



LATROBE VALLEY
AUTHORITY

Latrobe Valley
Community Report

Transitioning to a strong future

NOVEMBER 2016 – NOVEMBER 2019



Transitioning our community

The Latrobe Valley Authority (LVA) began in November 2016. Since then, we've had the privilege of working in partnership with you – our local businesses and community members – on projects that are securing a strong and resilient future for the region and for future generations of Gippslanders.

Transitioning our economy and community is long-term work that continues the efforts of many people in our community. Through genuine collaboration we can make important decisions now and for the future that will benefit everyone in our community.

On the ground, this collective work has already resulted in more than 2,500 new jobs and helped generate more than \$99 million of private investment in the Latrobe Valley to date.

These results are reflected in the October 2019 Latrobe-Gippsland unemployment rate falling by 3.7 percentage points since September 2016, with an additional 10,600 people in employment across the region.

However, jobs figures are just part of the story. For true sustainable change, we need to work on innovative projects that create long term investment and a vibrant and liveable Latrobe Valley, while ensuring everybody in our community benefits.

We want to ensure that pride and confidence in our future continues to grow and that we have the best conditions to grow our people and economy.

With so much work underway it's an exciting time to be in the Latrobe Valley.

We're really pleased to report in the following pages on the outcomes of our work so far with you - and hope you will continue with us on this long term transition journey.

Importantly, we are always here to hear from you on any matter – please drop in to our offices in Morwell or contact us on 1800 136 762 to arrange a time to talk to one of our staff.



Karen Cain
CEO, Latrobe Valley Authority

A different approach

Right from the start, we've been determined to take a different approach to support affected workers, business and the community to transition the Latrobe Valley region.

Working collaboratively in partnership is at the heart of the LVA approach. Our clear mandate is to bring community, business and government together to work on the things that really matter and that will make a difference.

By listening and learning from you, we've been able to be responsive to immediate needs, while also planning for the long term and investing resources into activities that will secure the transformation of the region.

Learning from and applying solutions conceived both locally and from outside the region is needed to do this well.

By focusing on what matters, and building on our strengths, together we can leave a legacy that will benefit future generations.

Key challenges

The work isn't always easy. Shifting mindsets and attitudes about what is achievable and possible is necessary to make real and sustainable change.

Our work is just beginning. Though results are demonstrating we are having an impact, we can't be complacent. To achieve positive change we need to be fearless in continuing to tackle underemployment and increase skilled jobs in growing industries.

With the growth of industries such as health and community services, construction and new energy, there is also a need to develop and attract workforces to sustain these industries into the future.

The work we've started needs continued support and nurturing to ensure long-term successful transition.

Evolving our approach

By focusing on listening, learning and understanding our local community, we have built local ownership and support, and have also been able to evolve our work over time.

We've moved from immediate response and 'filling gaps' to work that will create system-wide change, that is sustainable over the long term.

We've also focussed on integrating our work with existing and complementary actions so that we can maximise social and economic impact of the initiatives along the way.

We are also now well positioned to respond to future challenges the region may face.

Our mission

To work with and for the people of Latrobe Valley to:

- Build on community strengths and capability for the future
- Lead collaboration and innovation
- Draw on and use the best ideas for what works, both locally and from outside the region
- Support opportunity for all



Our stages of work



1. Immediate response



The work of the LVA has evolved over time.

In the initial period, work focussed on supporting workers and their families, affected businesses, and delivering the most needed community support, including:

- providing immediate crisis support to affected Hazelwood workers and their families

- delivering a coordinated response to support businesses.

During this period, major investments in community facilities and infrastructure created a pipeline of projects to provide an economic boost and jobs, whilst enhancing liveability and a sense of pride in the local community.

In progress

Worker Transition Service

Focussed on providing holistic support to people (and their family members) impacted by industry closures.

Support to transition into new jobs, access to training, personal and financial counselling or to move into retirement.

Delivered in partnership with Gippsland Employment Skills and Training, Workways, Skills and Jobs Centre TAFE Gippsland, and Gippsland Trades and Labour Council.

All clients provided individual service and follow up support.



74%

of former Hazelwood workforce currently employed or not looking for work, including retirement



More than

1,400

workers and their families offered support services



"The worker transition team basically taught me to write application letters, which were quite different from when I first started writing them, and selection criteria really wasn't in when I first started applying for jobs and that was something new to me."

- 80% (730) of affected Hazelwood workers registered and 84% (135) of former Carter Holt Harvey employees

- Support provided to more than 100 family members of affected workers, including counselling and financial support

- Workers supported to obtain more than 2000 qualifications, in areas such as construction and rail, and working at heights and in confined spaces

Delivered

Worker Transfer Scheme

Designed to facilitate the employment of Hazelwood workers into jobs created through early retirement at other power generators in Latrobe Valley.

