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SERVICES FOR RURAL LIVEABILITY

FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

RURAL COUNCILS VICTORIA | AUGUST 2019



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

Rural Councils Victoria (RCV), representing Victoria's rural councils, engaged Urban Enterprise to prepare a *Delivery of Services that Contribute to Liveability* report. The report supports RCV objectives to build capacity in rural areas and identify alternative means by which rural communities can access services that underpin liveability.

In a recent report prepared for RCV, *Population Growth in Rural Victoria: Opportunities and Actions (2018)*, Urban Enterprise identified four main liveability factors which a literature review found to be the greatest influences on the attraction and retention of population in rural and regional areas. These include:

- Lifestyle;
- Economy,
- Environment; and
- Connections.

These factors provide the context for this report. While each factor is critical to population attraction and retention, the **lifestyle** factor is particularly relevant to service delivery in rural areas. The research found that the 'lifestyle offer' of rural areas is particularly important to population attraction and retention, primarily through the provision of and accessibility to education, health, retail and transport services.

This research report seeks to further analyse the importance of these services across rural Victoria, the ways in which service delivery is changing, and innovative and alternative examples of service delivery in areas that may be facing population challenges.

1.2. PROJECT SCOPE

The scope of this report includes non-council services shown in Table 1, under the overarching categories of health, education, retail and public transport.

The study seeks to better understand the factors which influence both the demand for and supply of the services. Given the breadth of services considered, not all individual services are analysed in detail – rather, the research seeks to understand how service delivery is changing, quantify which services are considered most important to rural residents in terms of liveability, and provide direction to those consulted on the project on the general services that are within the scope of the project.

T1. SCOPE OF SERVICES

Health	Education	Retail/Finance	Public Transport
Hospital/Medical Centres;	Kindergarten ¹	Supermarkets	Buses
Primary Health	Primary School	Other Retail Shops	V/line Trains
Allied Health	Secondary School	Banking	
Pharmacy	Tertiary (inc. TAFE)	Post Office	

¹ Although Kindergarten (and childcare) are, in some instances delivered by Council, funding is provided through a mix of State and Federal Government.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

The following methodology was employed for this study:

- A literature review into rural service provision issues, covering state, national and international literature. This includes an overview of the key challenges, themes and case study examples for rural service provision;
- Primary research surveys of rural residents to obtain evidence and more nuanced information about how and where people currently access services, as well as trends in service provision and demand for services in Rural Victoria;
- Consultation with rural Councils and industry stakeholders to identify the importance of service provision to rural areas, key issues and opportunities, as well as any alternate models being considered/employed at the local level;
- Analysis of relevant case studies identified by stakeholders, to identify common success factors and best practice principles that could be applied to Rural Victoria; and
- Recommendations on the most effective approach for improved service delivery across Rural Victoria.

2. PROJECT CONTEXT

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This section provides context for the project, including the study area as well as important information relating to Rural Victoria, such as:

- Population profile;
- Challenges for the delivery and quality of services; and
- The role of key stakeholders (RCV and Local Governments) in influencing service provision.

2.2. RURAL VICTORIA

2.2.1. STUDY AREA

Within Victoria, there are 37 municipalities classified as 'rural' that are member councils of RCV. Each municipality is included within one of the nine Regional Partnerships established by the Victorian Government². The Regional Partnership program recognises that local communities are in the best position to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by their region.

The rural councils – and corresponding Regional Partnership areas – are shown in Figure F1 and Table T2. Regional Partnerships can facilitate a co-ordinated approach to regional issues and advocate for funding across the region, hence the research and analysis in this report often refers to challenges and findings at the 'regional' level.

DEFINITIONS

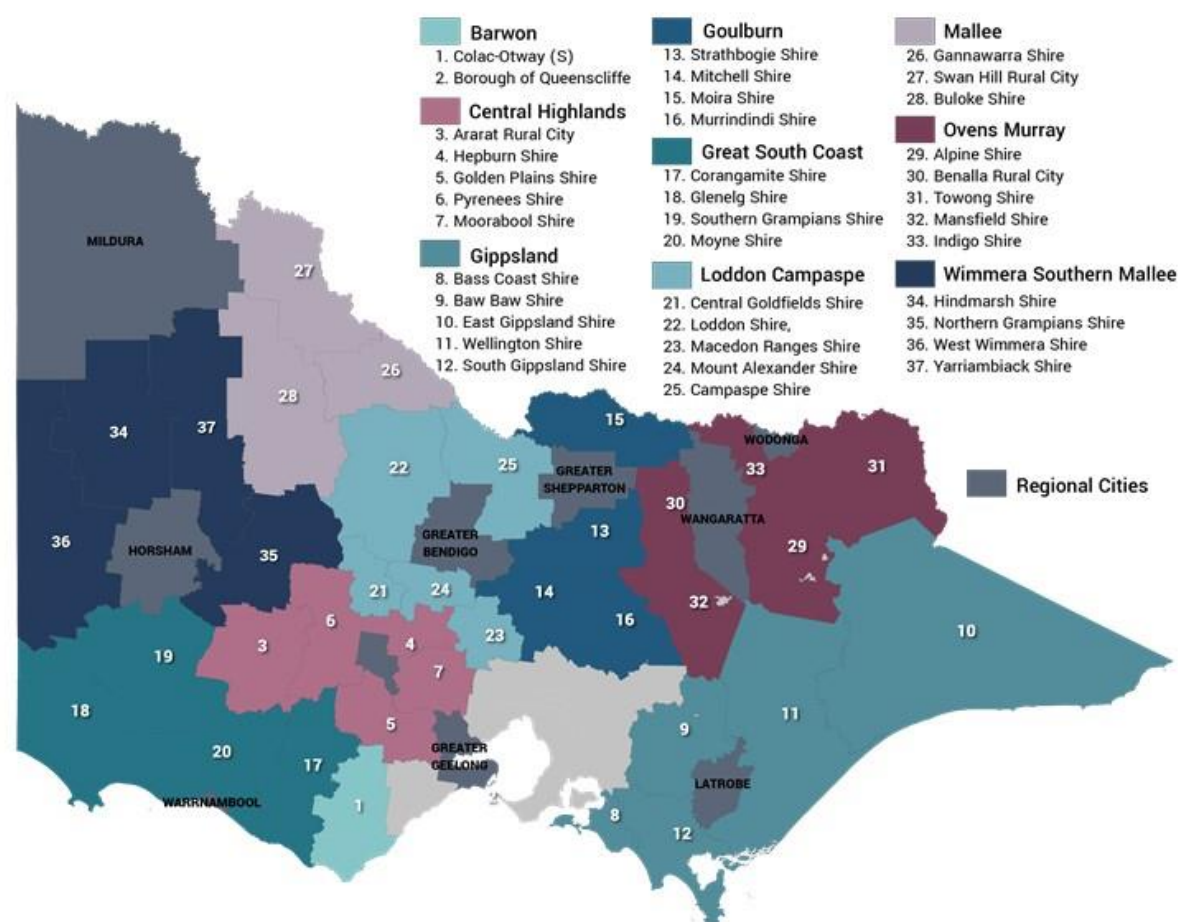
The map below should also be viewed in the context of the following spatial definitions that are referenced throughout the report.

- **Rural Victoria:** This area includes the municipalities of the 37 member councils of RCV as shown in Figure F1.
- **Peri-urban areas:** This area is a sub-set of rural Victoria and includes rural councils which border metropolitan Melbourne or Greater Geelong³; including the Borough of Queenscliffe, Golden Plains Shire, Moorabool Shire, Murrindindi Shire, Baw Baw Shire, South Gippsland Shire and Bass Coast Shire.
- **Regional Victoria:** This includes the ten municipalities outside metropolitan Melbourne with the greatest populations, being Warrnambool City, Horsham Rural City, Mildura Rural City, City of Greater Bendigo, City of Ballarat, City of Greater Geelong, City of Greater Shepparton, Rural City of Wangaratta, Latrobe City and City of Wodonga. These municipalities do not form part of Rural Victoria.
- **Metropolitan Melbourne:** This includes the 31 municipalities within the Melbourne metropolitan area.

² The nine Regional Partnerships are administered by Regional Development Victoria (RDV); Note: Under Regional Development Australia (RDA), there are five regions defined under the *Regional Growth Fund Act (2017)*. However, for the purposes of this report the RDV Regional Partnerships are used as they are a more accurate representation of rural/regional areas.

³ Peri-urban regions are known to generally be quite different to other parts of Rural Victoria, notwithstanding that all peri-urban municipalities contain 'rural areas' as well as townships experiencing a variety of growth rates and pressures.

F1. MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS OF RURAL VICTORIA



Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019

T2. MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS OF RURAL VICTORIA

Regional Partnership	Municipalities
Barwon	Borough of Queenscliffe, Colac Otway Shire
Central Highlands	Ararat Rural City, Golden Plains Shire, Hepburn Shire, Moorabool Shire, Pyrenees Shire
Gippsland	Bass Coast Shire, Baw Baw Shire, East Gippsland Shire, South Gippsland Shire, Wellington Shire
Goulburn	Mitchell Shire, Moira Shire, Murrindindi Shire, Strathbogie Shire
Great South Coast	Corangamite Shire, Glenelg Shire, Moyne Shire, Southern Grampians Shire
Loddon Campaspe	Campaspe Shire, Central Goldfields Shire, Loddon Shire, Macedon Ranges Shire, Mount Alexander Shire
Mallee	Buloke Shire, Gannawarra Shire, Swan Hill Rural City
Ovens Murray	Alpine Shire, Benalla Rural City, Indigo Shire, Mansfield Shire, Towong Shire
Wimmera Southern Mallee	Hindmarsh Shire, Northern Grampians Shire, West Wimmera Shire, Yarriambiack Shire

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019

2.2.2. POPULATION PROFILE

As of 2016, Rural Victoria has a population of 724,000 residents across 37 municipalities, comprising 11.7% of Victoria's total population⁴. However, Rural Victoria is receiving a declining share of the state's population, attracting just 6% of the total population growth between 2006 and 2016 (compared to 86% for Metropolitan Melbourne). Other key demographic indicators of the rural population include⁵:

- All rural regions have experienced a decrease in the number of residents in the family age brackets, which has contributed to an ageing population in recent years;
- Younger people are the largest group of people to leave rural Victoria, with residents aged 20-29 years accounting for 28% of those who moved from rural areas to either metropolitan or regional areas between 2011 and 2016;
- The ageing of the population in rural Victoria is projected to continue with the proportion of people aged over 60 expected to grow from 28% to 33% of the population by 2031. The working age population in rural Victoria is projected to fall from 43% in 2016 to 40% in 2031; and
- The proportion of the population in rural Victoria that will be over the age of 75 is projected to increase from 9% in 2016 to 13% by 2031, with implications for services that contribute to liveability, including health care, education, workforce and housing.

2.2.3. CHALLENGES FOR RURAL VICTORIA

There are several challenges specific to rural communities that influence the delivery and quality of services and infrastructure. A 2018 Parliamentary Inquiry into *sustainability and operational challenges of Victoria's rural and regional councils* identified the common factors that affect the service provision across Rural Victoria, which are summarised (in the context of this project) below:

- **Socio-economic disadvantage.** Disadvantaged individuals and communities have more complex needs, but have a lower level of income, resulting in a decreased capacity to pay for the required services and programs.
- **Age structure.** An ageing population generally has more complex needs, increases the demand for social and health-related services.
- **Population spread.** Population spread can also lead to market failures for private sector providers, leaving a gap in service delivery. As such, some councils are required to deliver services that are delivered by the private sector in other municipalities. Physical isolation for rural councils can also lead to increased need for, and reliance on, support and care services.
- **Remoteness.** Remote communities require duplicate services and community infrastructure across the municipality, which increase strain on public resources. There is also an increased reliance on public transport to ensure more remote communities have access to services.
- **Market failures.** Market failures in regional areas result in councils being required to provide some services that are delivered by private enterprises in metropolitan areas.
- **Staff retention.** Some councils report that their locations make it difficult for them to fill advertised positions and hire professional staff. Staff shortages create gaps in the delivery of services.
- **Capacity to pay.** Lower community income, fewer employment opportunities and higher levels of disadvantage result in populations that have a higher reliance on services, but do not have the capacity or means to pay for them.

These factors present unique challenges for rural communities and councils, which has implications for the liveability of rural communities.

⁴ ABS Regional Growth, 2016

⁵ Urban Enterprise, Population Growth in Rural Victoria: Opportunities and Actions, 2018

2.3. THE ROLE OF RURAL COUNCILS VICTORIA

RCV is the peak body representing and advocating for each of Victoria's 37 rural councils, with the aim of supporting and promoting sustainable, liveable, prosperous rural communities. The organisation's purpose is to:

- Promote a collective voice and to be an avenue of communication and liaison between member councils and State and Federal governments;
- Enable local solutions and facilitate networking, learning, capacity building, and external communication;
- Contribute to the development of evidence-based policy and strategy;
- Build the resilience and capacity of councils to support economic development and increase the sustainability of rural communities, and;
- Develop strategies and initiatives to improve the attraction and retention of residents and businesses to rural areas.

In the context of this project, RCV's can provide information and guidance to member Councils based on the research findings, and advocate to the State and Federal Governments for policy and funding responses to the report findings. RCV does not provide services in rural Victoria.

2.4. THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local Government is the level of government closest to residents and gives people a say in matters affecting their local area, which makes it a key agency of services and support. This is especially the case for rural communities, where local government is often the primary form of representation that can be accessed by residents.

Councils provide a wide variety of services to their municipalities and enforce various federal, state and local laws. Councils have autonomy to provide services that meet the needs of their local community. According to the *Municipal Association of Victoria*, all Victorian councils broadly have similar roles and responsibilities to provide services to its community (see Table T3). The core services provided by Council promotes liveability through improved community wellbeing, safety and engagement.

T3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Service	Children & Families	Health & Wellbeing	Home Services	Sport & Leisure	Roads & Safety	Community
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Childcare• Kindergarten• Maternal and child health• Playgroups• Immunisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disability services• Home maintenance• Home and community care• Food safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning permits• Building permits• Pet registrations• Rubbish	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sportsgrounds• Leisure centres• Parks and gardens• Festivals and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roads and footpaths• Car parks• Street lighting• School crossings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Libraries• Theatre and the arts• Community centres

Source: Municipal Association of Victoria, 2019; Note: the list is not exhaustive of all Council duties.

