



REGIONS RISING VICTORIA

4 JULY 2023 | GMHBA STADIUM | GEELONG



ABOUT THE REGIONAL AUSTRALIA INSTITUTE

The Regional Australia Institute (RAI) is the nation's first and only independent think-tank dedicated to empowering Australia's regions.

We are a not-for-profit organisation that undertakes research to stimulate and activate our rural and regional communities.

RAI celebrated 10 years in 2021. We are proud of the vast array of research, data, and detailed insights the RAI has provided into many of the significant issues and challenges facing regional Australia.

The work of the Institute is made possible through research partnerships with federal and state governments, the national Regions Rising event series, regional consultancy projects, membership, and philanthropic funding.

The RAI exists so that decision-makers at all levels of government, not-for-profits, industry, and community have the information they need to ensure the best outcomes for regional Australia.

By replacing myths and stereotypes with facts and knowledge, the RAI builds bridges between city and country Australians.

We care about the regions, because when our regions are strong, Australia is strong.



REGIONALISATION AMBITION 2032

In September 2022, the RAI launched the Regionalisation Ambition 2032 – A Framework to Rebalance the Nation (the Framework), to help direct the actions of government, industry, and the community to achieve more ambitious and balanced growth across our nation's regions.

By setting the ambition to Rebalance the Nation and see more Australians calling regional Australia home, the RAI is seeking to lead a shift in mindset in how we plan for the nation's future.

The Framework outlines cross-cutting themes, and five pillars with key targets, actions and benefits that will each contribute to building stronger regional communities, and a stronger Australia. The five pillars are:



WHY WAS THE REGIONALISATION AMBITION 2032 CREATED?

Australia has no single national approach which draws together the different themes which play a role in unlocking regional Australia's potential.

While there are various policies and initiatives that address some of the areas across population, jobs and skills, liveability, productivity and innovation, and sustainability and resilience, this Framework is designed to drive a coordinated effort and holistic view.

It does not seek to replace or replicate the work of other actors, including governments and regional organisations, rather uniting activities under a national effort with common goals and targets to inspire further collaborative action.

HOW HAVE REGIONAL COMMUNITIES CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONALISATION AMBITION 2032?

The Ambition and the initial regionalisation consultation paper was informed by over 10 years of research on regional Australia conducted by the RAI.

Over the course of 2021 and 2022, more than 2,000 people were consulted. This included 110 organisations, more than 500 individuals through an online survey, as well as regional voices from councils, regional development organisations and businesses.

Other critical voices included the members of the Regional Activators Alliance, a group of local government, regional development organisations and businesses, and the Regional Australia Council, a group of 18 leading organisations with a presence in the regions.

HOW CAN PEOPLE SUPPORT THE REGIONALISATION AMBITION 2032?

Organisations are encouraged to show their support by making pledges.

A pledge is a commitment to an action or activity that will help achieve one or more of the targets in the Framework. Each pledge is measurable but can be achieved at any time during the 10-year Ambition.

Individuals can add their support and get involved at www.rebalancethenation.com.au.

HOW WILL RAI SUPPORT THE REGIONALISATION AMBITION 2032 IN THE FUTURE?

The RAI will continue to lead and champion the Framework and will seek to activate the actions put forward by collaborating with our partners and convening decision-makers where targets and actions are outside of our sphere of influence.

In addition to the ongoing campaign to Rebalance the Nation, the RAI will continue to embed the Framework in our policy, research, consulting, and events, as well as activating the Framework itself at a place-based level by engaging with our regionally based stakeholders.