Negotiated agreement between the Victorian Government, Latrobe Valley unions, and Latrobe Valley power operators. Specific tax ruling meant workers who elected to take early retirement were not disadvantaged.

- 90 Hazelwood workers have found ongoing employment through the Scheme

In progress

Back to Work Scheme

Up to \$9000 funding per worker for businesses who employ and train unemployed people who live in the Latrobe Valley.

- 1245 payments made (1017 full time, 228 part time roles)

In progress

Economic Growth Zone reimbursements

Reimbursement of state and local government fees and charges related to the establishment or expansion of a business in the region. Aiming to support local businesses to grow and attract new businesses to set up in the region.



Local builder Virtue Homes received reimbursements of government fees to build a bigger office in Traralgon

Ongoing

Industry Capability Network

Helping business win government contracts.

Providing support for local contractors as part of the Local Jobs First policy, that mandates 90% minimum local content on major projects and 10% of major project workforce are apprentices and trainees.

- 10 workshops held to assist businesses to write effective tenders to win government contracts
- More than 700 Gippsland and Latrobe Valley businesses now have a profile on the ICN Gateway to better position them to win project tenders
- Local Jobs First assistance provided for major projects including Avon River Bridge upgrade, Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre and Latrobe GovHub



Delivered

Latrobe Valley Economic Facilitation Fund

Delivered by Regional Development Victoria, helping businesses in Latrobe Valley grow and create new ongoing jobs.

- 40 projects supported, leveraging \$94.4 million in capital investment
- 968 jobs created

Delivered

Supply Chain Transition Program

Delivered by Regional Development Victoria, assisting companies affected by the closure of Hazelwood Power Station and Mine, and Carter Holt Harvey saw mill, to create and implement a business transition plan.

- 57 plans completed
- 52 companies executing their plan
- 34 companies have fully completed their plan
- 7 awarded additional Economic Facilitation Fund grants, leveraging \$5.6 million additional capital expenditure and creating 87 jobs

Delivered

Community and Facility Fund

Support for community infrastructure projects and events, improving liveability, pride and local connection.

Generated local employment through use of local contractors, such as involvement of local sound and audio businesses in hall upgrades, and local tradesmen in energy efficiency upgrades and kitchen refurbishments.

Major projects included refurbishment of six local scout halls, upgrades to Sale Memorial Hall and Sale Showgrounds, Future Morwell streetscape project, and Maffra's Cameron Sporting Complex redevelopment.

186
community projects



Funding for total of
\$20 million

50
local events



The Fund has also supported almost 50 local events including the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival Jindivick event and events supporting communities affected by drought or bushfire, youth and science activities, scouting and sporting activities, music, sculpture, cooking, culturally diverse communities and large community gatherings.

Clubs supported report experiencing increased membership and participation - improved facilities have led to more event activity and increased visitation, which has improved their income significantly.

Funding for water and energy saving measures have led to significant cost savings – allowing clubs to invest these savings into facility improvements.



Briagolong Tennis Club received \$50,783 to improve disabled access to the courts and facility

In progress

Home Energy Upgrade Program

Delivered by Sustainability Victoria with local company Hills Energy Solutions, 1000 home energy upgrades being provided to Latrobe Valley region homes by June 2020.

Aims to reduce energy bills for local households and provide health and social benefits to those on low incomes, while boosting jobs in the region by using local businesses for assessments and upgrades.

- 810 assessments complete
- 717 upgrades complete
- 42 in progress

"Thank you for this program. My family and I would still not have hot water, if it wasn't for this. There are so many people living without the basics and it's good to see that programs like this can give them what everyone else takes for granted. We have had hot water for 8 months now and I still smile and thank this program each time I turn on the tap."

– Latrobe Valley resident

Ongoing

Good Money outlet

Delivered by Good Shepherd Microfinance supported by the Department of Health and Human Services, offering no cost and low-cost financial services, counselling and advice to Latrobe valley residents.

Drop in to 10 Tarwin Street Morwell or call 1300 770 550.

- 1062 no interest loans provided since opening in July 2017
- 274 low interest loans provided

Delivered

Sports and active participation initiative grant

Funding for sporting clubs to undertake strategic planning to build resilient, sustainable and inclusive sport and recreation organisations in the Latrobe Valley region.

- 6 grants awarded to local sporting groups including tennis, roller derby, walking J-Ball and Budjeri Napan Aboriginal Sports Committee

In progress

Sports infrastructure upgrades

Upgrade key local sporting infrastructure and attract major sporting events and programs to the region.

Additional funding to upgrade nine local recreation reserves supported by the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning.



Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre artist impression



Traralgon Sports Stadium artist impression

Project	Cost	Status
Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre	\$46 million	
Traralgon Sports Stadium	\$17 million	
Latrobe City Sports and Entertainment Stadium	\$1.7 million	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Traralgon Tennis Centre	\$400,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sale Tennis Centre	\$1 million	
Morwell Recreation Reserve	\$4 million	
Ted Summerton Reserve	\$3 million	
Local reserve upgrades	\$5 million	

Under construction Construction complete

In progress

Major sports events and community outreach

Building on Latrobe Valley's sporting strengths to drive continued growth and develop new links with elite clubs and competitions.

Working with Destination Gippsland to leverage attraction of major sporting events to maximise tourism impact.

Aims to build local capacity, reduce barriers to participation, improve health and social outcomes, boost the economy and foster regional pride.



Huge crowds of more than 7,500 attended the World Jousting Championships at Lardner Park Warragul

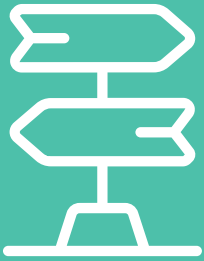
- 23 major events delivered through partnerships with 9 sporting partners
- Over 90 school visits conducted in 2018 reaching over 7000 students
- 17 clinics conducted in 2018 with 2910 young people
- 12 workshops facilitated with almost 300 coaches and club volunteers
- 15 coaches shadowed elite level coaches during games and training
- More than 400 young people included in game day experiences
- More than 1200 community tickets to Melbourne-based games provided to local community organisations

Coming up

Melbourne Stars v Hobart Hurricanes
Big Bash League match,
Ted Summerton Reserve 22 December



2. Recovery and capability building



Beyond initial immediate response, the LVA has been able to strengthen local capability, building partnerships and assisting key industries with job creation by:

- Identifying new employment opportunities and building the skills base of workers

- Building business capabilities and maximising use of local businesses
- Funding locally-identified priorities to increase participation and improve the sustainability of local community organisations.

In progress

Growing Regional Opportunities for Work in Gippsland (GROW Gippsland)

Maximising the use of local businesses on small and large projects to build a stronger local economy.

Brings business, government, community organisations and individuals together to look at ways to increase use of local businesses in the region and increase spend with Aboriginal businesses, social enterprises and disability enterprises.

Participating local businesses commit to increasing spend with local business, and to offering job opportunities to job seekers in places where there are high rates of joblessness.

Incorporates Gippsland Business Connect, a business marketplace and discovery tool allowing businesses to network with other businesses, view upcoming local projects, post work and view upcoming business events.

68

businesses committed to the GROW compact



900

local businesses registered on Gippsland Business Connect



In progress

Access New Industries Program

Linking local people with jobs in growth industries in Gippsland – tailored courses in patient transport, solar installation, health, disability services, transport, construction.

- 17 training programs delivered in growth industries in Latrobe Valley region through partnerships with organisations such as TAFE Gippsland, Interchange Gippsland and the West Gippsland Healthcare Group
- 112 people completed training programs



Billie secured a role with West Gippsland Healthcare Group after completing a taster course

In progress

Ladder Step Up youth program

Ladder is a not-for-profit organisation supported by the AFL Players Association. In Latrobe Valley, young people are nominated or self-nominate to participate in the program that supports them to build confidence, develop community connections, and test and assess a range of education, employment and training options.

- 82 young people are or have been involved
- 40 employed post program completion
- 30 re-engaged in secondary or vocational education
- 30 young people matched to community mentors

Delivered

Gippsland Jobs Hub and volunteering site

Community resource for small to medium enterprises to advertise local vacancies.

Led by all three Local Learning and Employment Networks in Gippsland.

- Website and app now live at gippslandjobshub.com.au or on the App Store

In progress

Latrobe Youth Space

A youth-led, adult-guided initiative providing a safe and inclusive space and empowering young people in the Latrobe Valley.

Latrobe Youth Space's work is guided and developed by 15 local young people aged 14-24 and a young advisor.

Led by YMCA as part of a consortium of 11 local organisations, with support from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Drop in to Shop 62, Mid Valley Shopping Centre Morwell

- 59 programs and events run over the last year
- Engaged with 7204 young people (aged 12-25)

Delivered

New Energy Jobs and Investment Prospectus

Outlined opportunities to capitalise on the region's extensive new energy technology opportunities and to support new energy transition.

- Prospectus published at lva.vic.gov.au/new-energy-prospectus
- Nine grants awarded to seven local businesses to develop new energy technologies, invest in new energy equipment/infrastructure and develop new skills



Alternate Energy Innovations in Morwell received funding for a demonstration wind turbine at their Saskia Way site

In progress

Planning improvements

Aiming to improve the planning system in the Latrobe Valley to make it easier and quicker for people to develop land and establish and grow businesses.