Although Councils play a critical role in contributing to the liveability of rural areas, local governments have only a limited role in the direct provision of the services within the scope of this research (for example through early childhood education, some health services and some transport services).

The sustainability of rural councils is of key concern to the State and local governments – the Victorian Auditor General along with a range of stakeholders such as RCV have highlighted over past years the financial pressures and structural issues experienced by rural and regional councils.⁶ Faced with these circumstances and the recent introduction of a cap on Council rate revenue increases, the capacity of rural Councils to maintain existing service provision standards to smaller and dispersed populations is under pressure.

⁶ Rural and Regional Councils Sustainability Reform Program, KPMG, December 2017.

The services within the scope of this research are primarily delivered by State government, institutions and the private sector. The ability of Councils to directly influence the delivery of these services is therefore limited, however there are several examples of Councils supporting alternative service delivery models in the state that are outlined in this report.

2.5. KEY POINTS

Rural councils and communities face specific – yet common – challenges to service delivery, impacting on the liveability of residents. These include:

- **Lack of economies of scale and a critical mass creates inefficiencies in service delivery;**
- **Large distances and time required to deliver services;**
- **Lack of competition from private service providers, as well as frequent market failure, increases the cost of some services; and**
- **Difficulties in the recruitment of professional staff and skilled contractors creates jobs and skills shortages, as well as service gaps.**

Importantly, the role of RCV and Local Government is generally limited to a *supporting* or *facilitating* role for services included in project scope, rather than provider/supplier. As a result, a focus on advocacy, funding, research and training is recommended.

3. STRATEGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This section includes a review of relevant literature and strategic priorities for rural areas.

3.2. REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

3.2.1. INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Each rural council in Victoria belongs to a Regional Partnership with specific strategic priorities and priority projects, some of which relate to service provision. Based on Regional Partnership submissions for the 2018-19 Victorian Budget, common priorities for key (non-council) services are summarised below.

- **Health:**
 - Regional Partnership priorities are to promote health and wellbeing for all local communities, as well as to ensure residents have easy access to services.
 - Strengthening prevention measures is a focus for most regions. Five Regional Partnerships (Ovens Murray, Loddon Campaspe, Great South Coast, Goulburn and Central Highlands) included the following priority areas to improve health outcomes: family violence, suicide, mental health and obesity.
- **Education:**
 - A focus within the education sector is on improving the quality of services and infrastructure for childcare as well as higher education (tertiary) institutions. This specifically includes:
 - Improving the learning and development of children in the early years, particularly children from vulnerable families.
 - Large infrastructure investment for several TAFE facilities across Victoria's regions, including Loddon Mallee, Ovens Murray and Gippsland. The investment in TAFE is designed to not only increase the level of educational attainment, but also create employment pathways by providing skills that meets the demands of the future workforce.
- **Public Transport:**
 - A priority across most Regional Partnerships is to increase transport connectivity between rural and regional communities and improve access for residents.
 - To achieve this priority, Councils are seeking government investment to improve transport infrastructure – particularly road and rail networks – as well as an increase in service frequency.
- **Other Priorities:**
 - Other priorities for Regional Partnerships relating to service provision commonly focus on improving community health, wellbeing and engagement, such as:
 - Increasing access to community facilities (e.g. libraries) and programs (e.g. cultural programs, etc.);
 - Investment in renewable energy options; and
 - Improving digital connectivity for residents.
 - Many partnership areas have prioritised the development of the tourism industry – through development of product and infrastructure – to grow and diversify the regional economy.

A detailed list of priorities for each Regional Partnership is shown in **Appendix A**.

3.2.2. INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES

The following provides an analysis of some of the common challenges for Regional Partnership areas and implications for infrastructure, identified through work prepared for Infrastructure Victoria. The analysis is summarised in Table T4 and helps to identify the infrastructure priorities for regional and rural Victoria to more effectively provide key services and improve liveability.

Key points to note include:

- Developing additional or improved infrastructure is a key priority to mitigate some of the challenges to service delivery. Infrastructure requirements range from additional fit-for-purpose facilities to improved transport networks; and
- Development of transport infrastructure and/or alternative transport modes is critical for rural communities to be able to access core services.

T4. REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES AND INDICATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLICATIONS

Challenge	Infrastructure implications
High Unemployment: Some regions are experiencing structural change associated with the decline of the energy and manufacturing industries, which is creating areas of relatively high unemployment.	<u>Education and training</u> facilities, and other infrastructure, can support those transitioning to new sectors.
Agglomeration of services to regional hubs.	Provide fit-for-purpose <u>transport</u> infrastructure to allow access to these services for rural residents.
Population expected to continue to decline and age , particularly in rural areas.	Ageing populations combined with agglomeration of services to regional hubs may warrant investigating alternative delivery models for health service access in rural areas. Options include <u>alternative transport modes</u> (e.g. group transportation) and alternative service delivery models (e.g. <u>remote access services</u> for mental health clients via <u>electronic</u> mediums).
Disadvantaged areas demonstrate poorer social outcomes for population health, crime, early childhood outcomes and drug, alcohol and mental health treatment.	Investigate the adequacy of social infrastructure and services required to assist in addressing disadvantage.
The impacts of climate change represent a risk to social wellbeing and cohesion, including public health from higher temperatures, uncertainty about water resource availability, etc	Land use planning, water and health infrastructure may play a role in reducing the severity of some outcomes.

Source: Aither, *An analysis of regional Victoria's strengths and challenges*, 2019 (prepared for Infrastructure Victoria).

3.3. LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review was conducted into rural service provision, including national and international sources to identify common challenges, opportunities and successful examples of alternative delivery model options for rural areas. Table T5 summarises the key findings from the review across the health, education, retail/finance and public transport sectors.

Further information on the sources used for the literature review is detailed in **Appendix B**. It is noted that much of the literature available relates to areas and towns that are experiencing population stagnation or loss and often in areas with small towns, as opposed to larger rural towns and cities.

T5. LITERATURE REVIEW KEY FINDINGS

Sector	Issues with Service Provision	Opportunities for Improvement	Case study
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery costs of health services to rural areas are high • There is limited accessibility for some health services in rural areas (lack of services, limited connectivity, etc.) • An ageing population is putting a strain on services (increasing demand) • Victorians living in rural areas typically have shorter life expectancy and poorer health outcomes compared to the state average • Population decline in some rural areas means the supply of health services and health professionals is decreasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of mobile services can help overcome some access issues, particularly for rural residents that are unable to travel • Broadening the primary care team to revolve around the GP • <i>'Easy Entry, Gracious Exit'</i> model –Allowing GPs to work in rural areas without having to become business owners or managers (incentivising work in rural Victoria) • Expand the responsibilities of individuals to increase the range of services provided by professionals (e.g. nurses providing prescriptions, etc.) • Technology can be used to improve service delivery, including telehealth services, use of internet for remote information, etc. 	<p>Case Study 1:</p> <p>A study in the USA investigated the implications of delivering mobile dentistry services to a community health centre in rural areas. The study found that hybrid solutions, where care is offered at a mix of fixed and mobile locations, offered the best balance of care (that was also financially sustainable).</p> <p>Case Study 2:</p> <p>A strategy involving 'walk-in-walk-out' arrangements was initiated in rural NSW (Shires of Walgett and Brewarrina) to overcome the barriers known to deter GPs from taking up practice in the area (e.g. focus on clinical care, not on business management). Adoption of the model has resulted in the doubling of the number of GPs in the areas.</p>

Sector	Issues with Service Provision	Opportunities for Improvement	Case study
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural communities exhibit higher rates of absences, lower rates of attainment and lower standards of reading/writing compared to the state average Population decline is leading to teacher shortages and decreases in student population Subsequently, classroom sizes and the number of schools in rural areas are decreasing Increasing travel times (and higher travel costs) to rural schools Lack of services in (and access to) tertiary/higher education facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial and career incentives (e.g. professional development) provided to young teachers to address shortages Consideration of sustainable practices for schools with declining student population, including multi-grade classrooms Shared Services – Utilising school facilities to also serve the community (functions, events, etc) Tailoring the curriculum to suit the needs of the local community (e.g. agriculture, environmental sustainability, etc.) Use of technology to connect remote students and rural schools via videoconferencing to build networks and partnerships 	<p>Case Study 1:</p> <p>An ICT initiative was implemented in Canada in 2002 designed to maintain small schools in remote areas and address student exodus by connecting schools via a videoconferencing system. There are now more than 120 schools using the remote network, with teachers and parents strongly supporting the system.</p>
Retail/Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer demand for physical retail and financial services (in general) has decreased due to the proliferation of online services This is accelerated by the declining population in rural areas (as well as the small catchment areas) Subsequently, there have been cuts to physical banking facilities across rural areas; while the retail sector is declining in some areas, leading to the closure of many independent retailers There is also increased competition from retail & banking in Regional Centres, which generally offer greater access to a broader range of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCV previously identified the following opportunities to improve local business trading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer free Wi-Fi (cafés) to attract customers Share services/office space with Council and other businesses (e.g. for hot-desking, start-ups, etc.) Create an online presence Capitalise on the distinctiveness of rural products and advertising 'localness' in order to attract more trade Increase community and Council involvement, including provision of informal training courses (e.g. business management) for local retailers Provision of shared services to accommodate physical banking facilities (e.g. presence in AusPost) Use of technology to allow online communication/videoconferencing with banking professionals Mobile banking services to provide regular physical access for rural residents 	<p>Case Study 1:</p> <p>Residents of a small town in Devon (UK) helped save the general store from closure by taking over and running the business as a community-wide venture. This involved local residents becoming members of the business (to meet operating costs) and community volunteers running the shop. The business was subsequently saved from closure, with total community membership increasing from 90 to 350</p>

Sector	Issues with Service Provision	Opportunities for Improvement	Case study
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High costs associated with the provision of bus and train services, caused by small population centres (which limits usage) as well as the high geographical dispersion of rural areas • Lack of networks (e.g. stations, stops) limits the dispersion of public transport in rural areas • Lack of access/connectivity for residents reduces access to the public transport network • Where the network does exist, however, the number of services does not meet consumer expectations (both for residents and visitors) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating fixed transport services with other social/community services (e.g. postal service, healthcare providers, etc.) • Consideration of demand responsive (flexible) services during periods of increased demand (e.g. holiday periods) • Community-driven schemes that provide vehicles to rural residents (e.g. car-share services) 	<p>Case Study 1:</p> <p>The “Runaway Bus” model was adopted in Western Australia. It aims to provide affordable, regular inter-regional transport for visitors during the summer school holidays. This involves the use of an inter-regional bus service operating from rural and regional areas of South West Western Australia and leverages existing transport networks in the South West Region to maximise access to the service. The service is still running, having been setup nearly 30 years ago.</p> <p>Case Study 2:</p> <p>Lincolnshire County Council (UK) introduced a localised bus service designed to connect isolated rural areas to the main transport network. The service is driven by local demand, with the needs of the rural communities directing planning. There are local buses running at frequent intervals which are fully accessible to all. In addition to this, passengers can pre-book an auxiliary service, which will collect them at a convenient location and bring them to a point where they can access other transport.</p>

3.4. EXISTING GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

The Federal and State governments currently offer a range of programs, grants and funding which seeks to address the challenges to service delivery in rural Victoria and Australia. Examples include:

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL

- **Stronger Rural Health Strategy**, including programs for teaching, training and recruitment of health professionals in rural and remote areas.
- **Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF)**. The BBRF supports the Australian Government's commitment to create jobs, drive economic growth and build stronger regional communities into the future. A further \$200 million in funding is anticipated to become available in the second half of 2019.
- **Regional Employment Trials**. The Regional Employment Trials program provides local stakeholders in selected regions, including businesses, not-for-profits and local government agencies, with grants to trial local approaches to delivering employment related projects.

STATE (VICTORIAN) GOVERNMENT LEVEL

- **Rural Councils Transformation Program**. Supporting new regional service delivery models for Council services;
- **Regional Infrastructure Fund**. This aims to harness key regional strengths to improve regional Victoria's productivity and liveability. It will invest in major infrastructure projects that create or enhance the conditions for economic growth and build diversified and sustainable regional economies that are resilient to change;
- **Regional Health Infrastructure Fund**. Grants are available for projects that contribute to better health for people in rural and regional Victoria, including: Capital projects; Medical equipment/infrastructure; and ICT;
- **Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme**. Providing travel and accommodation support to rural and regional Victorians who need to travel long distances for specialist medical care;
- **Rural Development Program Stream**. This program will assist rural Victorian businesses and communities to create opportunities for economic growth. It will also assist in enhancing the appeal and liveability of rural towns and surrounding areas by improving local infrastructure;
- **Innovation and Productivity Program Stream**. This program stream aims to improve regional industry and business productivity to ensure the long-term sustainability of employment and business growth. It will provide funding to enable the adoption of new technology and innovative processes;
- **Investment Attraction Program Stream**. aims to grow existing or attract new businesses and industries to regional Victoria;
- **Regional Skills Fund**. The Regional Skills Fund is a targeted, place-based regional skills grants program driven by industry in partnership with the tertiary sector, working to build local capacity, resilience and support jobs creation;
- **Employment Precincts Program**. This program stream aims to boost the capacity of new and existing regionally significant employment precincts. It will provide funding to support the development or enhancement of land and facilities that generate greater job density and more productive industry clusters.

It is evident that the need to support rural communities, particularly in the field of health, has been well identified by all levels of government, and that government responses include (to some extent) encouragement and investigation of alternative models of services delivery (primarily relating to the use of technology and greater collaboration between Councils to achieve economies of scale).

It is also apparent, however, through stakeholder consultation, that some existing programs have recently ceased, resulting in reduced funding for services such as local transport.

In this context, it is considered important that RCV advocates for the retention of programs that are well aligned to the main issues experienced in Victoria relating to service provision and in particular advocates for new programs which support alternative models that have successfully addressed these challenges, either locally or in relevant interstate and international cases.