REBALANCE

THE NATION

PROGRAM

TIME	DURATION	ITEM
8.30 am	30 mins	Registration Opens
9.00 am	5 mins	Welcome and Housekeeping MC: Harrison Tippet, Reporter - ABC Geelong
9.05 am	5 mins	Welcome to Geelong Cr Trent Sullivan, Mayor - City of Geelong Council
9.10 am	5 mins	RAI Chair Welcome Christian Zahra, Chair - The Regional Australia Institute
9.15 am	5 mins	Minister Introduction Christine Couzens MP - State Member for Geelong
9.20 am	20 mins	Keynote Address The Hon. Harriet Shing MLC, Minister for Regional Development
9.40 am	10 mins	Q&A
9.50 am	20 mins	The Regional Australia Institute Address Liz Ritchie, CEO – The Regional Australia Institute
10.10 am	10 mins	Q&A
10.20 am	20 mins	MORNING TEA
10.40 am	50 mins	Panel 1 – Regional Partnerships <i>Facilitator: Harrison Tippet, Reporter, ABC Geelong</i> Michael Johnston, CEO - Committee for Geelong Giulia Baggio, CEO - G21-Geelong Region Alliance Cr Mary-Ann Brown, Chair - Rural Councils Victoria Cr Trent Sullivan, Mayor - City of Geelong Council and Regional Capitals VIC Anthony Schinck, Acting CEO - Regional Development Victoria
11.30 am	50 mins	Panel 2 – Liveability <i>Facilitator: Linda Nieuwenhuizen, CEO - Committee for Shepparton</i> Dr Jonathan Spear, CEO - Infrastructure VIC Hannah Duncan-Jones, Director Local Government and Regional Priorities - Homes Victoria Emily Peel, Head of NBN Local Victoria & Tasmania - nbn co. David Moreland, COO - Avalon Airport
12.20 pm	40 mins	LUNCH
1.00 pm	20 mins	Keynote Address Professor Rebecca Lester, Director, Centre for Regional and Rural Futures - Deakin University
1.20 pm	10 mins	Q&A
1.30 pm	50 mins	Panel 3 – Jobs Jennifer Conley, CEO - Geelong Manufacturing Council Rob Priestly, Director - Gouge Linen and Garment Services Nick Stanley, Founder, Director and Chair - Runway Prof. Tiffany Walsh, Research Director - Hycel
2.20 pm	30 mins	In Conversation with Liz Ritchie, CEO – The Regional Australia Institute Cr Kevin Erwin, Mayor - Northern Grampians Shire Council Dr Sue Barrell AO, Chair - SUPL
2.50 pm	5 mins	Closing Remarks MC: Harrison Tippet, Reporter - ABC Geelong

REGIONS RISING - MC



HARRISON TIPPET
GEELONG REPORTER - ABC MELBOURNE

Harrison Tippet is the Geelong reporter for ABC Melbourne, working and living on Wadawurrung Country. He has worked in community and regional newspapers since 2012, including as a senior reporter at the Geelong Advertiser before moving to the national broadcaster. Harrison has won numerous awards for his reporting on various regional issues.

FACILITATORS & INTRODUCTIONS



LINDA NIEUWENHUIZEN
CEO - COMMITTEE FOR SHEPPARTON

Linda Nieuwenhuizen commenced as CEO of the Committee for Greater Shepparton in February 2022.

Linda moved to Melbourne in 1990 for university and started her career with Australian Wheat Board as an economist working in on a wide range of international trade and domestic policy issues. The desire to travel saw Linda relocate to the UK working in financial services with Zurich International. Linda returned to Melbourne in 2000 where she took on roles with South East Water and then with CPA Australia in its policy and advocacy areas in tax, corporate governance and corporate social responsibility.

In 2007, Linda, her husband Paul and their pre-school children relocated to Shepparton to be closer to Linda's family's dairy farms at Boosey, and Linda took on a Senior Communications and Stakeholder Relations roles with Goulburn Murray Water, Manager of Governance and Communications with Moira Shire Council, and most recently was Head of Communications and Future Business with Apple and Pear Australia. In 2016, Linda was appointed to the Board of Goulburn Valley Water and is currently the deputy Chair.

Linda has a Bachelor of Commerce (Economics) from University of Melbourne, Graduate Diplomas in Agribusiness (Monash University) and Corporations and Securities Law (University of Melbourne) and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Fairley Leadership Program (2014) and International Association of Public Participation (IAP2).

Linda is passionate about the careers, opportunities and ongoing innovation within Australian agriculture, and the dynamic, progressive and resilient regional communities, businesses and economies they create.