With support from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, the project worked to simplify the planning schemes in Latrobe City, Baw Baw and Wellington shires to make them easier to understand and more consistent, so that the planning schemes better facilitate development.

- Councils have all streamlined their planning processes and have set the ground work for new projects and initiatives to further improve planning systems.

In progress

Latrobe Valley Business Support Service

Operated in partnership with three Latrobe Valley councils, a free, flexible and confidential tailored support service to help business navigate services on offer and follow up to make sure they are getting what they need.

Connecting businesses with services through partnerships with government departments and other organisations.

- Concierges now available to assist you:
Baw Baw Shire Council 1300 229 229
Latrobe City Council 1300 367 700
Wellington Shire Council 1300 366 244
Latrobe Valley Authority 1800 136 762
Regional Development Victoria 5116 7300



The business concierge team are based at each local council office across the region

3. Strategic and sustainable growth



Whilst maintaining a focus on job creation, the LVA is now moving towards region-wide, long-term strategic growth opportunities that will set the region up for a strong future.

By drawing on experiences elsewhere in the world, the LVA and its partners are thinking creatively about ways to meet present and

future needs through new business models, services, technology and collaborative practices that grow innovation.

The result will be an integrated agenda incorporating best practice contemporary regional development. It sets out the local projects and infrastructure that will translate agreed new ideas and opportunities into action on the ground.

In progress

Industry competitive advantages – Smart Specialisation Project

Drawing on expertise and best practice examples from the European Union’s Smart Specialisation Strategy initiative, which has been applied and refined over two decades to a wide variety of European Union regions.

Builds on existing regional initiatives and involves government, business, research and education, and the wider local community to identify and develop local strengths, opportunities and genuine competitive advantages.

Focusing on four key identified sectors for future growth – food and fibre, new energy, health and wellbeing, and the visitor economy.

- Working with partners in the food and fibre and new energy sectors to develop and implement identified projects
- Health and wellbeing and visitor economy sectors at exploration phase
- Project continues to receive international interest as the first of its kind in regional Australia

In progress

Health and community services workforce

As the largest sector of employment in Gippsland, a skills modelling report has been undertaken to identify future needs of the industry in the region.

A key recommendation has identified need for further allied health tertiary courses in Gippsland so that local students don’t have to travel and talent is retained in the region.

- Report completed detailing areas for action including promotion of the sector and jobs, attracting required workforce and supporting students
- The Victorian Government has supported Federation University to establish new allied health courses at Churchill campus.

In progress

SEA Electric

SEA Electric to set up a new electric vehicle assembly plant in Latrobe Valley, creating up to 500 jobs and manufacturing up to 2,400 vehicles per year.

SEA Electric has already employed several Latrobe Valley residents who are working at SEA’s Dandenong plant ahead of the company establishing a new factory in Latrobe Valley.

- Training agreement signed between TAFE Gippsland and SEA Electric to develop courses to support the electric vehicle industry.
- Working to secure a site for the plant.



SEA Electric employees from the Latrobe Valley at the Dandenong facility

In progress

Internationalising education

In partnership with the International Education Division of the Department of Education and Training, Lowanna College, Traralgon College, Kurnai College and Trafalgar Secondary College are developing their capacity to host international students and increase their students' understanding and experience of global cultures.


- All four schools now registered for international student programs

In progress

Industry education partnerships

Developing a model to support industry and schools to access innovative real world learning experiences that build students' enterprise skills and aspiration, preparing the workforce of the future.

Providing direct funding support to the *Broadening Horizons* program.

906 
students
participating
in Broadening
Horizons

20 
industry
partners
providing real
world challenges

In progress

Transferable work skills - microcredentialling

Partnership with the Assessment Research Centre at Melbourne University to design and develop a process and online system that assesses and recognises demonstrated 'enterprise skills'.

Gippsland employers identified that communication and collaborative problem-solving skills are the most desired in potential employees.

- Pilot assessment process underway.

In progress

GROW People

Pilot program helping businesses identify employment opportunities for people with barriers to work, linking the Worker Transition Service and GROW Gippsland to focus on both jobseeker and business needs during the recruitment process.

- Trial underway with 14 people experiencing additional barriers to entering the workforce.

In progress

Gippsland Hi Tech Precinct

Co-location of TAFE Gippsland, Gippsland Tech School, Latrobe City's Kernot Hall, along with construction of new Innovation Centre built and operated by Federation University.

- Construction underway, completion due 2020



Gippsland Hi-Tech Precinct artist impression

Delivered

Tourism growth plan

Destination Gippsland leading development of a 10-year Destination Management Plan which is a blueprint to grow the visitor economy.

