"Central Highlands is strategically located, strongly endowed and well positioned to continue to be a major contributor to Victoria and a leading region well into the future."

Four regional priority projects

**Priority Project 1:** Ballarat West Employment Zone (BWEZ) – Stage 1
More Jobs and Competitive Businesses to Support Growth in the Central Highlands Region

**Priority Project 2:** Beaufort and Ararat Bypass Projects – Stage 1
Critical Need for a Full Study to Determine Final Beaufort and Ararat Bypass Routes

**Priority Project 3:** Goldfields Heritage Region – Stage 1
Enhancing Victoria’s Goldfields Heritage Streetscapes

**Priority Project 4:** Regional Mining Industry Fly In Fly Out (FIFO) Project
Mining in Stawell – Industry Development Opportunity
Message from Central Highlands Councils' Chair

Central Highlands Councils has been working together for several years including the implementation of the Central Highlands Regional Strategic Plan.

The scope of the Plan is to drive change across the region. Articulating what is important to the region to progress this change is a key focus for Central Highlands Councils. After a strategic review, Central Highlands Councils has assessed four priority projects for the region which will form the primary focus for the group in 2012/13.

These projects all highlight the theme of “People, Places, Productivity.”

Central Highlands Councils will be presenting the business cases for these priority projects to State and Federal Government with the aim to strongly advocate for funding support and recognition as vital to the region’s prosperity, economic development and sustainable growth.

Warm regards,

Cr Mark Harris, Chair, Central Highlands Councils
Mayor of Ballarat City Council

Delivering for People, Places and Productivity
- Overview of four regional priority projects

In 2012/13, Central Highlands Councils has assessed four priority projects for the region. These projects are outlined in more detail in project information sheets included with this overview document. These priority projects will be presented to State and Federal Government for funding support and recognition.

Priority Project 1: Ballarat West Employment Zone (BWEZ) – Stage 1

More Jobs and Competitive Businesses to Support Growth in the Central Highlands Region

Linked to Central Highlands Regional Strategic Plan through Strategic Direction “Plan for Growth.”

Fast facts:
Stage 1 ready to proceed – project aimed at securing anchor tenants with limited 20-30ha plus freight hub land release planned. Over the life of the project it is projected to deliver:

- 10,000 ongoing jobs
- $5B in economic activity
- Annual increase in Ballarat economic activity of $1.5B
- $89M-$123M of offsetting project revenues
- Cost neutral to Government

Central Highlands Councils' Strategic Directions

The following eight Strategic Directions have been endorsed by the Central Highlands Councils in 2012 with strong progress being made in each area. The Strategic Directions are: plan for growth; improve transport infrastructure and services; raise the region’s profile as a tourist and heritage destination; improve access to health and tackle health inequality; utilise the region’s strength in ICT to provide better services to businesses and communities; provide better access to education and training; continue to foster leadership capacity within the region; and productive and resilient landscape management.

Three of the four regional priority projects are aligned to the Regional Strategic Plan and are articulated in the actions within the strategic directions.
Priority Project 2: Beaufort and Ararat Bypass Projects – Stage 1

Critical Need for a Full Study to Determine Final Beaufort and Ararat Bypass Routes

Linked to Central Highlands Regional Strategic Plan through Strategic Direction “Improve transport infrastructure and services.”

**Fast facts:**

- Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of between 2.78-3.0. This is an extremely high ratio. By way of example, the Ballarat Western Link Road Project has a BCR of 1.16 – 1.86 in relation to the Beaufort Bypass where a cost benefit analysis has been completed.
- Net Present Value $89.5m
- First year project benefits 42.6%

**ASK OF GOVERNMENT**

- $2M in 2012/13

Priority Project 4: Regional Mining Industry Fly In Fly Out (FIFO) Project

Mining in Stawell – Industry Development Opportunity

**Fast Facts:**

- Project ready to proceed
- Key environmental assessments completed
- Crocodile mining employs 283 staff and 100 contractors, or around 8% of total employment.
- With an employment multiplier of 1.86 (REPLAN), the 383 employed by the mine supports a further 329 jobs within the local economy.
- Crocodile Mining has extensive mining interests in the Northern Territory and recognises the high quality and highly skilled workforce in Stawell and is contemplating establishing Stawell as a FIFO base to service the NT interests.