CHRISTIAN ZAHRA
CHAIR - REGIONAL AUSTRALIA INSTITUTE

Christian Zahra AM FACID is Principal of specialist policy and strategy consulting firm, Impact Partners Australia. He has served on the Board of the Regional Australia Institute (RAI) since its inception in 2011 and was appointed Chair in 2021.

Christian grew up in the Latrobe Valley in Eastern Victoria, represented a Gippsland electorate in federal parliament and now lives with his family in Central Victoria.

He has been the Chairman of the Federal Government's one-billion-dollar Regional Development Australia Fund Advisory Panel and also served on the Ministerial Advisory Council on Regional Australia.

Christian has been the Chief Executive of major regional indigenous organisations and is currently a non-executive director of one such organisation based in Western Australia's Kimberley.

In June 2018, Christian was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for "significant service to rural and regional development, to the advancement of Indigenous welfare, and to the Australian Parliament".



CHRISTINE COUZENS MP
STATE MEMBER FOR GEELONG

Christine Couzens grew up in public housing in the northern Geelong suburb of Corio, giving her firsthand experience of the impact government can have on people's lives and a lifelong desire to fight for the most vulnerable. She has worked with homeless young people, assisted in the public housing sector, and represented people on consumer law issues. Christine has also previously served as the President of the Geelong Trades Hall and worked with former Geelong MP, Ian Tresize, who served in the Bracks and Brumby Governments. She was elected to the Victorian Parliament in 2014 and is also the Victorian Ambassador for Closing the Gap.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



THE HON. HARRIET SHING MLC

MINISTER FOR WATER, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
EQUALITY AND COMMONWEALTH GAMES LEGACY

Harriet Shing was first elected as Member for Eastern Victoria in 2014 and has since been honoured to represent this diverse and wonderful region in the Victorian Legislative Council.

Harriet was sworn in as Minister for Water, Regional Development, and Equality in June 2022, then Commonwealth Games Legacy in December the same year.

Harriet has previously served as the Parliamentary Secretary for Creative Industries, Digital Government, Equality, Water, Emergency Services, and Mental Health.

Until she was elected to the Upper House, Harriet worked as a senior policy advisor, lawyer and industrial relations specialist in the Victorian private, public, and not-for-profit sectors.

An experienced negotiator and advocate, Harriet has worked extensively in industrial relations, employment and discrimination law and dispute resolution at state and federal levels and served as a trustee director on the board of industry superannuation fund Vision Super.

As a Labor Member for Eastern Victoria, Harriet is particularly committed to identifying and enhancing opportunities that will enable communities throughout the region to thrive.

Harriet previously lived in Morwell, with a very lazy ex-racing greyhound and whippet. This gives Harriet a unique insight into the vast differences of the many communities that make up the Eastern Victoria region.



LIZ RITCHIE

CEO - REGIONAL AUSTRALIA INSTITUTE

As the CEO of the Regional Australia Institute, Liz Ritchie's primary goal is to make a difference through providing leadership and vision for a better future – a future that recognises regional Australia in a new light.

For over 20 years, Liz has worked across the corporate, government and the not-for-profit sector, and she specialises in leading organisational transformation to build a sustainable future. Liz is a change agent, a marketer, a researcher and an extremely passionate advocate for regional Australia, hailing from Deniliquin, NSW.

Liz understand the issues and opportunities impacting regional Australia, and is dedicated to reforming our regional economies - as well as changing the narrative to entice more Australians to live, work and invest in regional Australia through the Move to More national campaign.



PROF. REBECCA LESTER

DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR REGIONAL AND RURAL FUTURES - DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

Professor Rebecca Lester is the Director of Deakin's Centre for Regional and Rural Futures. Rebecca's scientific background is in the management of aquatic ecosystems, including the intersection with ecology, hydrology and related disciplines, and the social and economic impacts of natural resource management. She specialises in synthesising knowledge across disciplines, types of responses and in space and time, including developing predictive models.