- New Gippsland brand launched March 2019
- Destination Management Plan launched September 2019
- New consumer and industry websites developed
- Working collaboratively with local councils and key stakeholders to grow a vibrant and coordinated calendar of events

In progress

Latrobe Gov Hub

More jobs are coming to the Latrobe Valley with a dedicated government hub to provide a base for up to 300 staff, including 200 public sector employees.

- Construction underway
- New jobs advertised at www.careers.vic.gov.au



Latrobe Gov Hub artist impression

Creating jobs in Latrobe Valley

The creation of meaningful and sustainable jobs in the Latrobe Valley region is a major focus of the Latrobe Valley Authority.

The role of government is important, in directly creating jobs, but also making sure the Latrobe Valley is an attractive and thriving place to do business.

We need jobs that are secure, sustainable, and of high quality, which is why the Victorian Government is addressing job creation in a holistic way:



1.

Major projects

More than \$1 billion of investment in major projects underway, including major sports facilities – Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre, Traralgon Sports Stadium, and Ted Summerton Reserve; as well as the Gippsland Hi Tech Precinct, GovHub and upgrades to the Gippsland rail line.

The construction jobs associated with these projects gives an important boost to our economy and creates immediate and ongoing jobs.



2.

Business support

Business concierges are now based in all local council offices and at LVA to assist businesses to navigate the range of services and support available to them.

Businesses can also access funding to reimburse government fees and charges when they expand or establish in the Latrobe Valley region – to date this fund has supported 140 projects totalling more than \$6.9 million.

The Back to Work Scheme has assisted employers to hire and train 1245 local unemployed people.



3.

Buying local

GROW Gippsland is working directly with 68 local businesses to shift more of their spending to local businesses, employ more people with barriers to work, and supporting investment opportunities.

Economic modelling shows that a 10% shift from non-local to local spend will generate approximately 4200 more jobs in Gippsland.



4.

Future industries

Developing competitive advantages in our growth sectors, including agriculture, new energy, health and tourism through Smart Specialisation.

Supporting students to gain exposure and experience in these industries.

This will become a greater focus in 2020 and beyond.



5.

Worker readiness

Skilling up the region's current and future workforce so they can seize job opportunities is key.

Building skills of local people will enable long term investment and growth in Latrobe Valley.

More than

2,500 jobs

are being directly created by programs and initiatives led by Latrobe Valley Authority and Regional Development Victoria since 2016, with many more indirectly benefiting from employment through LVA's broader work supporting the growth of the Latrobe Valley region economy.