3.5. FINDINGS

- Regional Partnership investment priorities commonly respond to a view that health and wellbeing, connectivity and community engagement are pivotal to the liveability of residents and seek to respond by improving provision of core services (especially health and public transport services).
- Federal and State programs exist to support rural service provision and alternative models, however many programs either have limited funding available or are not suited to the particular requirements of rural Victorian communities.
- Literature on rural service provision contains several key themes and opportunities relating to service delivery in rural areas, including:
 - High delivery costs. Due to a lack of critical mass (through a small and dispersed population base), the cost of providing core services is relatively high, which prices out (public and private) service providers and means some residents are unable to pay for services;
 - Accessibility (physical access). The ability (or lack thereof) of rural residents to access services is critical to effective service delivery. This includes proximity to services as well as appropriate transport options to enable travel;
 - Flexibility. Service delivery should be flexible in remote areas to effectively cater to the population. This includes provision of mobile services, remote access (i.e. internet, telephone) and flexible roles/responsibilities of professionals to adapt to their unique/specific environments; and
 - Partnerships. Collaboration between local businesses, community groups, Local Government and other stakeholders is important to ensure services can be adequately provided to the community. This includes knowledge sharing, volunteering and sharing of physical space and infrastructure.
- There was a relative lack of empirical evidence on the service needs and liveability priorities of rural residents in the material reviewed.

4. PRIMARY RESEARCH

4.1. INTRODUCTION

To respond to the relative limitations of secondary research and provide more detailed, targeted analysis of the issues and opportunities for this study, primary research was undertaken as follows:

- A survey of all RCV member councils;
- A survey of the service provision needs and priorities of a random sample of rural Victorian residents;
- Consultation with key stakeholders in local government, state government and relevant industries; and
- Analysis of case studies of models of alternate service delivery in rural Victoria.

This primary research has been designed to enable a more detailed and empirical understanding of service provision priorities in rural Victoria and underpin findings on how to best to achieve liveability gains in rural areas.

4.2. RCV MEMBER COUNCIL PRIORITIES

A survey was provided to all RCV member Councils in April 2019. Responses were received from 23 of the 37 member councils (a response rate of 62%), providing a significant sample rural councils⁷.

The purpose of the council survey was to:

- Gauge the importance of liveability and related services to councils⁸;
- Identify the quality of service provision;
- Identify trends and issues with service provision; and
- Identify examples of alternate service delivery models currently or recently employed.

The full survey is included in **Appendix C**.

RESULTS

The key results from this survey have been consolidated and analysed below.

1. How important is the delivery of services that contribute to liveability in your council area?

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not important and 5 = very important), 96% of the responses viewed the delivery of services as '*very important*'. This demonstrates a significant interest in the issue and awareness of the challenges faced in rural areas of Victoria.

2. How well are each of the following services being delivered in your municipality to meet community needs?

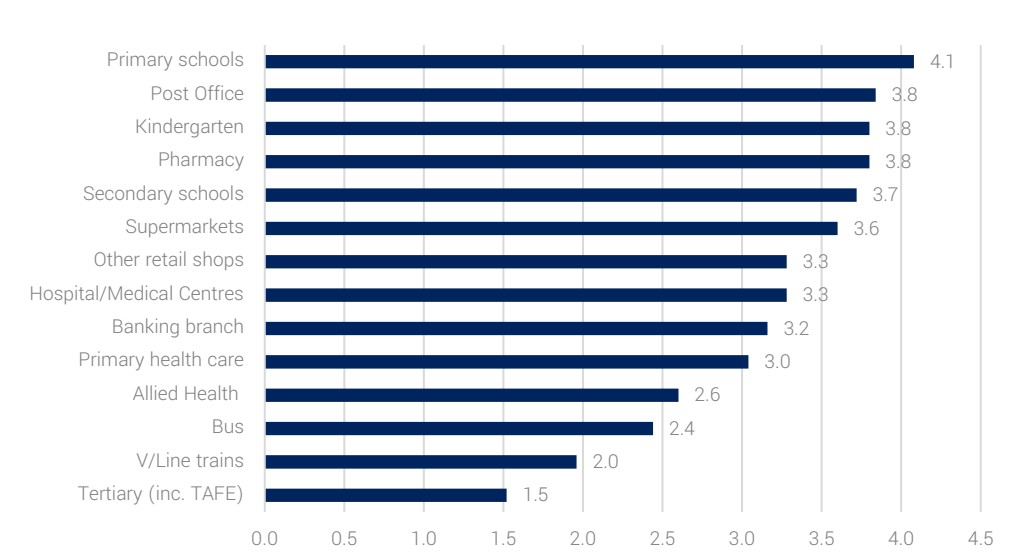
On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not at all and 5 = very well), councils identified the extent to which services were meeting community needs. Figure F2 shows the aggregated average rankings of each service, as indicated by councils. Key points to note include:

- Primary schools, post offices and kindergartens were identified as the services with the best service delivery in rural areas;
- Public transport, tertiary education and allied health services were rated as having the worst service provision levels.

⁷ Response: Buloke Shire, Colac Otway Shire, Moira Shire, Gannawarra Shire, Mount Alexander Shire, Hepburn Shire, Strathbogie Shire, Southern Grampians Shire, Mitchell Shire Council, Wellington Shire Council, Indigo Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Corangamite Council, Central Goldfields Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Golden Plains Shire, Moyne Shire, Mansfield Shire, Yarriambiack Shire, South Gippsland Shire, Pyrenees Shire, Loddon Shire.

⁸ This includes the Health, Education, Retail/Finance and Public Transport services outlined in Section 1.2.

F2. SERVICES MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS, AVERAGE SCORE



Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019

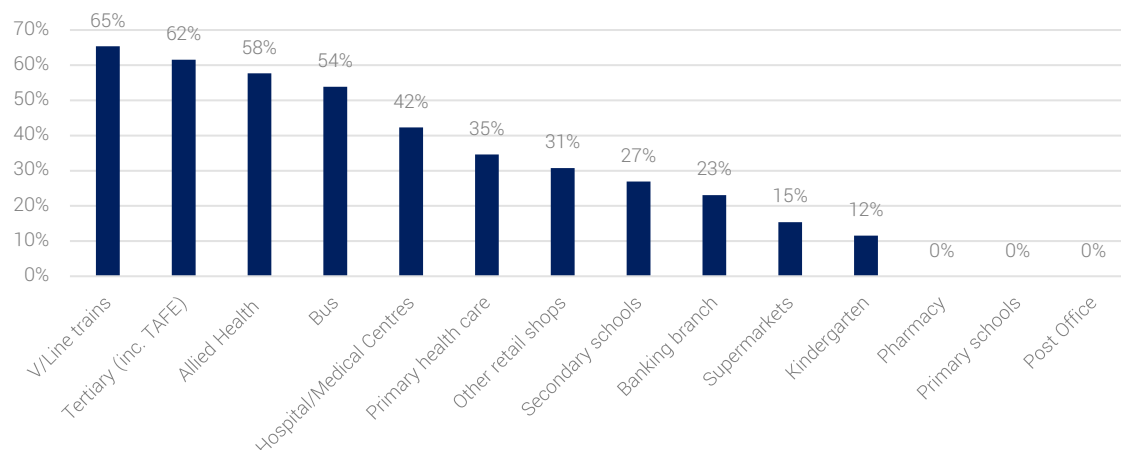
3. Is a lack or absence of any of the following services negatively impacting the liveability of residents in your municipality?

Figure F3 illustrates the proportion of council responses for each service that is lacking and, subsequently, negatively impacting rural communities (in the view of Council respondents). Key points to note include:

- Public transport options (V/Line trains and buses) are typically lacking or absent in many council areas, impacting liveability;
- Having limited or no access to tertiary education is also a significant component of liveability and population retention;
- A lack of health services, including Allied Health, medical centres and primary health, was also recognised as having a significant impact on the liveability of rural residents;
- Primary schools, pharmacies and post offices were less commonly identified as absent services negatively impacting liveability, reflecting common circumstances in rural communities where these services are often provided at the local level.

It is noted that many of the responses point to the absence of 'higher order' services as impacting liveability – these services commonly serve a wide catchment and are often located in regional centres. Economies of scale often dictate that delivery of these services is not possible in smaller settlements, however this indicates the importance of providing good access to the services where possible.

F3. ABSENCE OF SERVICES NEGATIVELY IMPACTING COMMUNITIES, PROPORTION OF RESPONSES



Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019.

4. Has your council ever considered or sought to implement/support any alternate service delivery models?

23 councils provided a response to this question, which generated the following results:

- 52% of responses involved some form of community transport, used to increase resident access to core services in surrounding communities; and
- 12% of responses used some form of mobile service to provide direct access to residents in need.

Most alternative models involved improving access to services (rather than provision of specific services). The provision of alternative transport means to increase access to services was the most common example of the way in which Councils are seeking to improve liveability for residents.

4.3. RESIDENT SURVEY

OVERVIEW

A survey of rural Victorian residents was conducted in April – May 2019, facilitated by an independent third-party survey provider using an online platform.

The purpose of the rural resident survey was to understand:

- How and where residents access services;
- Trends in service provision;
- Location of key services; and
- Demand for services across Rural Victoria.

The survey focused on the services included within the project scope. The full survey is provided in Appendix D.

SAMPLE

The survey was a random sample survey, with responses filtered by the resident's address to determine eligibility as a resident of 'rural Victoria'⁹. A total of 505 eligible responses were received.

As shown in Table T6, the responses resulted in a diversity of residents across all age groups, household types and regions of rural Victoria. 52% of responses were received from residents aged less than 40 years, however overall a broad range of age groups were represented in the sample.

T6. RESIDENT SURVEY, BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS

Age Group	%	Household Type	%	Regional Partnership ¹⁰	%
15-19 years	1%	Lone person	19%	Barwon	8%
20-29 years	29%	Group	7%	Central highlands	9%
30-39 years	22%	Family	46%	Goulburn	12%
40-49 years	18%	Couple	28%	Great south coast	8%
50-59 years	13%			Loddon	13%
60-69 years	11%			Mallee	7%
70-79 years and over	5%			Ovens Murray	7%
				Gippsland	22%
				Wimmera	14%

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019

It is noted that one potential limitation of the survey was that responses appeared to focus primarily on personal experiences, despite direction to respond on behalf of other household members (such as children) where applicable. Results relating to the importance and use of education services (especially kindergarten, primary and secondary school) were consistently lower than other service types, potentially due to the way in which the survey was responded to.

⁹ In order to ensure the survey was completed by rural residents only, the survey filtered out responses based on post codes. As such, areas within regional centre were excluded from the survey.

¹⁰ The Regional Partnership results – categorised using post code data – are based on more than 505 responses due to some duplication of post codes in multiple regions.

RESULTS

1. Frequency of access to services and importance of proximity

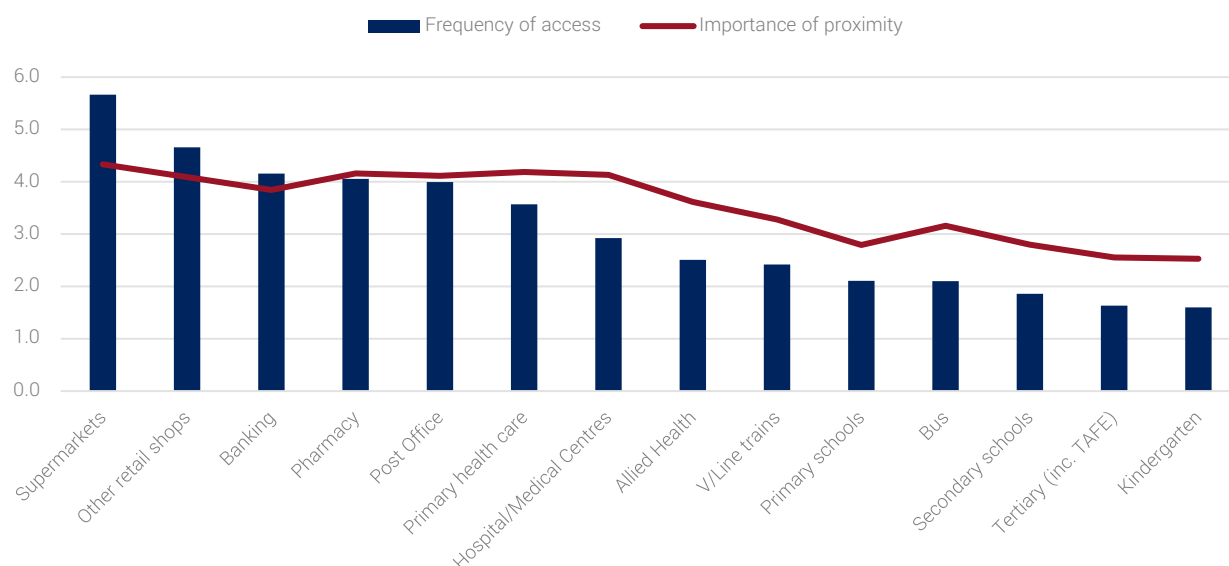
The following analysis combines two survey questions:

- *How frequently do you access a particular service* (on a scale of 1 = never and 7 = weekly)¹¹? and
- *How important to your liveability is it to have a particular service in close proximity to your home* (on a scale of 1 = not important and 5 = very important)?

Figure F4 shows there is a clear correlation between the two results – as frequency of access increases so does the level of importance amongst rural residents. Key points to note include:

- The retail/finance sector contains the most frequented services, particularly supermarkets (almost weekly), other retail shops and banking (almost monthly). This is followed by health-related services, including pharmacy and primary health care (3-4 times per annum);
- Public transport services were frequented less often than other sectors, on average once per annum, indicating a relative lack of services available to rural residents;
- Although education services were the least frequented, this is likely to result from not all residents requiring the services;
- Correlating with the level of frequency, supermarkets and other retail services were viewed as the most important, along with higher order health care; and
- Conversely, education and public transport were perceived as the least important.

F4. FREQUENCY OF ACCESS AND IMPORTANCE OF PROXIMITY, AVERAGE SCORE



Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019

¹¹ The full scoring system is: 1 = Never; 2 = Less than once p.a.; 3 = 1-2 times p.a.; 4 = 3-4 times p.a.; 5 = Monthly; 6 = Weekly; 7 = Daily.

2. Location of services

Respondents were asked to identify the location where they access each service, either: Metropolitan areas; Regional centres; Rural centres; or Small towns¹². This question was designed to better understand the spatial distribution of services and how readily available they are in rural communities (compared to more urbanised locations).