She is passionate about regional development, particularly in Victoria and, is the lead Knowledge-broker for the Victorian Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS PANEL



MICHAEL JOHNSTON
CEO - COMMITTEE FOR GEELONG

Michael Johnston the Committee for Geelong as CEO in February 2023, bringing over a decade's experience in senior leadership roles in the federal government and not-for-profit sectors. Michael most recently served as Chief Strategy Officer and General Counsel with Hockey Australia, including a 6-month period as Interim CEO. Prior to this, Michael spent an extended period with the Australian Sports Commission, having commenced his career with Coulter Legal in Geelong.

Michael is on the Geelong Football Club Corporate Governance Committee and is a non-executive director with sport technology platform, Tidy HQ.



CR MARY-ANN BROWN
CHAIR - RURAL COUNCILS VICTORIA

Cr Mary-Ann Brown has been a partner in a financial services business in Hamilton and a merino sheep stud. She has served in variety of roles, including Chair and committee member of the Western District Health Service, Chair of Dunkeld Community Centre, Councillor, and 3-time Mayor of the Southern Grampians Shire, and is the current Chair of Rural Councils Victoria. Mary-Ann is passionate and committed to promoting rural communities and wants to ensure that all communities have equal access to opportunities and essential services, such as health, digital connectivity, public transport, and housing.



ANTHONY SCHINCK
ACTING CEO, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT VICTORIA

Anthony Schinck is an experienced regional development director, with a passion for public administration. His work has given him strong regional networks and a depth of knowledge about the challenges and opportunities in regional Victoria.

In 2021, Anthony was appointed Executive Director, Regions, at Regional Development Victoria, building on his 6 years as Regional Director for Grampians at the same organisation. He provides inspiring leadership and accountability across regional Victoria.

Anthony previously was the CEO of the City of Ballarat, from 2008-2015, where he has focused on managing sustainable growth, building stronger communities and attracting and delivering major events and projects for Ballarat.



GIULIA BAGGIO
CEO - G21-GEELONG REGION ALLIANCE

Giulia Baggio is CEO of G21 Geelong Region Alliance which represents five municipalities in Victoria's south west (City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast Shire, Golden Plains Shire, Colac Otway Shire and the Borough of Queenscliff.) Through its Board and Pillar Groups, G21 identifies regional projects and issues, working with state and federal governments to drive planning and investment.

Giulia enjoys working in collaboration across the community to achieve practical outcomes and has worked in government and advocacy organisations over the last 20 years, covering a range of public policy areas including housing and homelessness, climate change and carbon pricing, workplace relations, superannuation and women's financial security.

Prior to this, she enjoyed a career as an ABC news and current affairs journalist, mainly as a political reporter in the Victorian and Canberra press galleries.



CR TRENT SULLIVAN
MAYOR - CITY OF GEELONG COUNCIL AND REGIONAL CAPITALS VIC

Cr Trent Sullivan is skilled in strategy development and implementation, corporate governance and organisational design, stakeholder engagement, financial and project management, and leadership coaching. He has a proven ability to engage diverse stakeholders to deliver strategic objectives and achieve business outcomes through people-led change. Trent's strong communication skills combined with his unwavering commitment to high standards and professional integrity have resulted in a solid track record in achieving positive outcomes within the organisations he's lead throughout his career with budgets exceeding \$600M+ and upwards of 3,000 employees.

LIVEABILITY PANEL



DR JONATHAN SPEAR
CEO - INFRASTRUCTURE VIC

Previously the organisation's Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel, Dr Jonathan Spear has led Infrastructure Victoria's work on Victoria's 30-year infrastructure strategy, research program and provision of independent advice to the Victorian Government.

Before joining Infrastructure Victoria during its establishment in 2015, Jonathan held senior leadership, policy, strategy and legal roles with the Victorian Government Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of Justice, Victoria Police and Slater and Gordon Lawyers.

Jonathan holds a Doctor of Philosophy in History, Executive Master of Public Administration, Master of Laws, Bachelor of Laws (Honours) and Bachelor of Arts (Honours). He is also a legal practitioner, a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Williamson Community Leadership Program, and a director of the Melbourne Forum.