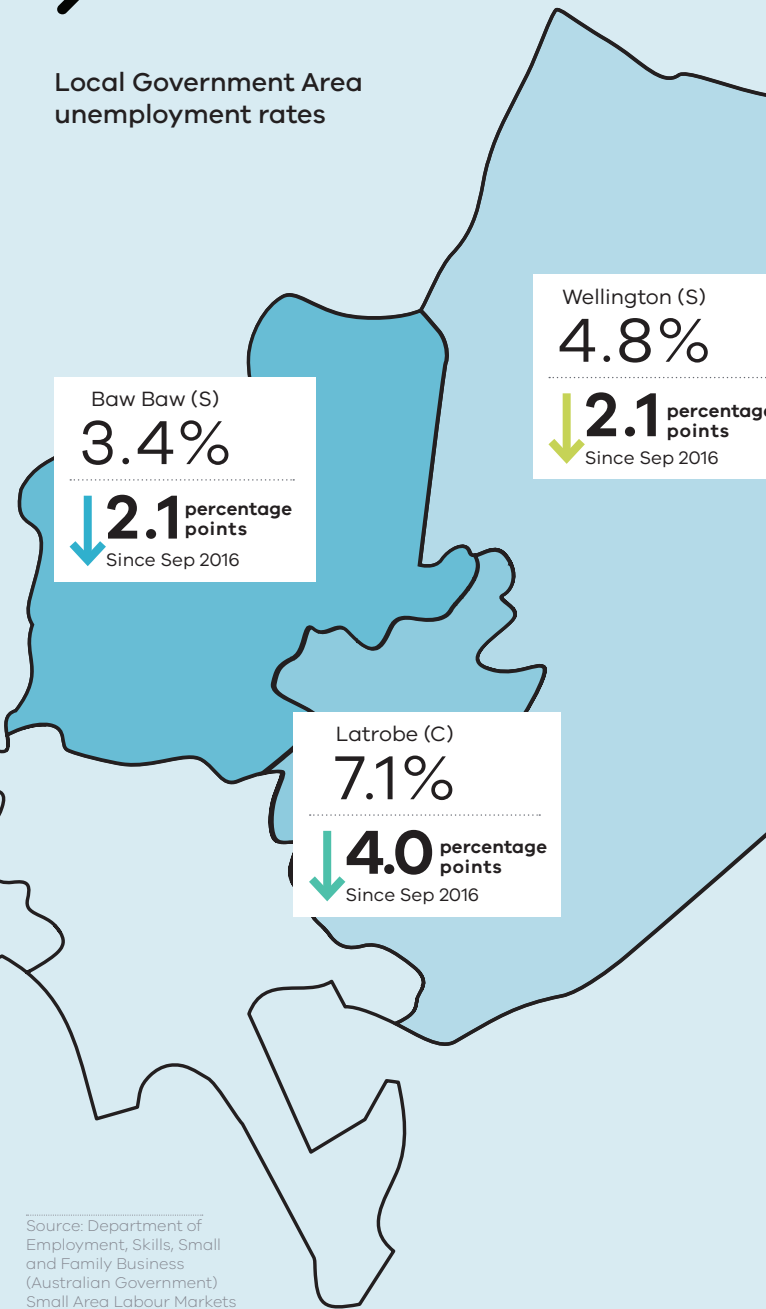
Current employment data



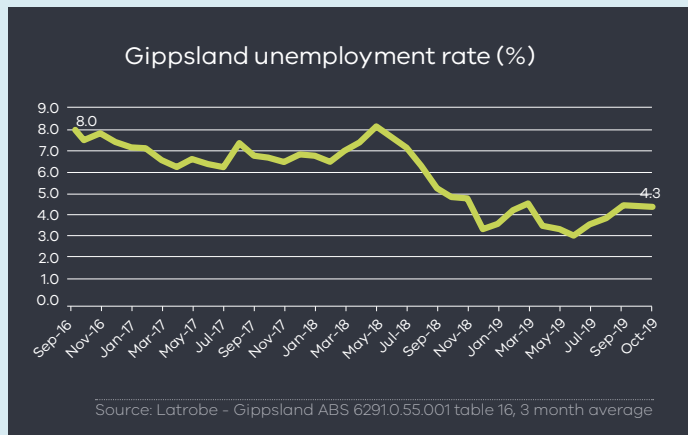
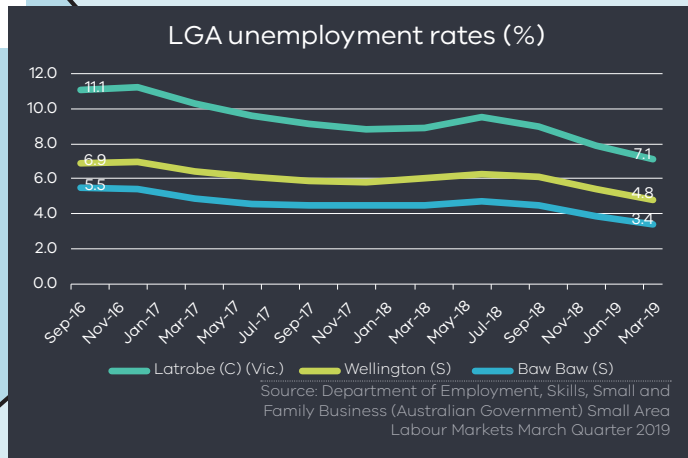
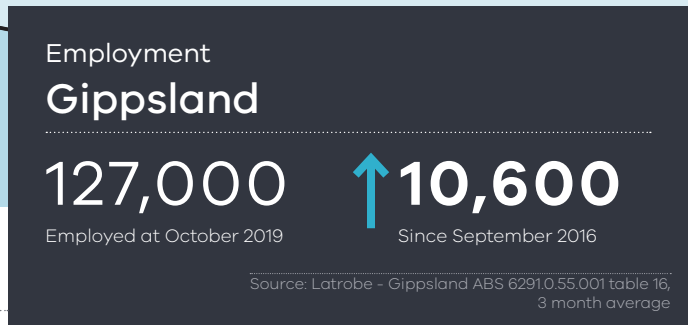
Job creation is the result of many factors and is influenced by government and private sector investment as well as wider industry changes.

The overall trend from both a Gippsland-wide and Latrobe Valley perspective indicates consistently that the regional economy has been resilient following the closure of Hazelwood power station, providing a strong basis for future growth and improvement.

Local Government Area unemployment rates



Source: Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business (Australian Government) Small Area Labour Markets March Quarter 2019



Making a real difference

A few examples of how a coordinated approach is making a difference on the ground in the Latrobe Valley region.



Outcomes focussed

Energy upgrades to lower bills

Mum of two Rebecca recently received energy efficiency upgrades to her home including a new reverse cycle air conditioner and insulation thanks to the Latrobe Valley Home Energy Upgrade Program.

Rebecca said before the upgrades her family experienced a very hot house in summer and cold house in winter, with high electricity bills.