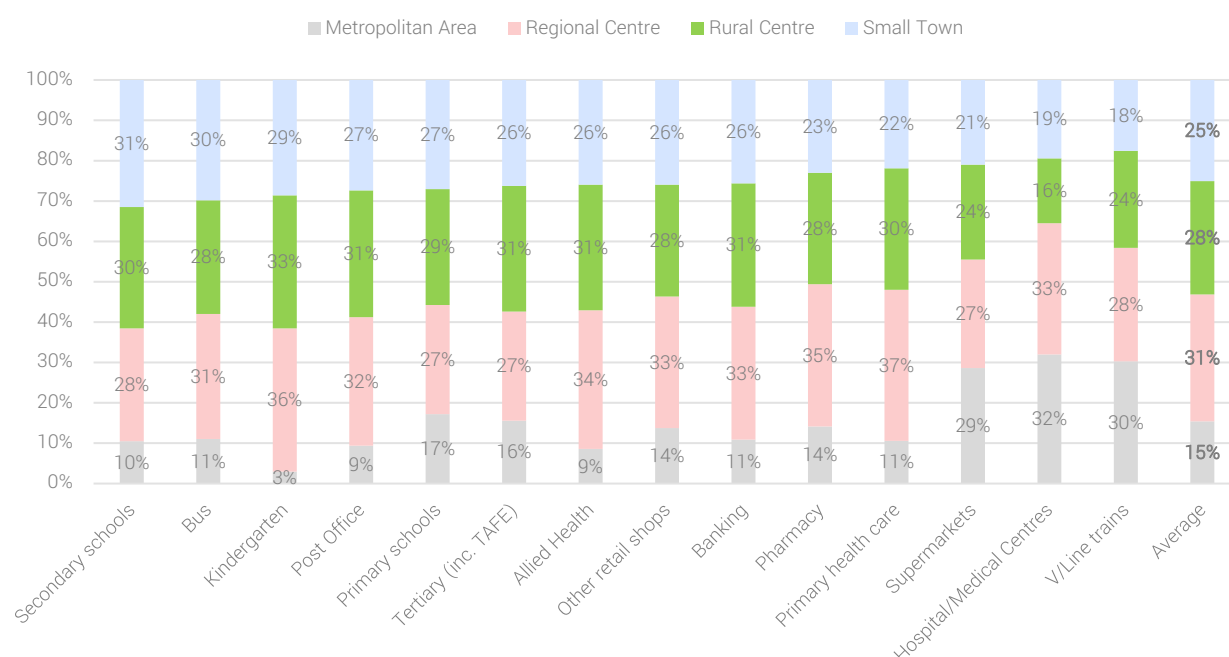
As shown in Figure F5, the majority of services are accessed in regional centres (31%) or rural centres (28%), while only one quarter of key services are accessed within small towns. This demonstrates that services are primarily accessed outside rural communities (i.e. small towns), reflecting the need for a critical mass of residents to support services and the regionalisation of services taking place.

For individual services:

- Education services are generally accessed within small towns, particularly kindergarten and schools;
- A higher proportion of health services are accessed in regional centres, particularly Allied Health and primary health care; and
- Rural residents commonly access supermarkets, hospitals and trains in metropolitan areas.
- As supermarkets are the most frequented (and important) service, rural residents are presumably willing to travel outside of their community to nearby urbanised areas to access this facility.

The need to travel outside smaller towns to access the majority of services clearly indicates the importance of mobility and transport in the provision of services to rural residents.

F5. LOCATION OF SERVICES, PROPORTION OF RESPONSES



Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019

¹² The definitions for each area is as follows: A **Metropolitan Area** refers to Greater Melbourne; A **Regional Centre** is one of the following: Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga; A **rural centre** is one of the following: Alexandra, Ararat, Bacchus Marsh, Bairnsdale, Bannockburn, Beaufort, Beechworth, Benalla, Camperdown, Castlemaine, Colac, Corryong, Daylesford-Hepburn, Donald, Echuca, Edenhope, Euroa, Gisborne, Hamilton, Kerang, Leongatha, Mansfield, Maryborough, Mortlake, Myrtleford, Nhill, Point Lonsdale, Portland, Sale, Stawell, Swan Hill, Wallan, Warracknabeal, Warragul, Wedderburn, Wonthaggi, and Yarrawonga; and a **Small Town** is any town not listed above.

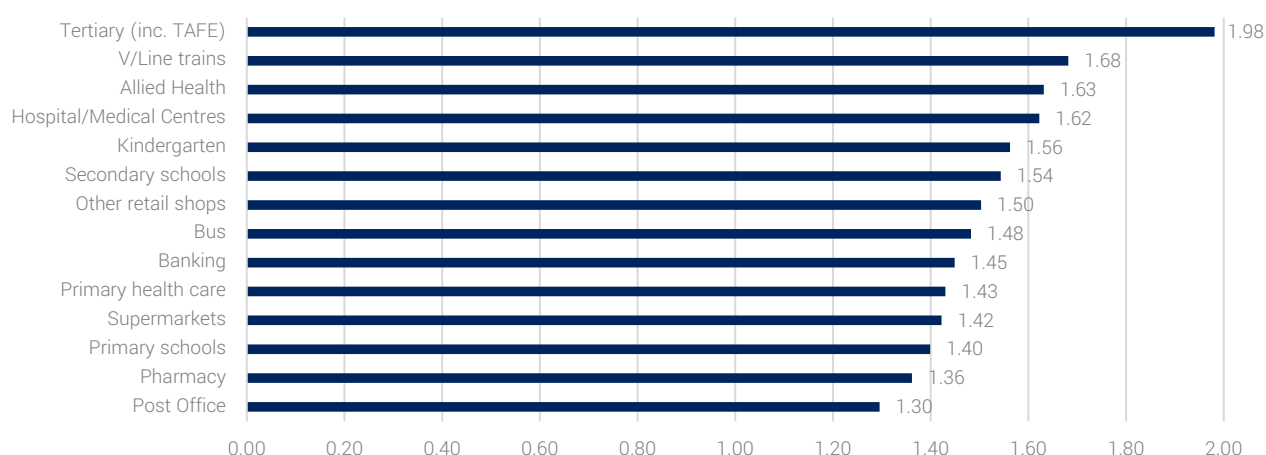
3. Travel time required to access services

Identifying the approximate travel time taken to physically access each service is an important indicator of proximity to services for rural residents. This is illustrated in Figure F6, which ranks the average travel time for each service on a scale of *1 = less than 30 minutes to 4 = over 2 hours*.

Tertiary services require the greatest average travel time, followed by access to trains and key health services (Hospital/Medical Centres and Allied Health). The lowest average travel time is required for post offices, pharmacies, primary schools and supermarkets.

The data indicates that overall, rural residents usually need to travel 30 minutes or more to access key services.

F6. TRAVEL TIME REQUIRED, AVERAGE SCORE



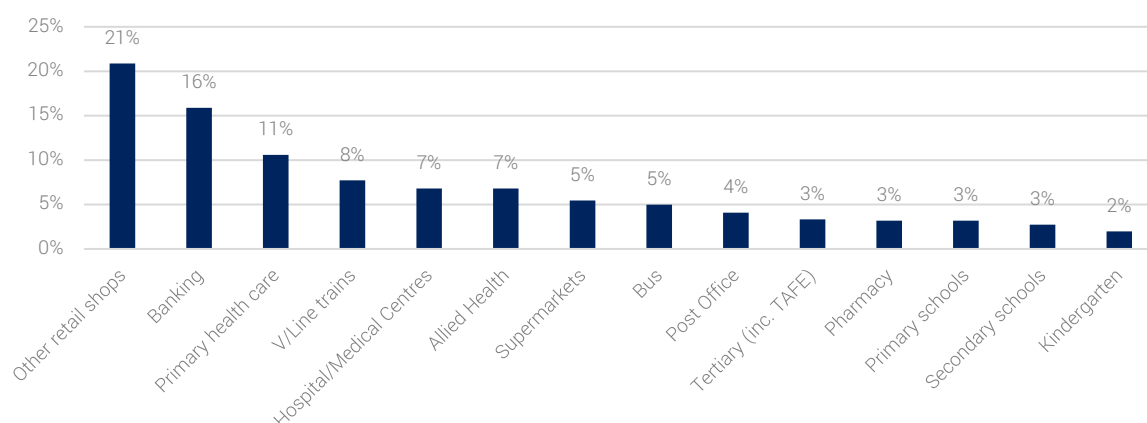
Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019

4. Services that have recently been lost or diminished in rural areas

Respondents were asked to identify which services has been recently lost or diminished in their area. Results (Figure F7) indicate that local retail services have been impacted the most of any service, with 21% of respondents identifying a loss (or decline), followed by banking and primary health care.

This experience is likely to be associated with an increase in digital accessibility to retail and banking services – a third of residents responded that they accessed retail services electronically and two-thirds accessed banking services on-line.

F7. LOST/DIMINISHED SERVICES, PROPORTION OF RESPONSES



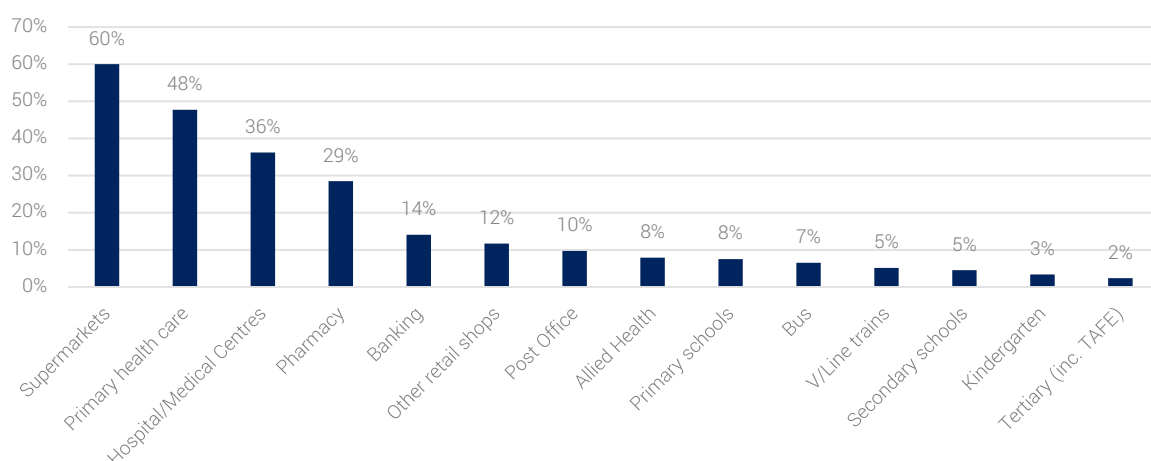
Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019.

5. Services that are most important to liveability

Respondents were asked to identify the *top 3 services that are most important to your liveability*. The results (Figure F8) show that:

- 60% of respondents identified supermarkets in their top 3 (supermarkets are also the most frequented service of respondents);
- 48% of respondents identified primary health care in their top 3, highlighting the importance of GPs and nursing practitioners to residents' perceptions of liveability;
- Overall, health services were commonly included in the top 3 services important to liveability, including primary health care, hospitals/medical centres and pharmacies.

F8. SERVICES MOST IMPORTANT TO LIVEABILITY, PROPORTION OF RESPONSES



Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019; Although the education sector was given the lowest level of importance to liveability, this reflects responses by individuals that do not directly access education (and is not an accurate reflection of the importance of school).

6. Population retention and migration questions

Respondents were asked the following question about their potential migration out of existing communities:

If you were to consider moving to improve your lifestyle/improve access to services, where would you move to and why?

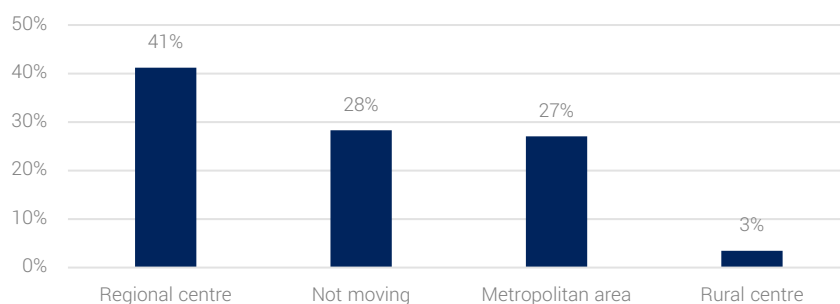
As shown in Figure F9, almost three-quarters of responses would consider moving to improve lifestyle. Of these responses:

- 41% would move to a regional centre;
- 27% would move to a metropolitan area; and
- 3% would move to a rural centre¹³.

28% of residents indicated that they would not consider moving to improve their lifestyle or improve access to services.

¹³ Note: the responses were open-ended and aggregated by Urban Enterprise into the four categories.

F9. POSSIBLE LOCATION OF MOVE

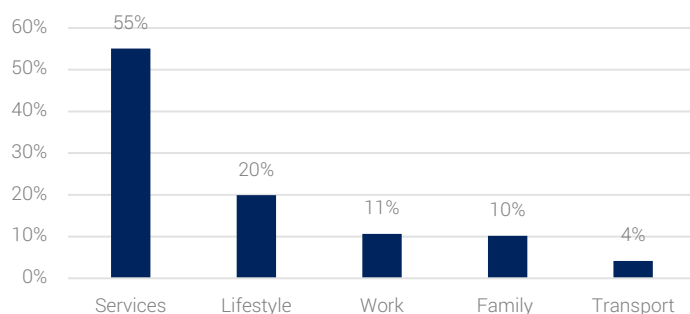


Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019.

Of those residents that would consider moving, the 'open answer' (unprompted) reasons for a potential move were aggregated into five categories as follows:

- 55% of residents would move for improved services and increased access to services. This primarily included health and retail services;
- 20% of residents would consider a move for 'lifestyle' reasons, such as shorter commute times, better weather, for a sea/tree-change, etc;
- 10% would move for family reasons; and
- 4% specified better access to road and public transport as reasons for a potential move.

F10. REASONS FOR MOVE



Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019.

4.3.1. RESULTS BY REGION

The following analyses results for each Regional Partnership, in comparison to the overall average from the aggregated results. This is designed to identify any relevant trends in service provision based on location, recognising that each area has specific needs and requirements (based on demographics, population density and other factors).

