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C59**MUNICIPAL SNAPSHOT**

The Macedon Ranges Shire comprises the former Shires of Gisborne, of Newham and Woodend and of Romsey and most of the former Shire of Kyneton. The Shire comprises approximately 1,747 square kilometres and is located midway between Melbourne and Bendigo. It is predominantly rural in character with the exception of the established urban and town/village centres.

Major Transport Corridors

The Calder Freeway and the Melbourne Bendigo rail line form a major transport corridor which serves the western sector of the Shire and links places to the north and south of the Shire.

The Calder Freeway is one of Victoria's main road transport routes and carries in excess of 13,000 vehicles per day. Upgrading of the Calder Freeway has significantly reduced travelling time between Melbourne and the Shire and areas to the north. The construction of the Woodend By-Pass and the completion of the Calder Freeway between Kyneton and Gisborne will reduce commuter times further. The location of the Calder Highway and the development which has been promoted by its use and upgrading have led to impacts on the Shire's environmental features, the most obvious being the Black Forest by-pass section. The Calder Freeway is providing urban growth boundaries to Gisborne, Macedon and Woodend and a residential growth boundary for Kyneton.

The eastern section of the Shire is served by the Melbourne-Lancefield-Tooborac Road, which provides access for communities such as Romsey and Lancefield to Sunbury and the metropolitan area.

Population Profile

The population of the Macedon Ranges Shire area more than doubled between 1971 and 1998. The consistent population growth rate has been due to highway improvements and the preference for "country style living". The total population of the Shire at the 1996 Census was 32,367. The estimated resident population in 1998 was 35,274. The rate of population increase has slowed during the 1990s. The total population increased 4.6% between census 1991 and 1996. This compares with a 43.3% increase in the ten years between 1981 and 1991.

Population Change 1986 – 1996

	1986	1991	1996	CHANGE 1986-96
Macedon Ranges	25,271	29,819	32,367	28.1%

Source: ABS

The population growth has been considerably greater in the south of the Shire near the fringes of metropolitan Melbourne. In contrast, the northern portion of the Shire has not experienced the same level of population growth.

It is predicted that the Shire's population will continue to grow, with recent estimates suggesting a population of more than 46,000 by 2020. Attractive living environments, increased commuting to Melbourne and growth in home-based occupations will drive population and economic growth over the next 20 years. Given the characteristics and features of the Shire, there will be a continuing need to manage growth and development to protect State and regional values and natural resources.

The age structure of the population varies in the different communities in Macedon Ranges. These differences include:

The Kyneton area has a higher proportion of persons in the 65 years age group (12.6%) compared to 8.4 % for the total Shire.

There are high proportions of younger families in Romsey, Riddells Creek, Gisborne and Woodend, and lower proportions in Kyneton.

The level of commuting has been steadily increasing. Journey-to-work destination data from the 1996 Census indicate that 5,685 people living in the former Shires of Newham and Woodend, Gisborne and Romsey travel to the north west suburbs of Melbourne (4,250) or Inner Melbourne (1,435) for work. The number of Shire residents travelling to work destinations within the Calder Corridor declined from 3,353 to 2,704 between 1991 and 1996.

Settlement Pattern

The Shire's settlement pattern comprises major urban centres of varying size located throughout the whole Municipality and providing lifestyle diversity and choice. Significant increases have occurred in the population of all urban centres in the past 20 years. The majority of the Shire's population lives in Kyneton, Gisborne/New Gisborne, Woodend and Romsey. Almost all commercial, civic and employment opportunities are located within these four centres.

Riddells Creek, Macedon and Mount Macedon are popular centres for people choosing to live in smaller urban communities, with relatively easy access to Melbourne. Smaller centres or villages with limited or no services include Darraweit Guim, Monegeetta, Newham, Carlsruhe, Cobaw, Ashbourne, Bullengarook, Cherokee, Couangalt, Kerrie, Heskett, Bolinda, East Trentham, Tylden, Rochford and Lauriston.

There are limited local employment opportunities, especially for young people, in the Shire's urban centres and smaller settlements. Public transport facilities and services are limited and are confined to the Calder Freeway corridor.

A number of smaller settlements are constrained in future growth by limited or absent infrastructure and services.

The Municipality has retained a strong rural character, while accommodating this increase of settlement and development in the area.

Settlement Structure and Roles

URBAN CENTRE	FUNCTION	ROLE	POPULATION TOTAL	
			1996	% CHANGE 1986-1996
Gisborne New Gisborne	Major Urban Centre	Centre with some growth potential due to its proximity to Melbourne, with a high commuter population.	4047	74.2
			(2006) 6398	% Change 1996-2006 58.0
Kyneton	Major Urban Centre	Rural based centre providing for local employment with the largest commercial/business centre. There is potential for growth.	3737	-6.8