"Our house is much more climate friendly now, we were very lucky that the air conditioner went in at the very start of the 40 degree week," said Rebecca. "Hills Energy installed it in a three day period before the 40 degree days started, so with a little girl it was very nice and comfortable."

Action orientated

Linking people with jobs

LVA is coordinating a series of workforce attraction programs in partnership with local organisations and education providers to link local people with jobs in growth sectors.

Brendan

Brendan wanted a change of direction after being made redundant from Carter Holt Harvey's Morwell mill in September 2017, following 14 years of service as an operator.

He wanted a job that was not so physically demanding, and felt a career in the growing local health sector would provide him with job security into the future.

Brendan is now working as an assistant at Maryvale Private Hospital, after participating in a health taster course and completing a Certificate III Health Service Assistance through Chisholm Institute in partnership with Central Gippsland Health and Noweyung.

David

After being made redundant, David participated in a free taster course giving him insight into working in the disability sector to determine if it was a good fit for him.

The course, delivered in partnership with Community College Gippsland, included placement at local disability organisations, where David was able to build relationships with local employers and set himself up for his new role at SASI (Statewide Autistic Services Inc) in Newborough.

David says the course gave him a chance to discover a new and rewarding career path that he wouldn't have considered otherwise.

Coordinated effort

Community halls band together

A recent sold out Beatles Spectacular event held at Heyfield Memorial, Bundalagwah and Newry Halls affirmed the region's ability to attract high profile performances and events and gave local organisers confidence that working together is a win-win for everyone.

The three halls have been successful in receiving a combined total of more than \$500,000 funding from LVA's Community and Facility Fund to upgrade acoustics and undergo major refurbishments, enabling them to host both local functions and large scale events and performances.



Valley Court Laundry accessing new markets

From initial uncertainty when Hazelwood Power Station closed - their major source of work - Valley Court Laundry has transformed their business to enable them to access new markets in the aged care and health industry.

The business, which has operated in Morwell since 1993, initially participated in the Supply Chain Transition Program, identifying an opportunity to supply flatwork linen processing to service local hospitals, hospitality and aged care facilities.

With further support from the Economic Facilitation Fund to purchase new machines, the company has been able to quadruple their output and retain their existing workforce of 10, as well as add another 15 jobs over the next three years.



Locally owned ideas

Growing new energy

Alternate Energy Innovations in Morwell have received funding from the LVA's Latrobe Valley New Energy Jobs Fund to develop equipment for wind turbine tower manufacturing and installation of a training and demonstration turbine. A locally manufactured Safetech Pty Ltd crane has already been installed at their Saskia Way workshop as part of the project.



Genuine partnership

Supporting young people

21 year old Leticia participated in the Ladder Step Up Latrobe Valley program, gaining the confidence through relationships with others in the program and with her mentor Gabrielle to secure employment at Latrobe Regional Hospital in the food services department.



Focus on driving a future for everyone

Whilst delivering whole-of-community programs, the LVA has also been focussed on identifying individuals and groups that require specific support to ensure they benefit from the region's economic growth.

Helping local Aboriginal businesses

GROW Gippsland has a focus on retaining spending in Gippsland and supporting inclusive employment, providing resources and support for participating businesses to help them employ more people who face barriers accessing the workforce.

GROW Gippsland is working collaboratively with Aboriginal business support organisations to increase visibility and capacity of Aboriginal business across Gippsland in line with the Victorian Government's Social Procurement Framework and the *Tharamba Bugheen: Aboriginal Business Strategy 2017-21*.

The GROW platform assists these businesses to connect to contracts in state and local government and industry including on major projects.

As part of this work:

- 13 additional Aboriginal businesses have been identified
- Three businesses have featured in marketing profiles;
- Aboriginal businesses have been supported to register on ICN Gateway and Gippsland Business Connect platforms to increase their exposure to new contracts
- Five businesses have become GROW Compact members
- 10 businesses participated in a network event in preparation for the Avon River bridge upgrade contracts
- Traditional Owners are involved in delivering cultural awareness training to GROW compact members, and
- Aboriginal businesses involved in GROW are supporting other local businesses in providing cultural safety and inclusion training to assist their employment of Aboriginal people.



Members of the GROW Gippsland compact participating in cultural awareness training with local Traditional Owners

Recognising individual skills

In 2018, LVA supported local Aboriginal community organisation employees and volunteers to obtain Certificate IV in Community Services qualification, delivered by TAFE Gippsland, providing a formal recognition of their experience and a pathway to future employment.

Work is currently underway to identify ways to better support those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who face barriers entering the workforce. A trial program, GROW people, is working with employers and the individual to overcome common issues.