HANNAH DUNCAN-JONES
DIRECTOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGIONAL PRIORITIES - HOMES VICTORIA

Hannah Duncan-Jones is a public policy executive with extensive experience in leading development of complex strategies, plans, and policies. She has a demonstrated ability to lead and develop policy advocacy campaigns supported by a robust knowledge of the political environment.

Hannah has over 20 years of experience in state and local government currently as the Director Policy and Strategy at Local Government Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and previously as Planning and Environment Director at Bass Coast Shire Council. She has demonstrated experience in community consultation in the development of regional and urban planning policies and a strong understanding of the Victorian planning context, demonstrated by participation in the Peri Urban Group of Regional Councils and the Municipal Association of Victoria Planning Committee.

Throughout Hannah's career she has demonstrated a strong commitment to leadership and staff development, recognised through consistent and ongoing career progression.

She is skilled in all facets of project management from inception, approval, planning, monitoring, implementing to reviewing. Hannah has excellent communication skills, with the demonstrated ability to communicate complex issues in a variety of contexts including through presentations, at meetings and utilising written media.



EMILY PEEL
HEAD OF NBN LOCAL VICTORIA & TASMANIA - NBN CO.

Emily Peel has executive level experience in transformational and cultural leadership, communications and stakeholder engagement, business strategy and operations. Her career spans across digital and telecommunications, local, state, and federal governments, law, mining and the resource sectors, including roles in large complex organisations and remote Indigenous communities.



DAVID MORELAND
COO - AVALON AIRPORT

As Chief Operations Officer at Avalon Airport, David Moreland has been an integral part of the leadership team at Avalon since 1993.

David brings extensive commercial, planning and delivery experience to Avalon Airport - Victoria's second international gateway airport, a future multi-modal transport hub, and a state-leading jobs precinct.

A qualified tradesman, with advanced diplomas in both project management OH&S, David is a passionate advocate for the Geelong region as an alumni member of Committee for Geelong's Leadership Program.

JOBS & SKILLS PANEL



JENNIFER CONLEY
CEO - GEELONG MANUFACTURING COUNCIL

Jennifer Conley is an advanced manufacturing advocate with two decades' experience at the intersection of industry, research, and government. She works with companies and organisations to achieve competitive advantage in the global marketplace, champion greater Asia-Australia business and investment, and develop thought leadership campaigns around advanced manufacturing, energy and tax policy, as well as global social issues. She's passionate about building support, capability, and opportunity for Australia's innovative small and medium sized companies.



ROB PRIESTLY
DIRECTOR - GOUGE LINEN AND GARMENT SERVICES

Rob Priestly is a director of Gouge Linen and Garment Services, a former Deputy Mayor of the City of Greater Shepparton, and a former Chair of the Committee for Greater Shepparton.

Gouge has grown from 20 to 420 staff over the past 25 years, from a home base in Mooroopna in regional Victoria, with planning underway for the construction of a new facility in Geelong that will more than double capacity.

Gouge is focused on an inclusive company culture and has been awarded by the Victorian Multicultural Commission for its employment programs for refugee communities.



PROF. TIFFANY WALSH
RESEARCH DIRECTOR - HYCEL

Prof. Tiffany Walsh has over 25 years of post-PhD international research experience in the academic sector, with deep expertise in materials science and the chemistry of materials for sustainability and energy. She is also knowledgeable about catalysis relevant to low-carbon fuel processes and biofuels, interfaces relevant to battery materials, nanomaterials for the renewable energy transition such as in hydrogen production, fuel cell design, and hydrogen storage in nanoporous media. She has expertise in light-weight composites for hydrogen containment and distribution systems, and ceramics and minerals for CCS solutions.

Tiffany is the Director of Research at the Hycel Technology Hub, Deakin University; and Program Coordinator for the mobility theme of the Scaling Green Hydrogen CRC bid.



