

# Media Release

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



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## BACKING OUR RURAL AND REGIONAL VICTORIAN LEADERS

The Andrews Labor Government is backing the next generation of rural and regional leaders through a new round of the *Regional Community Leadership Program*.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Maryborough alongside a number of female country MPs and Ministers including Gayle Tierney, Maree Edwards, Christine Couzens, Danielle Green, Juliana Addison, and Michaela Settle.

The group announced \$1.8 million for the *Regional Community Leadership Program* to be funded in each of Victoria's nine Regional Partnerships areas.

The program aims to ensure stronger representation of women, Aboriginal leaders, multicultural community members and people living with a disability.

LEAD Loddon Murray is one of the groups to receive funding under this program, which will develop and support community leaders through the Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program. It will assist community members to broaden their project management, public speaking, advocacy and collaboration skills.

Since its inception in 1998, the Loddon Murray program has supported more than 500 locals to become stronger community leaders, including Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership member and Maryborough resident Jess Kelly.

Jess graduated from the leadership program in 2019 and is focused on resolving food insecurity in regional Victoria through her work in the Regional Partnership.

Jess has further developed her personal skills as a leader in her role of product development manager at True Foods. In addition, she holds a strong passion for improving education and gender equality in leadership, while also encouraging the delivery of more STEM skills across her community.

The *Regional Community Leadership Program* branches out to more than 60 local government areas. The program is part of the Government's almost \$30 billion investment across regional and rural Victoria since 2015.

The nine Regional Community Leadership Programs will be in each of the Regional Partnerships including Barwon, Central Highlands, Gippsland, Goulburn, Great South Coast, Loddon Campaspe, Mallee, Ovens Murray and Wimmera Southern Mallee.

For more information visit [rdv.vic.gov.au/rcldp](https://rdv.vic.gov.au/rcldp)

### Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

*"I'm pleased to support our next generation of future leaders, backing them to take up new opportunities and lead their communities, unlocking more jobs and economic success for regional and rural Victoria."*

*"The Regional Community Leadership program is about building a strong and diverse group of leaders across the state and helping to drive positive change."*

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