FREQUENCY OF ACCESS TO SERVICES AND IMPORTANCE OF PROXIMITY

Results for individual regions generally align with the overall average in terms of the frequency that services are accessed. As shown in Table T7, the most frequented service across all areas are within the retail sector – supermarkets followed by other retail shops. Other key points to note include:

- Transport and education are amongst the least frequented sectors across the state, particularly kindergartens and tertiary facilities;
- In the Great South Coast region, education services are accessed more often compared to other regions; and
- Residents within Mallee frequent health services at a rate higher than the average.

T7. FREQUENCY OF ACCESS, AVERAGE SCORE BY REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

	Average	Barwon	Central Highlands	Goulburn	Great South Coast	Loddon Campaspe	Mallee	Ovens Murray	Gippsland	Wimmera
Supermarkets	5.7	5.6	5.7	5.7	5.4	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.6	5.8
Other retail shops	4.7	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.8	4.5	4.8	4.6	4.8
Banking	4.2	3.8	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.4	4.3
Pharmacy	4.1	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.2
Post Office	4.0	4.0	4.2	3.9	3.6	4.2	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.3
Primary health care	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.8	3.9	3.3	3.4	3.5
Hospital/Medical Centres	2.9	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.2	2.6	2.7	3.0
Allied Health	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.3	2.4	2.5
V/Line trains	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.1	2.5	2.3	2.6	2.5	2.3
Primary schools	2.1	2.4	2.2	1.9	2.4	1.9	2.5	2.1	2.0	2.1
Bus	2.1	2.0	2.1	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.5	1.8	2.2	1.9
Secondary schools	1.9	2.0	1.8	1.7	2.4	1.6	1.8	1.6	2.0	1.7
Tertiary (inc. TAFE)	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.6	2.1	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.6
Kindergarten	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.9	1.8	1.5	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.7

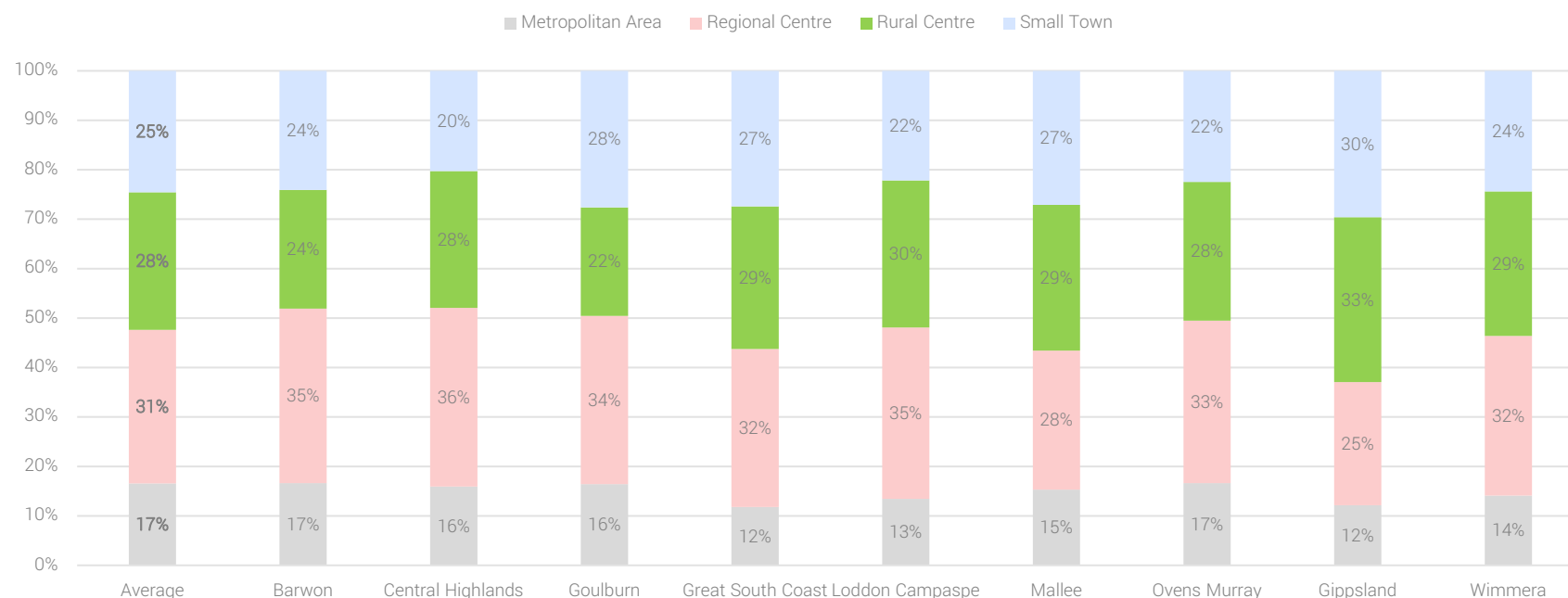
Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019

LOCATION OF SERVICES THAT ARE ACCESSED

Figure F11 compares the average location where all services are accessed for each Regional Partnerships, including, Metropolitan areas; Regional centres; Rural centres; and Small towns. Key points to note include:

- For all regions – excluding Mallee and Gippsland – the largest proportion of services are accessed in regional centres;
- A higher proportion of services in Mallee and Gippsland are accessed in rural centres; and
- Compared to the state average, each of Mallee, Gippsland, Great South Coast and Goulburn experience a higher proportion of service provision within small towns. This indicates that these areas provide a better access to services for rural residents, as a lower proportion of services need to be accessed in larger urbanised areas.

F11. LOCATION OF SERVICES, PROPORTION OF RESPONSES BY REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP



Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019

TRAVEL TIME REQUIRED TO ACCESS SERVICES

In terms of the travel time required to access services, the rankings of each area broadly align with the state average (see Table T8). For all regions, the post office and pharmacy require the least amount of travel time to access. Conversely, core health services – such as allied health and medical centres, as well as tertiary facilities, require the longest travel time to access.

In terms of individual regions, the key findings can be summarised as follows:

- The average travel time for service provision (across all sectors) is lowest in Gippsland, which aligns with the information above that there is a greater dispersion of services across small towns and rural centres; and
- The average travel time is highest for Ovens Murray and Wimmera, which also aligns with the locational information above whereby a higher proportion of services are in larger regional centres.

T8. TRAVEL TIME REQUIRED, AVERAGE SCORE BY REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

	Average	Barwon	Central Highlands	Goulburn	Great South Coast	Loddon Campaspe	Mallee	Ovens Murray	Gippsland	Wimmera
Post Office	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.2	1.4
Pharmacy	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.8	1.3	1.6
Primary schools	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.3	1.6
Supermarkets	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.4	1.5
Primary health care	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.9	1.4	1.7
Banking	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.7	1.4	1.5
Bus	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.8	2.0	1.3	1.7
Other retail shops	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.5	1.6
Secondary schools	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.4	2.2	1.3	1.8
Kindergarten	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.7	1.4	1.5	1.9	1.6	1.8
Hospital/Medical Centres	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.8	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.7
Allied Health	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	2.0	1.5	1.9
V/Line trains	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.5	2.1	2.2	1.7	2.0
Tertiary (inc. TAFE)	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.7	1.8	2.6
Average travel time	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.9	1.4	1.7

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019

SERVICES THAT HAVE RECENTLY BEEN LOST OR DIMINISHED IN RURAL AREAS

In Table T9 below, it is evident that rural communities in each region have experienced a loss of services, with the greatest decline generally in retail services, banking and primary health care.

Other key points to note include:

- Loss of health services was more frequently noted in Gippsland (hospital/medical centres) and Central Highlands (primary health care);
- Loss of train services were more commonly noted in the Mallee and Wimmera regions; and
- Tertiary facility losses were more commonly noted in Barwon and Central Highlands.

T9. LOST/DIMINISHED SERVICES, PROPORTION OF RESPONSES BY REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

	Average	Barwon	Central Highlands	Goulburn	Great South Coast	Loddon Campaspe	Mallee	Ovens Murray	Gippsland	Wimmera
Other retail shops	21%	26%	19%	22%	17%	22%	23%	19%	23%	20%
Banking	16%	13%	13%	22%	15%	14%	12%	13%	16%	12%
Primary health care	11%	6%	14%	9%	9%	10%	11%	10%	14%	12%
V/Line trains	8%	4%	5%	4%	7%	7%	13%	8%	8%	10%
Hospital/Medical Centres	7%	7%	5%	7%	6%	7%	6%	6%	10%	5%
Allied Health	7%	5%	5%	3%	6%	7%	9%	5%	7%	7%
Supermarkets	5%	6%	5%	6%	3%	8%	2%	3%	3%	4%
Bus	5%	4%	8%	3%	8%	4%	1%	6%	5%	4%
Post Office	4%	4%	3%	2%	6%	3%	5%	6%	4%	4%
Tertiary (inc. TAFE)	3%	7%	8%	3%	5%	6%	4%	2%	3%	3%
Pharmacy	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	5%	2%	4%
Primary schools	3%	4%	5%	6%	4%	5%	3%	3%	1%	4%
Secondary schools	3%	6%	4%	2%	2%	1%	1%	7%	2%	5%
Kindergarten	2%	4%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	5%	1%	4%

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019

SERVICES THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO LIVEABILITY

In terms of services that are most important to liveability, Table T10 shows that for each region, the most important service for liveability was a supermarket, followed by health sector services including primary health care, hospital/medical centres and pharmacies.

T10. SERVICES MOST IMPORTANT TO LIVEABILITY, PROPORTION OF RESPONSES BY REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

	Average	Barwon	Central Highlands	Goulburn	Great South Coast	Loddon Campaspe	Mallee	Ovens Murray	Gippsland	Wimmera
Supermarkets	60%	73%	73%	70%	73%	65%	71%	77%	44%	73%
Primary health care	48%	59%	56%	56%	60%	59%	56%	48%	38%	56%
Hospital/Medical Centres	36%	41%	45%	47%	35%	46%	50%	36%	25%	48%
Pharmacy	29%	33%	29%	34%	38%	41%	44%	32%	22%	29%
Banking	14%	22%	9%	10%	19%	15%	15%	23%	7%	21%
Other retail shops	12%	18%	16%	14%	8%	16%	10%	20%	8%	17%
Post Office	10%	10%	7%	19%	6%	9%	6%	16%	7%	9%
Allied Health	8%	16%	9%	11%	10%	9%	6%	5%	2%	6%
Primary schools	8%	14%	18%	10%	13%	13%	19%	18%	7%	12%
Bus	7%	4%	11%	3%	10%	7%	4%	5%	4%	9%
V/Line trains	5%	0%	15%	9%	2%	12%	6%	2%	5%	7%
Secondary schools	5%	6%	5%	6%	12%	4%	4%	2%	4%	2%
Kindergarten	3%	4%	2%	9%	4%	1%	4%	11%	3%	6%
Tertiary (inc. TAFE)	2%	2%	4%	3%	12%	2%	4%	5%	2%	4%

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019

4.3.2. RESULTS BY DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

An analysis of the results by age group and household type also broadly aligns with the state average across each sector. This indicates that, despite spatial and demographic variability, the trends and demand for services across the health, retail and transport sectors are relatively consistent.

Results relating to the importance of education services varied widely by age group and household type, reflecting the generally higher education needs of younger residents and families. For example:

- Residents aged between 30 and 49 years access primary and secondary schools more frequently than the average, indicating the importance of schools to attracting and retaining families in rural Victoria; and
- Family households considered education as more important than the average respondent.

4.4. FINDINGS

Input from RCV member councils indicated that:

- Service delivery to rural communities to retain and improve liveability and influence population attraction and retention is a high priority;
- The absence of transport services was noted as a significant issue for liveability;
- The relative lack of health-related services in rural communities is also impacting Councils' ability to attract and retain population; and
- Most rural councils have sought to implement alternative solutions to address gaps in services, primarily through facilitating local transport services and mobile services.

A survey of rural residents found that:

- Almost 70% of rural residents would consider moving out of rural Victoria to improve their access to services, the majority of whom would be likely to move to a regional centre;
- Most services are accessed in regional centres or rural centres requiring at least 30 minutes travel time. In many cases, more than an hour travel is required to access services;
- Supermarkets and primary health care were identified as the most important services to liveability; and
- Rural residents highlighted the reduction in local retail and banking services as the greatest loss of services in their communities.

The primary research findings confirm the importance of service provision to residents' perception of liveability and subsequently the close relationship between service provision, liveability and population attraction and retention.

The research highlights the prospect of further regionalisation of population and services if a minimum level of service provision is not maintained in smaller towns and rural areas. The survey indicates that the most important services to provide to support local population are supermarkets and primary health care. Retention of these services in areas and towns experiencing population challenges can be particularly important given that other smaller services (such as independent shops, pharmacies and allied health providers) often seek to co-locate with supermarkets and primary health care services and are unlikely to remain if those services are lost or regionalised.

Not all services can be provided in a distributed network. The critical importance of physical / transport access to higher order services in larger cities is evident in the research, with long distances evident. The research highlights the need to ensure residents can access services in other towns and cities through an effective and reliable transport offer.

5. CONSULTATION AND CASE STUDIES

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Consultation with key stakeholders was undertaken across a range of forums to inform the study (see Appendix E for the full consultation schedule). Consultees included officers, Councillors and Mayors of rural councils, State government representatives in health and transport, and representatives of organisations that have been involved in developing specific models for alternative service delivery.

The consultation process was designed to achieve the following outcomes:

- Gauge the current provision of services in rural & regional communities;
- Identify alternative means by which rural communities can access services that underpin liveability; and
- Identify examples (e.g. case studies) of working models of alternate service delivery.

5.2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

Urban Enterprise conducted two council workshops in Ararat and Wangaratta¹⁴. These workshops build on the primary research findings (identified in Section 4.2) and:

- Articulate some of the key challenges with service provision in rural communities;
- Outline the local/regional responses to these challenges; and
- Describe some examples of successful alternate working models.

Some of the key ongoing challenges for service provision across Rural Victoria, as identified during the workshops, are summarised below:

- **Role of Council undefined.** Some Councils are unsure of the level of intervention required to provide local services, particularly whether they should be delivering/operating services or playing a facilitation/support role. The issues include:
 - Intervening in services that are usually delivered by other levels of government and/or the private sector can be costly (e.g. transport); and
 - Delivering services require additional resources in terms of staff and funding, which is limited in many areas.
- **Quality of services.** Councils should not only focus on service provision, but also on service *quality*. Having poor quality services will negatively impact the community and influence population retention, as residents will explore other areas for services.
- **Labour and skills shortage.** Due to the declining population base, there is a critical shortage in staff, particularly skilled staff, which is impacting on the delivery (and quality) of some services. This is particularly relevant for early years' education services, primary school teachers, as well as primary health medical practitioners.

