

Victoria in focus

Social, economic and environmental changes are shaping Victoria. Some trends are linked to global drivers, while others relate to policy choices or conditions specific to Victoria. There are many similarities between regions, but also key differences that relate to the varied environmental conditions, population profiles and local economies across the state.

LODDEN MALLEE NORTH

- Today: ~128,500 people. 2046: ~160,000 people.
- Relatively diverse community profile, along with highly mobile groups of seasonal and transient workers.
- Agriculture central to economy with a strong irrigation network and growing domestic and Asian demand. Natural advantage for solar energy sector.
- Continuing drought and irrigation systems damage river condition, likely to worsen in future and threaten agriculture, especially horticulture.

WIMMERA SOUTHERN MALLEE

- Today: ~48,000 people. 2046: ~55,000 people.
- State's highest percentage of people aged 65+ (20.7%). Small town population decline.
- Economy focused on cropping and grazing. Significant nature-based tourism assets.
- Likely challenges to agriculture include higher temperatures, less rainfall and associated changes to flowering, planting, pest and disease. Risks to threatened flora and fauna.

GREAT SOUTH COAST

- Today: ~102,000 people. 2046: ~125,000 people.
- Warrnambool one of state's faster growing regional cities.
- Productive land, moderate temperatures and good rainfall support strong food and fibre sector, likely to benefit from increased Asian demand. Renewable energy opportunities.
- Coastline vulnerable to sea level rise. Threats to waterways used by commercial and recreational fishers.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

- Today: ~193,000 people. 2046: ~315,000 people.
- After Melbourne, state's second lowest proportion of people aged 65+ (15.2%)
- Ballarat: Victoria's third biggest city, and a major commuter region to Melbourne. Key industries are hospitality, retail, professional services and a growing education sector.
- Potential growth in rural areas with increased food and fibre production, extractive industries, forestry and renewable energy.
- Likely to experience more frequent fires, higher temperatures and less predictable rain.

LODDON MALLEE SOUTH

- Today: ~195,000 people. 2046: ~295,000 people.
- Bendigo: Victoria's fourth largest city, with commuter travel patterns suggesting jobs are more 'contained' to region than Ballarat.
- Bendigo's economic growth driven by service sectors, manufacturing and tourism. Strong arts scene.
- Natural environment threatened by soil disturbance, salinity and vegetation loss.

GEELONG (G21)

- Today: ~284,500 people. 2046: ~430,000 people.
- Geelong: Victoria's second largest city. Slightly older than average population with sustained residential expansion in recent years and a large Melbourne commuter population.
- Economy in transition: shrinking manufacturing sector and growing services industry supported by expanding and denser urban area and larger workforce catchment.
- Dry soil salinity likely to increase, impacting local agriculture and food production. Increased bushfires and sea level rise may affect tourism.

HUME

- Today: ~276,500 people. 2046: ~375,000 people.
- Includes regional cities, townships, rural residential areas, relatively isolated communities and alpine resorts.
- Located strategically along major transport routes. Varied industry base with productive agriculture sector, especially in Goulburn Valley.
- Tourism likely to face reduced snow depth and shorter seasons from environmental changes.

GIPPSLAND

- Today: ~273,000 people. 2046: ~415,000 people.
- Townships in south-west (closer to Melbourne and near the coast) have experienced higher levels of population growth than other parts of Gippsland in recent decades.
- Economy based on natural resources and commodities – produces 90% of Victoria's electricity. Strong nature-based tourism sector emerging.
- Vulnerable to sea level rise and more frequent bushfires.

MELBOURNE

- Today: ~4.6 M people. 2046: ~7.1 M people
- Nearly 80% of state's jobs by 2046.
- Outer suburbs fastest growing in Australia, especially north and west.
- Mismatch between job and population growth. Central Melbourne: 48% of jobs growth vs 8% of population growth. West subregion: 9% of jobs growth vs 24% of population growth.
- More affordable housing in outer Melbourne, but poorer access to jobs and services.
- Dominant age profiles differ across subregions: young people in centre, older people in east, families in west.
- Pressure on biodiversity from expanding population and settlement. Risks from increased heatwaves and fires.

Source: Based on SGS Economics and Planning, *The current and future state of Victoria: A spatial perspective*, 2016

Note: Estimated resident population for today (2016) is rounded to the nearest 500. Estimated resident population for 2046 is rounded to the nearest 5,000.