**ASK OF GOVERNMENT**

- $26M over 5 years
- Federal Government $10M over 5 years
- State Government $10M over 5 years
- Local Government: $6M

Priority Project 3: Goldfields Heritage Region – Stage 1

Enhancing Victoria’s Goldfields Heritage Streetscapes

Linked to Central Highlands Regional Strategic Plan through Strategic Direction “Raise the region’s profile as a tourist and heritage destination.”

**Fast facts:**

- Heritage region scoping study completed
- Heritage Streetscapes project business case completed
- Evidence of community support
- 13 Municipalities in support
- 2 Regional Development Australia regions in support

**ASK OF GOVERNMENT**

- $0.5M for feasibility study
- $1.5M for initial infrastructure

Local Priority Projects

The Central Highlands Regional Planning Committee has developed a simple framework for articulating the four regional priorities while maintaining alignment with the Central Highlands Regional Strategic Plan and the current Regional Growth Plan development.

Additionally, sitting behind these four Regional Priorities are the Local/Place priorities. These projects are the top priority projects from each council in the Central Highlands Region. These local priority projects provide context for local and place based projects and are of high priority across each member Council.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ararat</th>
<th>Ballarat</th>
<th>Central Goldfields</th>
<th>Golden Plains</th>
<th>Hepburn</th>
<th>Moorabool</th>
<th>Northern Grampians</th>
<th>Pyrenees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra Oval development</td>
<td>Major Events &amp; Entertainment Precinct</td>
<td>Talbot Community Wastewater Scheme</td>
<td>Integrated Community Centre</td>
<td>Flood mitigation works</td>
<td>Indoor Aquatic Centre</td>
<td>Halls Gap Community and Tourism Hub</td>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More detail regarding each Local Priority Project is available on request.
Key Characteristics of the Central Highlands region

The Central Highlands region is home to about 205,000 people with the population growing over the last decade at about 1% per annum. On current growth rates the State Government’s projections indicate that the region’s 2012 population figure will increase by 60,480 people over the period to 2031. Over 31,000 more people will be in Ballarat and some 7,000 to 14,000 in both Golden Plains and Moorabool Shires in 2031.

The major attributes of the Central Highlands region are:

- Sustained population growth
- Located on the east-west transport corridor connecting Melbourne, western Victoria and Adelaide
- Large areas within Melbourne’s peri urban influence and network adjoinig the western metro area, the site of major current and future infrastructure investment and much of Melbourne’s population growth
- The major concentration of Australia’s gold mining heritage
- Victoria’s best developed and integrated regional higher education and training system network
- Regional Victoria’s strongest concentration of IT and computing services and capacity
- Some of Victoria’s most productive soils and quality horticultural growing conditions
- A restructuring economy embracing new opportunities in such areas as IT, advanced manufacturing, education and tourism
- Ballarat - Victoria’s third largest urban area

About Central Highlands Councils

Central Highlands Councils includes the Central Highlands Mayors and CEOs Forum and the Central Highlands Regional Planning Committee. The Councils involved are: Ararat Rural City Council, Ballarat City Council, Central Goldfields Shire Council, Golden Plains Shire Council, Hepburn Shire Council, Moorabool Shire Council, Northern Grampians Shire Council and Pyrenees Shire Council.

The Central Highlands Mayors and CEOs Forum retains primary responsibility for strategic oversight of the emerging issues and priorities for the region. This includes the ongoing monitoring and review of the implementation of the Central Highlands Regional Strategic Plan.

The Regional Planning Committee co-ordinates the implementation of the Plan on behalf of the Mayors and CEOs Forum. In particular, it focuses on:

- Co-ordinating the regional planning process;
- Leading the development and review of the Plan in the interests of all municipalities;
- Co-ordinating the identification of initiatives and development of proposals; and
- Ensuring engagement of key strategic stakeholders, such as the Mayors and CEOs Forum, the Grampians Regional Development Australia Committee and the Grampians Regional Management Forum.

For more information about Central Highlands Councils or the Regional Priority Projects please contact the Central Highlands Secretariat:

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