

Goulburn Valley Designated Area Migration Agreement (GV DAMA)

Securing Regional Workforce and Economic Growth

Greater Shepparton is one of Victoria's key regional economies, with strengths in agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, healthcare, logistics and education. However, like many regional communities, the region continues to experience significant workforce shortages across a range of skilled and semi-skilled occupations.

For many employers, access to migrant labour is essential to maintaining business operations, supporting growth and delivering critical services. Without reliable workforce pathways, businesses face reduced productivity, constrained investment and ongoing labour shortages.

The Department of Home Affairs is transitioning existing DAMAs toward state-led arrangements, with the Victorian Government currently investigating future delivery and governance models. This presents a significant opportunity to retain the strengths of the existing Goulburn Valley DAMA (GV DAMA); however, without strong regional representation in future arrangements, there is a risk that local workforce priorities and industry needs may not be adequately reflected.

The GV DAMA, covering Greater Shepparton, Moira Shire and Campaspe Shire has been a proven tool for helping regional employers address workforce shortages while supporting population growth, economic development and community sustainability.

Project Snapshot

Item	Details
Advocacy Priority	Retain the existing place-based GV DAMA model and strong regional input into future DAMA administration.
Key Beneficiaries	Regional businesses and industry, essential services and local communities.
Industries Supported	Agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, healthcare, education, logistics, retail and construction.
Regional Outcome	Workforce attraction, business growth, population growth and regional economic development.
Strategic Focus	Regional workforce and economic development.

Investment Ask

Greater Shepparton City Council is seeking a commitment from the Victorian and Australian Governments to retain the existing place-based DAMA model and ensure strong regional input into future DAMA administration and decision-making. Future arrangements should continue to:

- Reflect regional workforce priorities.
- Support timely employer access to skilled migrants.
- Recognise the unique needs of regional economies.
- Preserve collaboration between industry, local government and community stakeholders.

Key Outcomes

Maintaining a place-based DAMA model will:

- Address critical workforce shortages.
- Support business growth and investment.
- Strengthen key regional industries.
- Improve workforce attraction and retention.
- Support population growth and community sustainability.
- Enhance access to essential services.
- Deliver positive outcomes for employers, workers and local communities.

Economic Benefits

A strong regional migration program will:

- Support productivity across key industries.
- Protect food production and manufacturing capacity.
- Enable business investment and expansion.
- Strengthen regional employment and economic growth.
- Support Victoria's export industries and regional competitiveness.

Why This Matters

Regional workforce shortages continue to limit business growth and place pressure on essential services. Local industry, councils and community organisations have developed significant expertise in workforce attraction, employer engagement and migrant settlement.

Maintaining a strong place-based model DAMA model ensures migration outcomes remain aligned with genuine workforce needs and regional development priorities. Regional workforce challenges require regional solutions.

Call to Action

Greater Shepparton City Council is seeking a commitment from the Victorian and Australian Governments to retain the existing place-based DAMA model and ensure strong local input into future DAMA administration and workforce planning arrangements. Supporting a locally informed DAMA model will help businesses access the workers they need, strengthen regional industries and support the continued growth and prosperity of Greater Shepparton, Moira Shire, Campaspe Shire and regional Victoria.

Candidate Commitment

- Support migration settings that address regional workforce shortages.
- Support the retention of a place-based DAMA model and strong regional input into future DAMA administration and workforce planning arrangements.
- Recognise the importance of migration pathways in supporting regional jobs, industry and community growth.

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Access to skilled workers through the DAMA program has been critical in helping regional businesses fill roles that cannot be sourced locally and continue investing in growth.”

PETER DON
PJ's Concrete
Pumping Pty Ltd