In addition to the key challenges, councils highlighted several opportunities to respond to the various issues with service provision, including:

- **Council as a service facilitator.** Delivery of services can be better provided in some case with Council support (rather than delivery), either through utilising State/Federal funding or providing support to community groups to deliver services;

¹⁴ Note: a third workshop was scheduled for Leongatha, to cover councils in the state's south-east. However, this was cancelled due to lack of uptake.

- **Alternative transport methods.** Promoting private and community-run transport services are a key opportunity for residents to access health, social and community services.
- **Co-location of services.** Councils are seeking opportunities to integrate services in a single co-located community facility, which also promotes more efficient use of public infrastructure and staff. This combines a variety of services into one facility/area that could be used as a single access point for the community.
- **Use of technology.** Technology was identified as an important element to mitigate some of the challenges faced by council. Having sufficient digital services enables people to work from home, access services remotely and contributes to population retention.

5.3. SERVICE PROVIDER CONSULTATION

Key findings from consultation with State Government and industry service providers¹⁵, with regards to potential opportunities, are synthesised as follows:

- **Increase Awareness.** State government consultees identified challenges associated with the difference between perception and reality within rural communities. For example, there is often a perceived lack of services/access to services (particularly for the health sector), however in many cases services are available but there is a lack of awareness where there is a lack of a visible physical presence in towns. Opportunities therefore exist to promote awareness and profile of available services, for example through improved communication of available services and establishing a physical presence wherever possible in smaller towns.
- **Community ownership.** Bendigo and Adelaide Bank highlighted the success of their community ownership bank model as an effective means to support retail and other services within small rural communities, as well as the potential of the model to apply to other retail types. Community ownership generally involves community investment to establish or acquire businesses, oversee operation and seek to reinvest profits in a local area. Community ownership can often result in better rural services than would otherwise be possible through private ownership and generally results in greater indirect impact to local towns. There are examples of community owned services underpinning a viable retail presence (as an anchor for other smaller businesses) and leveraging State and Federal funding for other public investment
- **Transport as the enabler.** State government consultees highlighted the importance of effective transport in providing access to other services that underpin liveability, especially health and education. As V/Line services tend to service regional centres only, community and local transport (CLT) is the most important form of transport for rural communities to access other services. The primary focus is currently on providing access to health services in nearby regional centres, however, there is an opportunity to expand CLT to meet demand for other services (e.g. social, community, recreation, etc.).

As Federal and State government funding available to councils for CLT has decreased over time, many communities have taken ownership of this service through fundraising and volunteer support. However, these community led CLT services are usually disparate, poorly co-ordinated, and can have challenges in maintaining ongoing funding and reinvestment. Therefore, further assistance is needed to ensure residents in rural communities retain access to key services that underpin liveability.

¹⁵ Including DHHS, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank and the Department of Transport.

5.4. CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

A key outcome from stakeholder consultation was the identification of examples of working models of alternate service delivery in rural communities. Eleven case studies were identified and summarised in Table 11, followed by a more detailed of five key examples to ascertain common success factors, processes and learnings that could be applied to enhance service provision across Rural Victoria.

T11. ALTERNATIVE SERVICE PROVISION CASE STUDIES

Case Study	Service Type	Brief Description	Key Themes	Council (and Regional Partnership)
Smythesdale Business, Health and Community Hub	Health Retail/Finance Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Well is a community hub which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the local residents and surrounding areas through access to a medical clinic, Pharmacy and a range of other health and leisure services. The facility is operated and subsidised by Council, with assistance from government and health agency partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-location of services Government & community support 	Golden Plains Shire (Central Highlands)
Lexton Post Office	Retail/Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community run co-operative store that provides Australia Post services, groceries and electronic banking facilities Leases facility from Council at peppercorn rent, which also includes community meeting spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-location of services Community ownership 	Pyrenees Shire (Central Highlands)
Loddon Library Agencies	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of a physical library presence in community facilities and neighbourhood houses There are 6 agencies across the Shire, providing 20 hours of access per week to a physical collection, computers and internet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-location of services Government & community support 	Loddon Shire (Loddon Campaspe)
Hairdressing Social Enterprise	Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community owns and operated the hair salon, providing funding in partnership with council It is a community enterprise that allows the hairdressers rent space at an affordable price 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community ownership 	Loddon Shire (Loddon Campaspe)
Loddon Mallee Integrated Cancer Services	Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loddon Mallee Integrated Cancer Services ran a transport pilot with Neighbourhood Houses¹⁶. The program has funded two clusters of neighbourhood houses in the region, representing 41 houses, to help identify sustainable models for cancer patient transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-location of services Government & community support 	Various (Mallee)
Community Transport Network (Buloke)	Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Neighbourhood Houses across Buloke Shire provide a community car to transport residents for medical appointments Funded through community as well as local business and operated by volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-location of services Community ownership and support 	Buloke Shire (Mallee)
Yackandandah Service Station	Retail Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Yackandandah Service Station – which opened in 2003 – is the only fuel station in the town and also provides rural supplies, produce and hardware supplies. The facility is run by the community, via the establishment of <i>The Yackandandah Community Development Company</i> (an unlisted public company), which purchased the business by selling shares to the community to raise funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-location of services Community ownership & support Professional business model 	Indigo Shire (Ovens Murray)

¹⁶ Neighbourhood Houses are a place-based community development initiative of the Victorian Government

Case Study	Service Type	Brief Description	Key Themes	Council (and Regional Partnership)
Devenish Community Hotel	Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Devenish community bought the local hotel in 2004 when faced with closure The community formed the <i>Devenish Community Hotel Co-operative Ltd</i> to purchase and run the hotel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community ownership & support Professional business model 	Benalla Rural City (Ovens Murray)
Wimmera Western District Volunteers Health Services	Health Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wimmera Western District Volunteers Health services links smaller communities to Horsham via bus services. Launched in November 2018, stage one is a weekly Wednesday service which, for a small fee, brings residents of Kaniva, Nhill, Jeparit, Dimboola and Pimpinio into Horsham to access non-emergency medical and human services appointments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government & community support 	Horsham Rural City and surrounding areas (Wimmera Southern Mallee)
Rupanyup Community Retail Hub	Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The town of Rupanyup has received \$1.2 million in funding to develop a new retail precinct in the centre of town, which will include a supermarket, café/bakery, pharmacy, council service desk and open spaces for events. The project was community driven through the establishment of a clear responsible entity in 2013 – <i>Enterprise Rupanyup</i> – that partnered with other organisations to attract funding and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-location of services Community ownership & support Professional business model 	Yarriambiack Shire (Wimmera Southern Mallee)
Uniting Wimmera	Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide integrated family services to smaller rural communities surrounding Horsham Delivered through a <i>place-based</i> approach, with staff allocated to an outreach area and based in a community/government facility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-location of services Government & community support 	Horsham Rural City and surrounding areas (Wimmera Southern Mallee)

Source: Various, Urban Enterprise, 2019.

Following the identification of the above case studies, five case studies were investigated in detail through consultation with relevant organisations. These case studies were identified based on initial views on the extent to which each project had:

- The ability to fulfil a gap in service delivery;
- Demonstrated a relative level of success¹⁷;
- Benefits of efficiency and effectiveness of delivery¹⁸;
- Useability for rural communities; and
- Opportunity to apply findings on common themes and key learnings.

The key findings from this review are detailed below.

¹⁷ Success is measured through various qualitative measures, including: community engagement; health & wellbeing outcomes, etc.

¹⁸ Measured through funding and resources required for delivery, as well as usage levels.

CASE STUDY 1: RUPANYUP COMMUNITY RETAIL HUB

What is the project?

The town of Rupanyup (in the Wimmera Southern Mallee Region) is in the process of developing a new retail precinct in the centre of town, which will include:

- A supermarket;
- Café/bakery;
- Pharmacy;
- Council service desk; and
- Open spaces for events.

The project will be developed over 2 phases – phase 1 to include a new community owned supermarket facility to be completed by 2020; and phase 2 to be development of the remaining facilities over the next two-three years.

What problem is it solving?

Rupanyup is a town of roughly 500 people and has been experiencing a decline in population over time, coupled with a poor infrastructure. The retail offer in town is below par and not meeting community needs, which is having an impact on population retention. Therefore, development of a new retail hub is designed to attract new residents to town, stimulate the town centre and improve the liveability of residents by providing access to retail services.

What processes have been applied?

The project was community driven through the establishment of a clear responsible entity in 2013 – *Enterprise Rupanyup* – that partnered with Bendigo Bank, Yarriambiack Shire Council and the local community to help raise funds to develop the hub. Enterprise Rupanyup, which is comprised of local residents, appointed a consultant to provide a business case to examine the feasibility of the project.

How much funding was required/generated?

Enterprise Rupanyup and its partners managed to raise \$700,000 in total, which included a large grant from the community-owned bank, council funding and private funding from residents and various philanthropic organisations. This funding was supplemented by State Government funding of \$500,000, which was announced in February 2019, bringing total investment to \$1.2 million.

What are the key learnings that can be applied?

The key learnings from this project include:

- Importance of **community engagement** and getting residents 'on-side';
- Having a **professional focus** – establishing the Enterprise Rupanyup entity, generating funds from local sources and developing the business case, were key aspects in leveraging State Government partnership and funds;
- **Council support** is critical, particularly is acting as a conduit for funding, as well as supporting with planning/building permits (and providing land/leases where possible); and
- **Community ownership** of projects and community-driven initiatives are key to delivering services in rural communities and improving liveability, including leveraging the previously established community-owned bank.

CASE STUDY 2: THE WELL (SMYTHESDALE BUSINESS, HEALTH AND COMMUNITY HUB)

What is the project?

The Well is a purpose-built facility in Smythesdale, developed in 2009, which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the local residents and surrounding area by providing the following services:

- GP practice;
- Pharmacy;
- Allied Health;
- Council services, including MCH and customer services; and
- Community services, including:
 - Mobile library;
 - Exercise classes; and
 - The historical society.

The facility was recently expanded in 2014 to include additional community and private consulting spaces.

What problem is it solving?

Prior to its establishment, there was a lack of key health and community providers within Golden Plains Shire, which meant that community needs for core services were not being met. As a result, over 70% of Shire residents were travelling outside the council borders to access health and other services. The Well, therefore, provides localised access for the community for core services and helps improve liveability.

What processes have been applied?

The Council understood the issues with service delivery in the Shire and was proactive in identifying a solution. In 2004, Council led a Health Planning Forum to engage with key partners, including community health agencies (e.g. Ballarat Health), residents, the private sector and State Government. Council also undertook a Needs Analysis to confirm areas of need for the community (specifically additional health services).

The result of these initiatives was an application for funding for a single purpose-built facility to act as a community focal point. The facility is owned and operated by Council, who lease out space to private and public providers of health and social/community services.

How much funding was required/generated?

The capital budget for the facility totalled \$1.4 million and included contributions from State, Federal and Local Government, as well as the Central Highlands Regional Partnership.

Ongoing operating costs are covered by Council, who receive revenue in the form of lease fees.

What are the key learnings that can be applied?

The key learnings from the development of the Well can be summarised as follows:

- Importance of **partnership & engagement** with relevant community, agency and government stakeholders;
- Establishing an **evidence-based** approach that identifies needs of the community;
- Willingness of Council to drive application and **provide funding**, which leveraged additional public and private funds; and
- **Council support** is critical, particularly in operating the facility. Ongoing funding responsibility and risk remains with Council, however.

CASE STUDY 3: YACKANDANDAH SERVICE STATION

What is the project?

The new Yackandandah Service Station – which opened in 2003 – is the only fuel station in the town of Yackandandah that provides fuel to the community as well as the following accompanying businesses:

- Rural supplies;
- Produce; and
- Hardware supplies.

What problem is it solving?

In 2002 the existing service station gave notice of its imminent closure, which would result in no fuel or service station facilities within the town. This would have had a negative impact on the community in terms of access to basic services, which would have also affected liveability and population retention.

The facility also employs 12 staff, which helps with the ongoing issue of regional unemployment.

What processes have been applied?

Seven local residents established an unlisted public company – *The Yackandandah Community Development Company* – and sold shares to the community to raise funds to purchase the service station and secure the supply of fuel in the town. This ensured that the service station would be community owned and operated, as the board is comprised of local volunteers). Community shareholders receive benefits from the company through fuel discounts and dividends.

Once funding was secured, it was decided to re-locate to a more commercially suitable location, which involved the purchase of land (from Council) and building a new, purpose-built facility.

One of the company's goals is to also re-invest 50% of annual profits back into the community to support local programs, initiatives and infrastructure (e.g. schools, hospitals, etc.).

How much funding was required/generated?

With an initial target to raise \$382,000, the company received over \$412,000 (subscription rate of almost 108%). The facility is currently profitable and has provided almost \$200,000 in community grants since inception.

What are the key learnings that can be applied?

The key learnings from this facility include:

- Importance of **community engagement**;
- The need for a professional **business model** to generate funds and operate sustainably; and
- **Community ownership** to leverage off resident's ability to respond quickly to issues and challenges and cater to the town's interests.

CASE STUDY 4: LEXTON POST OFFICE

What is the project?

The Lexton Post Office is a community co-operative facility that provides a number of key retail/finance and community services, including:

- Australia Post (inc. electronic banking facilities);
- Groceries and packaged take away; and
- Community meeting rooms used by residents and council.

What problem is it solving?

The existing post office was set to close in 1999 due to lack of business, which would have removed crucial services and supplies from the town. As Lexton is a small town, this would have impacted on liveability and population attraction, as residents would have had to access postal services in surrounding communities.

What processes have been applied?

To maintain the post office and other services, the local residents established a co-operative whereby the community bought shares in the facility to ensure ongoing operation. Once funding was secured the facility was established at a new location within a council building.

The co-operative was also assisted by other parties as follows:

- Australia Post facilitated this process by providing a licence to the co-operative to run postal services; and
- Council provided the new facility (the old fire office) at a peppercorn rent and also covers ongoing maintenance costs.

