.05%	14.66%	28.47%	33.37%
Carrathool	2,771	2,698	21.52%	23.39%	23.33%	21.85%
Edward River	9,073	9,012	17.62%	14.26%	25.19%	30.95%
Federation	12,594	13,299	16.48%	14.02%	31.55%	38.25%
Griffith City	27,063	31,641	20.27%	18.73%	14.91%	21.10%
Hay	2,862	2,594	17.76%	16.69%	26.79%	28.24%
Leeton	11,302	11,061	20.57%	18.64%	19.42%	26.90%
Murray River	12,426	15,456	17.95%	16.37%	26.50%	34.32%
Murrumbidgee	3,895	3,998	18.94%	16.15%	21.48%	26.87%
Narrandera	5,789	5,373	20.79%	19.70%	20.00%	24.63%
TOTAL	152,212	181,371	19.24%	16.62%	17.41%	23.97%

Source: NSW Department Planning and Environment 2022 (2016 Census) <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Research-and-Demography/Population-Projections/Explore-the-data>

Table 6: Predicted Population Structure Change 2016 -2041

RAMJO	2016		2021		2026		2031		2036		2041	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
0-14 years	28,631	19.41	28,880	18.97	28,641	18.12	28,775	17.34	29,554	17.00	30,573	16.86
15-44 years	52,357	35.49	52,665	34.6	55,505	35.12	58,776	35.41	60,926	35.05	62,768	34.61
45-64 years	37,860	25.67	38,126	25.0	36,379	23.02	36,609	22.06	37,967	21.84	39,877	21.99
65+ years	28,658	19.43	32,541	21.4	37,534	23.72	41,814	25.19	45,370	26.10	48,153	26.55
TOTAL	147,506	100.00	152,212	100.00	158,059	100.00	165,974	100.00	173,817	100.00	181,371	100.00

Source: NSW Department Planning and Environment 2022 (2016 Census) <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Research-and-Demography/Population-Projections/Explore-the-data>

Employment by Industry

Table 7: Industry by Employment Time Series 2006 - 2021

RAMJO - Industry by Employment	2006	2011	2016	2021
Health Care and Social Assistance	5,765	6,868	7,555	9,584
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	8,606	7,151	7,239	9,328
Manufacturing	8,461	8,111	7,079	8,934
Retail Trade	7,416	7,184	6,458	7,197
Education and Training	4,265	4,697	5,107	5,558
Construction	4,282	4,387	4,938	7,028
Accommodation and Food Services	4,387	4,494	4,636	5,787
Public Administration and Safety	3,401	3,748	3,619	4,636
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	2,540	2,579	2,672	2,933
Inadequately Described/Not stated	1,579	1,534	2,573	-
Other Services	2,107	2,258	2,361	2,954
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2,175	2,163	2,177	2,496
Administrative and Support Services	1,290	1,405	1,732	1,745
Wholesale Trade	2,281	1,990	1,472	1,718
Financial and Insurance Services	1,122	1,083	957	1,111
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	809	876	807	1,282
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	660	609	601	673
Arts and Recreation Services	486	543	531	547
Information Media and telecommunications	591	491	454	505
Mining	81	151	175	273
TOTAL	62,304	62,322	63,143	74,289

2021 Source: <https://economy.id.com.au/ramjo/employment-by-industry>

Gross Regional Product

Data Limitations

Gross Regional Product data was not available at local government level from one source. It has therefore been collated from REMPLAN, Profile ID, LGA Community Strategic Plans and LGA Economic Strategies. All data used is 2021. The totals are therefore considered an estimate and should be viewed as indicative rather than absolute figures.

Table 8: Estimated Gross Regional Product 2021

Gross Regional Product	2021 \$ Millions	Data Source
Albury	3,343	https://economy.id.com.au
Griffith City	1,872	https://economy.id.com.au/ramjo/gross-product?WebID=150
Murray River	672	https://economy.id.com.au
Edward River	523	https://economy.id.com.au/ramjo/gross-product?WebID=130
Federation	708	https://economy.id.com.au/ramjo/gross-product?WebID=140
Leeton	588	https://economy.id.com.au/ramjo/gross-product?WebID=170
Berrigan	546	https://economy.id.com.au/ramjo/gross-product?WebID=110
Murrumbidgee	309	https://economy.id.com.au/ramjo/gross-product?WebID=190
Narrandera	371	https://economy.id.com.au
Carrathool	347	https://economy.id.com.au
Hay	189	https://economy.id.com.au/ramjo/gross-product?WebID=160
TOTAL	\$9.47 billion	

