

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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SUPERCHARGING TOURISM IN THE HIGH COUNTRY

The Andrews Labor Government is creating more trails and visitor facilities along the Great River Road in a bid to supercharge tourism and generate more jobs in the High Country.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Bellbridge to announce a \$120,000 grant towards the Lake Hume Masterplan, while viewing progress on the Great River Road project, which has been jointly funded by \$5.3 million from the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments.

The Lake Hume Masterplan will be delivered by Towong Shire Council, with community input to guide a strategy that will attract more visitors to the area by identifying future accommodation options and scenic tours.

Lake Hume is a tourism destination used by locals and visitors for fishing, boating and swimming activities. The Masterplan will support the Towong Shire's tourism industry to bounce back from challenges associated with the Black Summer bushfires and the pandemic.

It will also encourage local food and beverage businesses to invest in new opportunities to stimulate the local economy.

Starting in Bellbridge, the Great River Road project stretches approximately 150 kilometres along the Murray River, showcasing the peaks of the Snowy Mountains all the way to Khancoban in New South Wales with shared trails, picnic areas and artworks for motorists, cyclists and sightseers.

Construction is underway on the project's second stage, backed by \$5 million from the *Local Economic Recovery* program. The second stage includes the Pine Mountain interpretive centre, which will highlight the Indigenous and natural history of the region featuring shelter, seating and picnic areas for visitors.

The project is creating 100 construction jobs in its second stage. The project's first stage was completed in 2019 supported by \$330,000 from the *Regional Infrastructure Fund* for the installation of seating, landscaping, and art pieces based on native animals found in the Upper Murray.

The \$68.6 million *Local Economic Recovery* program is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments to support local projects vital for community recovery, driving economic stimulus and boosting industry and jobs across bushfire-affected regions.

The *Regional Infrastructure Fund* and *Infrastructure Fast Track Fund* are part of the Government's flagship *Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund*, which helps businesses create more jobs, supports community projects and helps councils build the infrastructure locals need. More information is available at rdv.vic.gov.au/rjif.

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"These projects will be a game changer in the region, supporting the community's recovery while creating more jobs and supporting businesses to bounce back."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"We are unlocking the High Country's tourism industry through these two exciting projects to support our local economy and increase the number of visitors to the region."

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