The co-operative coordinates all functions within the facility, which is open 7 days a week and acts as a focal point for the community. It is run by volunteers as well as some paid staff and is a not-for-profit entity, with all profits re-invested into the business to cover rents, supplies, etc.

How much funding was required/generated?

A total of \$10,000 was initially raised by the co-operative, which was enough to purchase the lease from Australia Post and start-up the business. Additional Federal funding has also been raised via the *Rural Transaction Centres* program.

What are the key learnings that can be applied?

The key learnings from this facility are summarised below:

- **Community ownership** was key to generating funds and local support to ensure the operation of the post office;
- Importance of **council support**, through affordable rents and maintenance costs; and
- **Integrating** the retail services in a council building provides economies of scale, allows multiple services to operate and helps meet community needs.

CASE STUDY 5: COMMUNITY TRANSPORT NETWORK (BULOKE)

What is the project?

Four communities across Loddon Shire each provides a community car to transport residents across Victoria to access health services. Over the 2017-18 year, over 400 trips were made across the Shire, with services are available in the following locations:

- Birchip;
- Wycheproof;
- Sea Lake; and
- Donald.

The transport services operate on-demand through appointments organised by residents. The cars generally travel to larger regional centres for medical appointments; however, the longer-term plan is to transport residents for other community and social services.

What problem is it solving?

Due to a lack of locally based medical/health facilities, residents in rural communities require transport to access these core services.

Buloke Council previously owned and operated community cars to provide access to residents, however, this was discontinued when Federal funding support was removed. This created a gap in the provision of public transport across the Shire, leaving many isolated and elderly residents without means of transport and without access to health services. The community cars, therefore, seek to fill in this gap and provide transport options for residents to access a medical appointment, particularly the elderly.

What processes have been applied?

The community cars are operated by volunteers delivered via partnerships with existing community/government facilities. Three of the locations operate the cars out of state funded Neighbourhood House facilities, while Birchip operates independently as a partnership between the Local Progress Association and the local school.

Each car was purchased using variety of funding sources, including community fundraising, community bank grants and philanthropic investment. This includes funding for ongoing operation including insurance, licences, police checks, etc.

Additional state funding is also provided via the *Patient Transport Allowance*.

What are the key learnings that can be applied?

The key learnings can be summarised as follows:

- **Community ownership** is critical, in terms of investment and operation, to fill in service gaps unable to be provided by Council;
- **Co-locating** the program within existing facilities, including community houses and government buildings, creates efficiencies, allows the initiative to operate at a reduced budget and provides a single point of access for the community; and
- Exploring **partnership** opportunities with existing organisations assists in the operation, helps promote awareness and increases the effectiveness of the program.
- **Capital costs** and **finding volunteers** can be challenging.

5.4.1. CASE STUDY INSIGHTS

Key insights and learnings from case studies can be synthesised as follows:

- The primary focus of local case studies for alternative service provision analysed was on retail and transport services;
- Case studies often sought to achieve or retain local service provision in smaller towns where 'market failure' was an issue and a community had identified a major risk to the ongoing viability of a township (and therefore to the standard of living and population base of a rural area);
- Case studies often sought to retain a place for trade and social interaction. Therefore, it is important to maintain core services such as supermarkets, post offices and banks that facilitates a higher level of community engagement;
- A number of consultees identified a key success factor of service delivery was to enable greater community engagement and thereby underpin the resident's sense of community and liveability; and
- Transport is used primarily as an enabler by providing access to key services in nearby areas (especially health), particularly as a cost-effective way of providing services to the community.

The following common themes which contributed to the success of the case studies are identified and have potential to guide future initiatives in rural Victoria:

- Co-location of public and private services within a common facility, which generates efficiencies and provides a focal point for the community;
- Making efficient use of Council-owned buildings and infrastructure to support flexible and adaptive use of otherwise underutilised assets;
- Community ownership and support, which is often a more effective way to generate funds, respond quickly to gaps in service provision and achieve community 'buy-in';
- Establishing a professional model and/or evidence base, which is critical in obtaining government support and leveraging state/federal funding; and
- Gaining council support can assist in the delivery of services (i.e. funding), streamline approvals (i.e. building approvals) and bring other stakeholders together.

5.5. KEY FINDINGS

Consultation with rural councils and service providers identified the following common factors and opportunities that could be applied to overcome gaps in service provision and improve the liveability of rural communities:

- Integrating multiple services into a single facility promotes a more efficient use of infrastructure and staff. It also provides a focal point for the community and ensures services can be provided to a greater number of residents at a lower cost;
- Support use of technology to overcome access issues and connect residents in smaller communities to key services, such as video conferencing and telehealth;
- Encourage community ownership of services/facilities in small communities, including funding and operation. This model is an effective way to generate funds, respond quickly to gaps in service provision and achieve community 'buy-in'. Initiatives that can generate funds from private sources often have a higher success rate of leveraging State and Federal funding;
- Increase awareness of services that are currently available to rural residents, especially those services that are not provided locally or in a physical form; and
- Utilise alternative means of transport to enable access to other services. There is generally greater difficulty (and cost) in providing retail, education and health services to rural communities, warranting a localised approach to transport in the absence of public buses and trains in many rural towns).

These opportunities were reinforced through the review of case study examples that present alternative models of service delivery, particularly the importance of co-locating services, facilitating community ownership and providing alternative transport options to residents. Other key learnings and common factors included:

- Ensuring programs and initiatives establishes a professional governance model and provides a solid evidence base for community need, which is critical in obtaining government support and generating public funding; and
- Council can facilitate and support alternative methods of service delivery through multiple avenues, including funding, building/planning permits, providing a facility and/or convenient lease arrangements.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This research confirms the importance of ongoing service delivery in rural Victoria to the ability of rural areas to attract and retain population. In particular, the research demonstrates the importance of liveability to rural communities, particularly through the availability of local retail and health services, and the ability to regularly and reliably obtain transport to higher order services in larger towns and cities.

The research has also highlighted the risks of declining provision of services, given almost 70% of rural residents surveyed indicated that they would consider leaving rural Victoria as a result of poor service provision.

Many gaps in service delivery are driven by a combination of economic factors, including costs of providing services, lack of critical mass of population, stagnating, declining or regionalising population trends and the impact of technology. This can result in market failure, whereby the private sector is unable to supply services to rural communities. As such, it is not always realistic or practical to provide services where gaps in provision exists.

Although RCV and Councils have limited opportunity and scope to intervene in the direct provision of these services, there are a wide range of case studies that identify an important role for local government in facilitating initiatives which address service gaps and respond to market failure in smaller towns.

RCV and Councils also have an important role to play in advocating for improvements to service provision across rural Victoria and in towns large and small. Given the range of challenges faced by rural Victoria's councils, State and Federal government support is critical to enable co-ordination and collaboration between councils, provide funding for key services that can't be delivered by the market, and encourage innovation through specific programs.

The case studies of alternative service delivery models analysis indicated that the following key success factors should be considered for any future initiatives in rural Victoria regarding service provision:

- Support initiatives that assist in either (a) maintaining a minimum level of service in rural towns or (b) improving accessibility to services located in other locations;
- Ensure a strong focus on initiatives which can enhance both service provision and social capital, for example through community ownership of key assets and services;
- Make efficient use of existing Council and other buildings and infrastructure and encourage flexible use of space for both private and public purposes;
- Encouraging and facilitating collaboration between local government, other levels of government, private investors and volunteer groups to establish partnerships for alternative service delivery;
- Ensure a high level of professionalism and governance is maintained for alternative models, drawing on successful examples discuss in case studies.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES

Public Transport	Health	Education	Other - Economy/Tourism	Other - Liveability/Sustainability
Mallee Regional Partnerships				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise rail infrastructure investments which will improve service frequency and network capacity • Understand demand for sustained and improved public and community transport services, particularly in those areas that are poorly serviced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that regional health services and facilities meet community needs • Provide services tailored to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve regional and rural childcare services to support balanced life/work choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage business growth and diversification to strengthen the resilience of the regional economy • Foster the right conditions for new, high value job creation in the Mallee by supporting research, development and training geared to the needs of key sectors • Develop tourism products and a cohesive regional 'brand identity' to grow our visitor economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to arts and cultural activities and facilities • Enable the region to explore its potential to act as a leader in the development and roll out of renewable energy • Invest in the community infrastructure of the region to support healthy and active lifestyles • Ensure that the needs of rural communities are addressed in emerging policies • Promote collaboration between government, community and business to address cross-border issues • Provide access to funding for priority projects which will enhance community vitality and viability

Public Transport	Health	Education	Other - Economy/Tourism	Other - Liveability/Sustainability
Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnerships				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase connectivity and prosperity through improved transport infrastructure, including roads and public transport 		Support WSM children aged 0-6 to flourish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Local Government can operate sustainably Activate prosperity through Economic Diversification, with a focus on Agriculture and Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased access to high quality mobile and Internet connectivity Facilitate Integrated and publicly available Regional Planning across the whole WSM region Enable Co-ordinated Regional Service Delivery
Great South Coast Regional Partnerships				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in enabling physical infrastructure through upgrade of our road and rail networks, public transport and improved economic and digital infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in health and well-being of our communities through improving our health facilities and tackling lifestyle diseases, substance use, suicide and family violence. 	Invest in education and skills development of our community to improve education attainment and access to university, vocational training and special development, as well to foster pathways to higher education and employment and provide for a skilled workforce that meets the demands of the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in our future economic strengths by developing our tourism attractions such as Great Ocean Road and Budj Bim, supporting Great South Coast food and fibre sector, as well as attracting people to live in our region and providing industry with energy certainty and security. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in our environment and culture through supporting UNESCO World Heritage nomination for Budj Bim and developing our creative industries, arts and culture.
Central Highlands Regional Partnerships				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect our communities locally, regionally and globally through improvement to transport infrastructure and services that promote health, well-being and economic sustainability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a place-based approach to strengthening prevention to improve the health and well-being outcomes of the communities of the Central Highlands. 	Attain jobs growth through the provision of advocacy, planning and support for projects that address challenges including the retention, renewal, recruitment, training and attraction to regional areas and regional jobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a globally recognised advance manufacturing sector through the creation and expansion of an advanced manufacturing cluster in the Central Highlands comprising research and development, industry and education. Position the Grampians Region as the 'Centre of the New Energy Future' to ensure energy security and affordability that generates economic growth and community benefit to the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an agreed plan with government, community and industry that defines 'digital success' for our region and provides the roadmap to realise the social and economic potential of the Central Highlands. Collaborate with government, service providers, sector agencies and local communities to accurately understand the size, scale

Public Transport	Health	Education	Other - Economy/Tourism	Other - Liveability/Sustainability
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate Regional Victoria's Visitor Economy through increased private and government investment that triggers growth in visitor numbers and yield, creating new jobs for the region in the visitor economy. • Maximise opportunities for our diverse food and fibre enterprises to participate and prosper delivering improved employment opportunities and liveability across our regional and rural communities. 	and future trends of homelessness in order to develop a Central Highlands place-based response.
Gippsland Regional Partnership				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport network and digital technologies are current and well-functioning to meet the needs of Gippsland's people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring Gippsland's people meet the health and wellbeing standards of the average Australian. 	Gippslanders have increased aspiration and improved infrastructure to participate and succeed in education at all levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing Victoria's future resource needs and uses while also considering new energy technologies. • Positioning Gippsland as open for business for Agriculture investment and as a leader in food and fibre technology. • To improve employment opportunities in our region. • Boosting the Gippsland tourism industry and increasing visitors to our unique region. 	
Barwon Regional Partnership				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the rail service volume between Geelong and Melbourne, the frequency of rail services between Geelong – Colac – Warrnambool and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice, early interventions and place-based approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the learning and development of vulnerable children in the early years by building parents' capacity as first educators through well targeted programs and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the opportunity for young people to access meaningful, sustainable future focused work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet capacity and access to digital learning and cloud-based resources to improved educational and future job outcomes

Public Transport	Health	Education	Other - Economy/Tourism	Other - Liveability/Sustainability
<p>establish the public transport connection to Torquay/Surf Coast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop transport infrastructure and services planning to enable a truly integrated, accessible, progressive and sustainable private, public and active transport network, joining key population growth areas of Geelong, Bellarine and Surf Coast To enable more productive use of train travel for commuters between the Barwon region and Melbourne 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise educational aspirations and improve educational engagement and achievement rates of school aged children and young people particularly in disadvantaged communities <p>Ensure successful post school transitions for all young people by addressing factors which create barriers and entrench disadvantage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing enabling infrastructure barriers to existing and future investment opportunities Examination of Barwon's existing and future skills demand requirements focusing on innovation and productivity Support the role that small-town centres play in servicing local residents and attracting visitors to the region Support investment in related tourism assets and to leverage the Great Ocean Road Support and facilitate transformative visitor economy projects for the Barwon region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect our high value natural assets and maintain the region's biodiversity Advance new technologies and innovation in the generation and application of renewable energy and energy storage Mitigate the impacts of climate change and sea level rise
Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The people in Loddon Campaspe region want to be better connected. They want great transport connections with increased rail services, faster trains and reliable access to internet so their travel time can be both productive and enjoyable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support communities to achieve real change in preventable health issues. The aim is to encourage more people, to be more active, more often. 	<p>The Regional Partnership wants to promote the importance of reading and speaking to children as this lays the foundations for literacy skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of a network of regional trails across the Loddon Campaspe Region to support healthy and active lifestyles, appreciation of the natural environment and development of a strong tourism experience for people visiting the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The region also wants reliable internet access and connectivity. Explore better ways of interacting, using and taking care of the bush so that it can be here for future generations to enjoy and explore.
Goulburn Regional Partnership				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve connectivity through continued advocacy for the rail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a healthy and engaged population through region-wide 	<p>Support children and young people by actively engaging with young people, advocating for place-based collective impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a sustainable future for agriculture by promoting climate change adaptation, providing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the peri-urban growth corridor by revitalising key locations and

Public Transport	Health	Education	Other - Economy/Tourism	Other - Liveability/Sustainability
network, identifying the economic and social impacts of gaps in regional transport networks and improving digital uptake and inclusion.	health and wellbeing planning, increasing access to creative and artistic activities and supporting initiatives to improve the obesity health status.	approaches, ensuring that the youth service system is as accessible and seamless as possible, and encouraging youth entrepreneurship.	surety in land use planning for agricultural development, and encouraging agri-investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to strengthen and diversify the economy by activating key locations and sectors for investment, improving pathways into education and employment, and ensuring that our roads and public transport system meet current and future needs. 	developing a pipeline of strategic regional infrastructure to support investment.
Ovens Murray Regional Partnership				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve transport connectivity so that it becomes an effective enabler for the region's communities, industries and service providers, with a particular focus on passenger rail improvements on the North East line. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen community health and wellbeing, particularly for disadvantaged communities and vulnerable families and reduce the impact of family violence through access to integrated mental health services and resilience building programs; integrated service delivery models; and place-based initiatives, including public housing urban renewal. 	Improve access to lifelong learning opportunities and create innovative learning pathways that support skills development now and into the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become a 'Smart Region' that connects people, attracts talent, encourages innovation and creates jobs and growth for the 21st century Create a prosperous and sustainable regional economy by growing and expanding the region's key and emerging economic sectors – agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and transport, distribution and logistics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support climate change adaptation, increase the region's focus on renewable energy, support innovative community-based energy initiatives and better protect the natural environment. Improve the liveability, prosperity and resilience of communities; provide better local amenities for residents and visitors to the region; and invest in infrastructure that supports development of the regional economy.