The Ladder Step Up Latrobe program is working specifically with young people at risk of disengagement in education and the workforce, providing individual support and community mentors to help them identify their goals, build skills and re-engage with education or the workforce.

Access for all

The LVA's Community and Facility Fund has had a strong focus on supporting community groups to foster inclusiveness amongst their members and improve accessibility to their facilities for all. Sixty projects from the fund, valued at \$10.5 million, have involved works to renovate buildings to improve disability access.

Some examples of funded projects focussed on inclusiveness include:

- Noel Yarram Community Golf and fishing day - aimed at fostering relationships between Aboriginal community members and health and community organisations with the aim of improving communication of health messages.
- The Gathering Place in Morwell - funded to improve their play and kitchen spaces.
- Gippsland Australia Muslim Festival of Cricket - an event to bring local cricket teams together including the police and women's teams to celebrate food and culture.
- Maltese Community's Museum - to transform the derelict former Pigeon Club building into a smart, modern community museum for the display of Maltese community artefacts and gatherings.
- Improvements and/or additions to disability access at facilities including Warragul CWA, Trafalgar Golf Club, Moe Botanic Gardens Play Space, Gippsland Ranges Roller Derby, VRI Hall Traralgon, Budgeree Hall, Heyfield Bowls Club and Sale Memorial Hall to name a few.

Local and global connections



As we work towards local solutions in Latrobe Valley, there are many other regions responding to a significant change in their economy and community elsewhere in Australia and around the world.

In particular, the challenges of transitioning to a low carbon economy and taking action on climate change are being confronted by many regional areas.

By connecting with other regions, LVA is sharing what we have learnt, and learning from elsewhere for our mutual benefit.

Though the challenges and circumstances may be different, there is broad agreement that the most important elements to enable successful and sustainable transition in regional areas are:

- Collaboration and innovation across industry sectors and between organisations who are delivering services
- Ensuring solutions and decisions are community-driven
- Building capacity locally in both people and facilities, and
- Promoting engagement and participation of local people.



Hunter Valley, NSW

The Hunter Valley has long been the main power generation contributor in New South Wales through brown coal. With Liddell and Bayswater power stations currently due to close by 2022 and 2035, the community and government are looking at ways to transition the community, workers and industry and diversify to new energy markets.



Collie region, WA

With the partial retirement of Synergy's Muja Power Station from October 2022, the Western Australian government is working to diversify the economy of coal mining town Collie. The Collie Futures Economic Advisory Group has been appointed to identify, consider and recommend worthwhile projects in order to create new jobs in a variety of industries and ensure ongoing security of the region.



Regional Queensland

The Communities in Transition Pilot program aims to unlock the economic, social and environmental potential of regional Queensland, particularly in areas such as agricultural technology, water for the future, waste composting and biofuels, food-based tourism and clean food production. The Clean Growth Choices consortium is working with local communities to design roadmaps and business cases to attract investment that help these communities shift towards a more resilient future.

Latrobe Valley on the world stage

Latrobe Valley is the first region in Australia to formally apply the Smart Specialisation method which is assisting to profile the region and progress towards transition on an international stage.



The Netherlands

Through the Smart Specialisation process and the identification of our region's competitive advantages, Gippsland industry representatives visited world leading agriculture and new energy precincts in the Netherlands, developing strong links for future opportunities between both countries.



Midlands region, Ireland

The Ireland midlands region is transitioning away from peat-fired energy production towards renewable energy sources, which will impact Bord na Móna peat company workers and the broader community. The Irish government is working on a comprehensive, all of government response to support the region through the transition, including support to retrain and reskill workers, bog restoration and rehabilitation, group housing energy efficiency upgrades, and the appointment of a Just Transition Commissioner.

Next steps for transition



The LVA is now focussed on building on existing work and momentum. Focus is on investing in the long-term prosperity of the region and providing more jobs and opportunities to ensure no one in the community is left behind for the next stages of transition.

This includes working collaboratively with government, business, education and community sectors to develop long term growth strategies, particularly in key growth sectors and focussed on areas of strength.

We will continue to support the transition of the region as required, supporting workers and their families to plan and work towards their future goals.

We will focus on:

- Actions not plans, with innovation a priority
- Using the best ideas from elsewhere and adapting them to suit our needs
- Working collaboratively with our partners for whole-of-community benefit
- Providing long term commitment to secure the future of the region.

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to the many hard working partners in the Latrobe Valley region we've had the pleasure of collaborating with since Latrobe Valley Authority's establishment.

This work relies on the expertise of many. Our partners continue to demonstrate a willing and open approach to new ideas for the greater shared benefit of the local community. Without this the work would not be possible.

Also thanks to the team of staff at Latrobe Valley Authority for their continued dedication and commitment to this important work to secure the future of the region.





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