Snapshot Data for Strategic Priorities Pillars Unpacked

Table 9: Strategic Pillar Snapshot Data Unpacked

Water	Energy	Transport
<p>3 Major Rivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray • Murrumbidgee • Lachlan <p>6 Major Water Storage Servicing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dartmouth • Hume • Yarrawonga/Mulwala • Burrinjuck • Blowering • Wyangala <p>11 Waste Water Treatment Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 per LGA <p>3 Major Irrigation Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murrumbidgee Irrigation System • Coleambally Irrigation System • Murray Irrigation 	<p>3 Solar Farms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Griffith x 2 • Carrathool x 1 • Various under construction and/or scheduled for construction <p>Hydro</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hume <p>Energy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential Energy (almost all RAMJO) • SP Ausnet (NSW/Vic Border) <p>35.97% dwellings with solar power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian PV Institute (ABS PV data) • https://pv-map.apvi.org.au/historical#8/-36.157/146.446 	<p>9 Major Highways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hume • Riverina • Sturt • Cobb • Kidman Way • Olympic • Mid-Western • Newell • Burley Griffin Way <p>Railway Lines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x major line – Melbourne - Albury - Sydney • 5 x branch lines • https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rail_transport_in_New_South_Wales#/media/file:NSWRailMap.png <p>Airports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albury • Griffith • Narrandera • Corowa • Hay • Deniliquin <p>Source: Regional Economic Development Strategies</p> <p>Intermodal Terminals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albury • Deniliquin • WR Connect – on boundary Griffith & Leeton • Griffith • Tocumwal • https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/documents/2017/intermodal%20terminals%20by%20local%20government%20area.pdf

Table 9: Strategic Pillar Snapshot Data Unpacked continued...

Digital	Health	Industry
<p>Progressive NBN Coverage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NBN Coverage as at Oct 2018 – map https://www.nbnco.com.au/residential/learn/rollout-map.html As at June 2018, the NBN was available at 87,588 premises in Farrer, of which 46.5% had been taken up. note: this overall figure includes LGA’s of greater Hume, Balranald and Wentworth which are outside RAMJO. to break this down to LGA level – contact NBN. <p>Black Spots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Reported Black Spots – Australian government national map. https://nationalmap.gov.au/#share=s-qmYEiDx3gp6CmV9gfGZRwx4aqmV Round 1 - 5 Funded Base Stations - Australian government national map https://nationalmap.gov.au/#share=s-qmYEiDx3gp6CmV9gfGZRwx4aqmV <p>Mobile Phone Towers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tower Search: https://www.rfnsa.com.au/?first=1 <p>Coverage Checker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/our-coverage https://www.optus.com.au/living-network https://www.vodafone.com.au/network/coverage-checker 	<p>Major Hospitals x2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albury Wodonga Health Griffith Base <p>Health Services x7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berrigan Corowa Deniliquin Finley Hay Leeton Narrandera <p>Multi-Purpose Services x 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hillston Jerilderie Lockhart Tocumwal Urana <p>https://www.mlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/our-facilities</p> <p>Residential Aged Care Places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PHIDU (June 2020) “Social Atlases of Australia: local government Areas – NSW / ACT” http://phidu.torrens.edu.au/social-health-atlases/data#social-health-atlases-of-australia-local-government-areas 	<p>Employment by Industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ABS 2016 Census – LGA Community Profiles – Time Series Profile table 34 industry by employment by Sex (collated LGAs) https://economy.id.com.au/ramjo/employment-by-industry <p>Gross Regional Product</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> REMPPLAN – Albury, Carrathool, Murray River, Narrandera ID.Profile – Berrigan, Federation, Griffith, Murray Economic Development Strategic Plan – Edward River Community Strategic Plan - Leeton <p>Jobs, Unemployment, Median Weekly Household Income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://economy.id.com.au/ramjo/income (2021 granular census data not yet available) <p>Higher Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNSW Medical School – Albury UNSW – Rural Clinical School – Griffith Campus Charles Sturt University - Albury TAFE x 6 – Albury, Griffith, Leeton, Narrandera, Deniliquin, Corowa Western Riverina Community College Deakin Uni – Centre for Regional and Rural Futures and Irrigation Research Centre Yanco Agricultural Institute – between Leeton and Narrandera <p>Source: Economic Development Strategies 2018- 2022 (x4)</p>

Housing

- Persons living in owned dwellings– 62.2% of population
<https://profile.id.com.au/ramjo/tenure?BMID=40>
- Low income households -48.46% of private dwellings
Housing Experiences and Suitability Atlas (2016 data)
<https://phidu.torrens.edu.au/social-health-atlases/topic-atlas/housing-atlas#housing-atlas-data-workbooks>
- Income stress “ : In Riverina and Murray Region, 9.5% of households with a mortgage were making high loan repayments of \$2,600 or more per month in 2021.”
[Housing loan repayments | Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation | Community profile \(id.com.au\)](#)



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- George Cowan, General Manager, Narrandera
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- Nicola Gleeson, Executive Officer RAMJO

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