Source: Regional Partnerships – various 2018/19 Budget submissions.

APPENDIX B LITERATURE REVIEW SOURCES

T12. LITERATURE REVIEW SOURCES

Health	Education	Retail/Finance	Public Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Statewide Design, Service and Infrastructure Plan for Victoria's Health System</i>, Victorian Government 2017 • <i>Discussion Paper: Victoria's Rural and Regional Health System, Design and Infrastructure Plan</i>, Deloitte 2016 • <i>Access all areas: New solutions for GP shortages in Australia</i>, Grattan Institute 2013 • <i>Telehealth services in rural and remote Australia: a systematic review of models of care and factors influencing success and sustainability</i>, Journal of Rural and Remote Health 2013 • <i>A Systematic Review of Primary Health Care Delivery Models in Rural and Remote Australia</i>, ANU and Centre for Remote Health 2006 • <i>Systematic Review of Palliative Care in the Rural Setting</i>, Cancer Control 2015 • <i>European Union: The impact of demographic change on European regions</i>, European Union 2015 • <i>Innovative Service Delivery – Meeting the challenges of rural regions</i> OECD 2008 • <i>Models of Allied Health Care in Rural and Remote Australia</i>, Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Access to Education for Rural Students</i>, Victorian Auditor General 2014 • <i>Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education</i>, Federal Government 2017 • <i>Challenges and Sustainability Practises of Frontier Schools in Montana</i>, Montana Schools Alliance 2011 • <i>A Synthesis of International Rural Education Issues and Responses</i>, Rural Educator journal 2011 • <i>School-Community Partnerships in Rural Schools: Leadership, Renewal and a Sense of Place</i>, Peabody Journal of Education 2001 • <i>Draft Rural Education Report</i>, Government of BC 2017 • <i>Advancing rural and remote education in Queensland</i>, Queensland Government 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rural Retail Handbook</i>, Rural Councils Victoria 2013 • <i>Retailing in Rural Municipalities of Victoria</i>, Essential Economics 2013 • <i>Rural retailing: a sector in decline?</i> International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management 2007 • <i>Rural retail business survival: Implications for community developers</i>, Journal of the Community Development Society 2009 • <i>Retail in Rural Regions: Exploring ways to support rural shops</i>, Northern European Scheme 2012 • <i>NSW Retail Expert Advisory Committee Independent Recommendations Report</i> 2017 • <i>Some Features of Financial Services in Regional and Remote Communities</i>, Banking Royal Commission 2017 • <i>Money Matters in the Bush: Inquiry into the Level of Banking and Financial Services in Rural, Regional and Remote Areas of Australia</i>, Federal Government 2004 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Improving Access to Transport for Young People in Rural and Regional Australia</i>, Federal Government 2005 • <i>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe: Older persons in rural and remote areas</i>, United Nations 2017 • <i>The future of rural bus services in the UK</i>, Better Transport 2017 • <i>What Works in Tackling Rural Poverty: An Evidence Review of Interventions to Improve Transport in Rural Areas</i>, Wales Centre for Public Policy 2018

APPENDIX C COUNCIL SURVEY



Services that contribute to liveability - Council Survey

Introduction

Rural Councils Victoria has engaged Urban Enterprise to prepare a research report into the *Delivery of Services that Contribute to Liveability*. This short 5 minute survey is designed to obtain general information from each RCV council, and will be followed by the opportunity for interested councils to liaise directly with RCV and Urban Enterprise on the topic. These consultation sessions will be held in mid-late April, in the regional centres of Ararat, Benalla and Leongatha.

The research is designed to achieve several outcomes, including:

- Gauge the current provision of services in rural & regional communities;
- Identify alternative means by which rural communities can access services that underpin liveability; and
- Identify examples of working models of alternate service delivery.

Services analysed are Health, Education, Retail/Finance and Public Transport.

This work responds to the RCV advocacy relating to population attraction and retention in Rural Victoria, and the importance of access to services in underpinning liveability in rural areas. This research also seeks to respond to service delivery challenges in areas experiencing stagnant or declining population.

Please complete the following 8 questions on behalf of your organisation and submit by 19th April, 2019.



Services that contribute to liveability - Council Survey

* 1. Please provide the following details.

Council

**Name of person
completing survey**

Position (s)

* 2. How important is the delivery of services that contribute to liveability in your council area? (Scale: Not Very Important = 1; Very Important= 5)

1
(Not Very Important)

2

3
(Moderately Important)

4

5
(Very Important)

☐☐☐☐☐

* 3. Why or why not is this an important issue for your council?

Services that contribute to liveability - Council Survey

* 4. How well are each of the following services being delivered in your municipality to meet community needs? (Scale: 1 = Not at all 5 = Very well)

	1 (Not at all)	2	3 (Moderate)	4	5 (Very well)
Hospital / Medical Centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Primary health care (e.g. GPs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allied Health (e.g. Physio, Psychology, Optometry, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pharmacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kindergarten	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Primary schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Secondary schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tertiary (inc. TAFE)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supermarkets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other shops (i.e. hardware stores, small businesses, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Banking branch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post Office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
V/Line trains	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 5. Is a lack or absence of any of the following services negatively impacting the liveability of residents in your municipality, or your ability to attract or retain population? (Select all that apply).

☐ Hospital / Medical Centres

☐ Tertiary (inc. TAFE)

☐ Primary health care (e.g. GPs)

☐ Supermarkets

☐ Allied Health (e.g. Physio, Psychology, Optometry, etc)

☐ Other shops (i.e. hardware stores, small businesses, etc)

☐ Pharmacy

☐ Banking branch

☐ Kindergarten

☐ Post Office

☐ Primary schools

☐ Bus

☐ Secondary schools

☐ V/Line trains

Other (please specify)

* 6. Has your council ever considered or sought to implement/support any alternate service delivery models? E.g. mobile health service, community driven transport scheme, etc.

APPENDIX D RESIDENT SURVEY



Services that contribute to liveability - Resident Survey

Introduction

This survey is intended to obtain more information about how and where rural/regional residents currently access services (health, education, retail, finance and transport) and other important elements of service provision in rural Victoria.

Responses should focus on personal experiences only, or members of your household (i.e. not business related).

Responses will be used to better understand which services contribute the most to residents' liveability and how governments can best respond to optimise provision of and access to these services in rural Victoria.

Services that contribute to liveability - Resident Survey

* 1. What is your place of residence? (please use postcode only)

* 2. What is your household type?

- ☐ Couple household (no children)
- ☐ Family household (one or more parents and child/children)
- ☐ Single (or lone) person household
- ☐ Group household (friends or sharehouse)

Services that contribute to liveability - Resident Survey

Access to Services

Please review the following services and detail your experience with each service.

* 3. How frequently do you access each of the following services? (Please select only one response per row)

	Never	<1 per year	1-2 per year	3-4 times per year	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Hospital / Medical Centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Primary health care (e.g. GPs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allied Health (e.g. Physio, Psychology, Optometry, Social work, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pharmacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kindergarten	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Primary schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Secondary schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tertiary (inc. TAFE)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supermarkets and groceries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other shops (i.e. hardware stores, small businesses, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Banking branch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post Office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
V/Line trains	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 4. Do you access each of these services physically (i.e. in person) or digitally?

	Accessed physically (i.e. go to the service)	Accessed digitally (i.e. via internet, phone etc.)	Both	Do not access
Hospital / Medical Centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Primary health care (e.g. GPs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allied Health (e.g. Physio, Psychology, Optometry, Social work, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pharmacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kindergarten	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Primary schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Secondary schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tertiary (inc. TAFE)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supermarkets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other shops (i.e. hardware stores, small businesses, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Banking branch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post Office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 5. Where is each service that you access located (by geographical area)?

Please note the following when responding to this question:

- Please refer to the list of rural and regional centres below. If the location you visit to access services is one of these, please select the relevant location type (either 'Rural centre' or 'Regional centre').
- If the area is a small town (i.e. a town not listed below as a rural or regional centre), then select 'Small town'.
- If the location is within a Metropolitan Area (i.e. Metropolitan Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide etc.), then select 'Metropolitan'.
- If you do not use the particular service, select 'Don't access this service'.

A rural centre is one of the following:

Alexandra, Ararat, Bacchus Marsh, Bairnsdale, Beaufort, Beechworth, Benalla, Boort, Camperdown, Castlemaine, Colac, Corryong, Daylesford-Hepburn, Donald, Echuca, Edenhope, Euroa, Gisborne, Hamilton, Kerang, Leongatha, Mansfield, Maryborough, Mortlake, Myrtleford, Nhill, Point Lonsdale, Portland, Sale, Stawell, Swan Hill, Teesdale, Wallan, Warracknabeal, Warragul, Wonthaggi, and Yarrawonga.

A regional centre is one of the following:

Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and

Wodonga.

Location

Hospital / Medical
Centres

Primary health care (e.g.
GPs)

Allied Health (e.g.
Physio, Psychology,
Optometry, Social work,
etc)

Pharmacy

Kindergarten

Primary schools

Secondary schools

Tertiary (inc. TAFE)

Supermarkets

Other shops (i.e.
hardware stores, small
businesses, etc)

Banking branch

Post Office

Bus

V/Line trains

* 6. What is the approximate travel time taken to physically access each service?

	Less than 30 minutes	30-60 minutes	60-120 minutes	Over 120 minutes	N/A
Hospital / Medical Centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Primary health care (e.g. GPs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allied Health (e.g. Physio, Psychology, Optometry, Social work, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pharmacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kindergarten	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Primary schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Secondary schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tertiary (inc. TAFE)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supermarkets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other shops (i.e. hardware stores, small businesses, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Banking branch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post Office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
V/Line trains	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 7. Which (if any) of these services are most important to be located close to your place of residence?
Please rank their importance to the liveability. (scale: 1 = Not important; 5 = very important)

	1 (Not important)	2	3 (Somewhat important)	4	5 (Very important)
Hospital / Medical Centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Primary health care (e.g. GPs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allied Health (e.g. Physio, Psychology, Optometry, Social work, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pharmacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kindergarten	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Primary schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Secondary schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tertiary (inc. TAFE)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supermarkets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other shops (i.e. hardware stores, small businesses, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Banking branch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post Office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
V/Line trains	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 8. Which of these services that you access do you think have recently been diminished and/or lost? (e.g. primary school closed down, bank branch moved to larger town, local GP reduced hours)

Please select all relevant responses.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital / Medical Centres | <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary (inc. TAFE) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary health care (e.g. GPs) | <input type="checkbox"/> Supermarkets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allied Health (e.g. Physio, Psychology, Optometry, Social work, etc) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other shops (i.e. hardware stores, small businesses, etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Banking branch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten | <input type="checkbox"/> Post Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary schools | <input type="checkbox"/> Bus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary schools | <input type="checkbox"/> V/Line trains |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

* 9. Please select the 3 services that are most important to your liveability.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital / Medical Centres | <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary (inc. TAFE) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary health care (e.g. GPs) | <input type="checkbox"/> Supermarkets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allied Health (e.g. Physio, Psychology, Optometry, Social work, etc) | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent retailers (i.e. hardware stores, small businesses, etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Banking branch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten | <input type="checkbox"/> Post Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary schools | <input type="checkbox"/> Bus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary schools | <input type="checkbox"/> V/Line trains |

* 10. Which other services (if any) contribute most to the liveability of an area or town?

These are services not already listed in the survey, which could include salons, repair shops, accounting firms, and law firms.

* 11. If you were to consider moving to improve your lifestyle/improve access to services, where would you move to and why?

APPENDIX E CONSULTATION SCHEDULE

The consultation schedule undertaken comprised several different formats and included a variety of stakeholders across the State. This process ensured that findings were as representative of rural communities' issues and opportunities relating to service provision as possible within the project timeframe.

T13. CONSULTATION SCHEDULE

Date	Organisation	Format	Participants/Organisations
12 April 2019	State Government	Phone Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health and Human Services
15 April 2019	Industry	Phone Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bendigo and Adelaide Bank
15 April 2019	State Government	Phone Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Transport
18 April 2019	Local Government	RCV Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCV Member Councils
29 April 2019	Local Government	Workshop (Ararat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moyne Shire Council Pyrenees Shire Council Loddon Shire Council Yarriambiack Shire Council Buloke Shire Council Golden Plains Shire Council
1 May 2019	Local Government	Workshop (Wangaratta)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moir Shire Council Alpine Shire Council Strathbogie Shire Council
14 June 2019	Local Government	Phone Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheryl McKinnon (Loddon Mayor)
14 June 2019	Local Government	Phone Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ellen White (Buloke Shire Cr) Mark Remnant (Buloke Shire)
14 June 2019	Local Government	Phone Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Clarke (Pyrenees Cr)
17 June 2019	Community	Phone Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Lerch (Yackandandah Community Development Company)
18 June 2019	Industry	Phone Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Louise Netherway (Uniting Wimmera)
18 June	Industry/Community	Phone Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Matthews (Rupanyup Community Retail Hub)
20 June 2019	Local Government	Phone Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebecca Hickey (Smythesdale Business, Health and Community Hub)