URBAN CENTRE	FUNCTION	ROLE	POPULATION TOTAL	
			1996	% CHANGE 1986-1996
Woodend	Major Urban Centre	Environmental and infrastructure issues prevent further significant urban growth.	2983	34.4
Romsey	Major Urban Centre	Compact township with community focus which has a high commuter population due to its proximity to Melbourne.	2332	83.4
Riddells Creek	Service Centre	Compact commuter township servicing immediate area. The range of services is limited. A railway station is located in the town.	1378	19.5
Lancefield	Service Centre	Small township servicing immediate area with limited services.	1097	32.8
Macedon	Village/ Service Centre	Small township servicing immediate area with limited services. A railway station is located in the town.	1921	5.6
Mt Macedon	Village/ Service Centre	Small township servicing immediate area with limited services.	Not available	
Malmsbury	Service Centre	Small rural township servicing the immediate area with limited services.	509	11.1
Darraweit Guim Tylden Clarkefield Newham	Village	Small settlements servicing their immediate areas with limited services. A railway station is located at Clarkefield.	Not available	

Calder Corridor

The Calder Corridor is the link between Melbourne and Bendigo. It comprises the Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander and Greater Bendigo municipalities. Regional development issues within the corridor include improvements to road and sewerage infrastructure, extension of the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne and managing growth in the main centres. The upgrade of the Calder Freeway is nearing completion and will improve travel between metropolitan Melbourne and the municipality.

Quality of Lifestyle

The Shire is renowned for its high quality “country style” lifestyle and its pristine landscapes and forests. These qualities have attracted residents and visitors since early settlement.

Townships in the Shire have their own distinctive character with tree lined avenues and “turn of the century” streetscapes, houses, commercial and public buildings. Wide main streets are a feature of Romsey, Gisborne and Woodend.

The popularity of the Shire's urban living environments coupled with its rural character has been a source of rejuvenation. However, urban development has placed pressure on the Shire's natural environment, management of effluent in some unsewered areas and increased the clearing of some forested areas.

Agriculture

A significant portion of the Macedon Ranges Shire is used for agricultural purposes. Farming areas make a valuable contribution to the Shire's economy and include the specialist activity of viticulture. High quality soils are situated between Lancefield and Romsey, in the Kyneton district and north of Woodend/Newham and Heskett.

Large farm holdings are predominantly located in the northern part of the Shire. Agricultural activities in the Shire are dominated by broad scale cropping and grazing, but also include timber plantations, the horse industry and grape growing. Traditional farming activities are declining in favour of more intensive agriculture, such as vineyards and other horticultural pursuits.

Rural areas in the Shire provide important buffer areas between urban areas and the Melbourne metropolitan area.

Tourism

Macedon Ranges Shire is the centre of a regionally significant tourism industry. The tourism industry is, and will continue to be, a growing component of the local and regional economy. The Shire, together with the Hepburn Shire, make up Victoria's "Macedon Ranges and Spa Country" Tourism Region. This region is extremely popular with both domestic and international visitors due to its rich history, natural attractions, top quality wineries, historic gardens and proximity and accessibility to the Melbourne metropolitan area.

Business and Industry

The Shire has a small, but robust commercial and industrial sector. Kyneton has the major concentration of commercial and industrial development. Gisborne / New Gisborne is also one of the Shire's key economic centres with growing retail, industrial, commercial and office sectors. The major urban centres have busy and expanding shopping precincts. Tourism retailing and attractions are significant activities in these precincts. The heritage streetscapes of Kyneton are acknowledged as significant attractions for tourism, retailing and visits. Industrial areas are an important employment source and provide a range of services to the region.

Natural Environment and Resources

The Shire contains many areas of environmental and landscape significance. A feature of the natural environment is the diversity and contrast of landscape types including forested ranges, river valleys and wide vistas of rural landscapes. Many landscapes in the Shire have been recognised as being of State significance.

Macedon Ranges Shire contains a modified landscape with significant remnant vegetation. These forests form a defining element of the Shire's character and identity. They provide significant fauna habitats. Black Forest and the Cobaw Forest are renowned for their scenic and landscape characters. Some forests (such as the pine plantation in the Shire's south) perform an economic function. Residential expansion at the urban edge of Woodend and other towns has led to a loss of native vegetation, increased fire risk, drainage problems, habitat loss, destruction of habitat links, land erosion and weed problems.

The Shire forms significant parts of the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment and Land Protection Region and the North Central Catchment and Land Protection Region and

contains a number of regionally important reservoirs. Large areas of the Shire form open catchments for a series of major reservoirs including Rosslynne, Eppalock, Malmsbury, Lauriston and Upper Coliban. Extensive areas are within proclaimed water catchments and land use determination areas. The management of land use and development to ensure the quality of the water in these storages is a critical consideration for planning decisions.

The ongoing implementation of the regional catchment management strategies for both Catchment and Land Protection Regions needs to be co-ordinated with the planning scheme.

The Shire contains important stone resources that are able to support major markets. These resources need to be protected from inappropriate development to enable their value to be realised under relevant environmental and amenity protection measures. The State Planning Policy Framework sets out objectives for the identification and protection of stone resources through the concept of Extractive Industry Interest Areas. The purpose of these areas is to provide a basis for the long term protection of stone resources, assist Councils in long term strategic planning and to create awareness that the extractive industry is a possible land use in these areas.

In recognising the importance of these resources, their utilisation needs to be balanced against the recognised landscape values of the area.

Cultural Heritage

There are many sites and features of national, state, regional and local historic, architectural and cultural significance in the Shire. Additionally, there are sites of Aboriginal cultural significance. Many towns and areas were developed prior to the gold rush. Development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been significant. Examples of this heritage are seen today in streetscapes, buildings and other landmarks. In the rural areas early settlement and farming practices represent significant cultural associations and relationships for the community.