NICK STANLEY
FOUNDER, DIRECTOR AND CHAIR - RUNWAY

Nick Stanley is a passionate entrepreneur driven by the success of regional startups. Nick's true passion lies in high growth companies, particularly in the tech, startup, and innovation sectors. Nick embarked on his entrepreneurial journey in 2004 and since then has founded or co-founded multiple thriving businesses, including PEPi Systems, Sky Software, Skills Base, Runway, and FitMyCar.

Having successfully led PEPi Systems and Sky Software as CEO and founder, Nick is currently chairperson at FitMyCar, Skills Base, and Runway. Notably, FitMyCar and Skills Base have expanded globally, with a strong presence in the US.

After the exhilarating experience of building Sky Software into one of the largest privately held software companies in regional Australia, Nick sold the company to the Tribal Group in 2014. Subsequently in 2015, he established Runway, a not-for-profit organisation focused on empowering regional entrepreneurs. To date, Runway has supported over 1,000 entrepreneurs in launching or scaling their businesses, generating more than 500 jobs, and contributing over \$150m to the country's GDP.

In recognition of his expertise, Nick was appointed as a panellist and judge for the Global Fintech Competition organised by the UK Department of International Trade in 2021. Additionally, he co-founded the Geelong Angel Investor Network in 2014, served as the founding vice-president of Pivot Summit, and held the position of Chair at ICT Geelong. Outside of his professional endeavours, Nick is happily married and resides in Geelong, with his wife and three children.

IN CONVERSATION WITH



CR KEVIN ERWIN
MAYOR - NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Cr Kevin Erwin is Northern Grampians Shire Council's longest serving councillor and represents the Central Ward.

Following on from his initial appointment, Kevin was re-elected to council in 2005, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020, and has served as mayor five times; 2005-06, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2013-14, 2018-19 and is currently serving his sixth term 2022-23.

The Mayor Emeritus Award was conferred on Kevin by the Municipal Association of Victoria on 27 October 2011, after he had served three consecutive mayoral terms.

Kevin farmed the land of the Central Ward before retiring to live in Stawell. He is passionate about his local community and represents and volunteers on many community organisations.

He is the Chairperson of the Grampians Grape Escape Festival and a past CFA Board member. Kevin is also the state government appointee to the Grampians Central West Waste and Resource Recovery Group Board.



DR SUE BARRELL AO
CHAIR - STAWELL UNDERGROUND PHYSICS LABORATORY (SUPL) LTD

Dr Sue Barrell AO is the Chair of Stawell Underground Physics Laboratory (SUPL) Ltd, a unique experimental facility located one kilometre underground, deep under solid rock in the Stawell Gold Mine. SUPL Ltd comprises four university members (Australian National University, University of Melbourne, University of Adelaide, and Swinburne University of Technology) and ANSTO (Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation) and is working closely with Stawell Gold Mine and the Northern Grampians Shire Council to ensure the laboratory can deliver world-leading science, including solving one of the biggest mysteries of the universe, the detection of dark matter. SUPL is connected to other such laboratories worldwide and hopes to generate excitement about STEM (and hopefully jobs!) in regional Australia and to inspire a new generation of scientists through our planned outreach program.

Sue is a highly accomplished executive, science leader, independent chair and director, committed to delivering highly valued outcomes for society and the environment through the application of science, technology and data.

Following a 38-year career at the Bureau of Meteorology, Sue retired in August 2018 from her final role as the Bureau's Chief Scientist, after a career that spanned forecasting, project management, research, science/climate/data policy and governance roles, to executive roles in information technology, observations and infrastructure, and science and innovation.

Sue continues her commitment to science, research infrastructure, leadership, diversity and gender equity through national and international science leadership, board, council, and advisory roles across the scientific, technology and education sectors. She enjoys the opportunity to share experiences with, mentor and learn from those who are at earlier stages in their journey and is a committed advocate for empowering girls and women to take up science careers and to become confident leaders.

Sue was awarded an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AO) in January 2022.

REGIONS RISING VICTORIA - ATTENDEES

You can view a full list of Regions Rising Victoria attendees [here](#), or by scanning this QR code:



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