

21.02 MUNICIPAL PROFILE

19/01/2006
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21.02-1 Location

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Central Goldfields Shire is located in north west Victoria, approximately 140 km from Melbourne. The Shire comprises some 1500 square kilometres of land and is one of the smaller rural shires. Municipal boundaries are shared with Hepburn, Mount Alexander, Loddon, Pyrenees and Northern Grampians Shires.

Maryborough is the Shire's largest centre and is located on the Pyrenees Highway. Maryborough is situated 164 kilometres from Melbourne and approximately 60 km from Ballarat and Bendigo. The geographic centre of the State of Victoria is located within the Shire.

21.02-2 Regional context

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Central Goldfields Shire is located in Central Victoria and is part of the Goldfields Tourist Region, a region that promotes tourism themes of gold and mining heritage.

Central Goldfields is located in the Loddon and Avoca River catchments which extends from the Great Dividing Range in the south to the Murray River floodplain to the north. Catchment management and planning is the responsibility of the North Central Catchment Management Authority

A population of over 200,000 resides in the wider region within a 100km radius of Maryborough.

21.02-3 Historical development

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The cultural landscape of the Shire and region has been shaped by a number of historical themes. First inhabitants of the area were the Aboriginal clan Dja dja wurrung. Evidence today of this occupation includes middens, sacred trees, Aboriginal rock wells and a ceremonial site.

The exploratory expedition led by Major Mitchell through the area in 1836 gave impetus to the taking up of large tracts of lands from 1840 by squatters for the grazing of mainly sheep. Some fine examples of bluestone homes and remnants of sheep washes and shepherd huts, still in existence today, testify to this era of first white settlement.

The gold rush greatly influenced the landscape of the region and gave birth to a number of bustling townships. Deep lead mining took over from the alluvial rushes and returned substantial yields with some mines continuing to operate right through until c 1914.

Land within the Shire was divided up under the Land Acts of the 1860's and 1870's. Farming families began to take up mostly 320 acre farms in the area from the 1860's.

The settlement pattern and agricultural activity of the 1860's and 1870's has broadly determined the land use patterns that the region relies on today. Small townships, although much fewer in number and size, continue to act as service centres for their respective farming hinterlands. Today most of the Shire is used for agriculture serviced by small towns. Areas of State Forest are interspersed through the rural areas of the Shire.

21.02-4 Settlement Pattern

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The main and largest centre is the compact heritage city of Maryborough. It is the administrative centre for the shire. In 1996 Maryborough had a population of 7,381 people.

Dunolly (668) is the next largest township, followed by Carisbrook (579) and Talbot (334). Bealiba, Moliagul, and Timor/Bowenvale each comprise fewer than 200 people.

Rural residential and farmlet development surround Maryborough and the heritage towns.

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Population

The Shire’s population was 12,914 in 1996. The Shire experienced a decline in population of 1.35% from its 1991 population of 13,092.

Maryborough experienced a minor population decline between 1991-1996. With the exception of Carisbrook all townships had minor population declines between 1991 and 1996.

The rural areas of the Shire have experienced consistent population growth over the past two decades. Most of this rural residential type development has occurred at the edge of Maryborough, Dunolly and Talbot.

POPULATION CHANGE - SHIRE, TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS

	1981	1986	1991	1996	Average Annual Growth Rate
Maryborough	7858	7705	7623	7381	81-96 - 0.4% 91-96 - 0.6%
Dunolly	621	649	686	668	81-96 + 0.5% 91-96 - 0.5%
Carisbrook	358	472	557	579	81-96 + 3.3% 91-96 + 0.8%
Rural Balance	2112	2672	3307	3360	81-96 + 3.1% 91-96 + 0.3%
Total Shire			13092	12914	91-96 -0.27%

Regional Victoria In Fact : 1996 Census Statistics For Victoria’s Local Government Areas

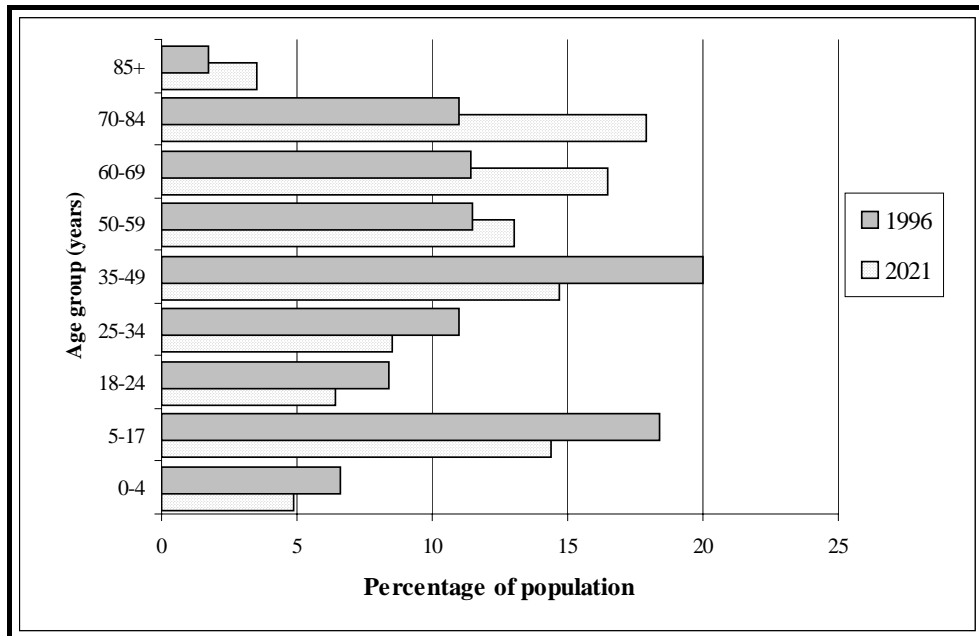
Population projections by the Department of Infrastructure envisage that the shire will experience minimal net population growth. The forecast annual average percentage change from 1996-2011 is estimated to range between 0.58% - 0.69%.

Based on population forecasts in Victoria in Future (1996), the Shire’s population is expected to increase by about 1,100 people for the period 1996-2011. The additional population will require some 450 dwellings.

When compared with regional Victoria, the Shire has the following demographic features:

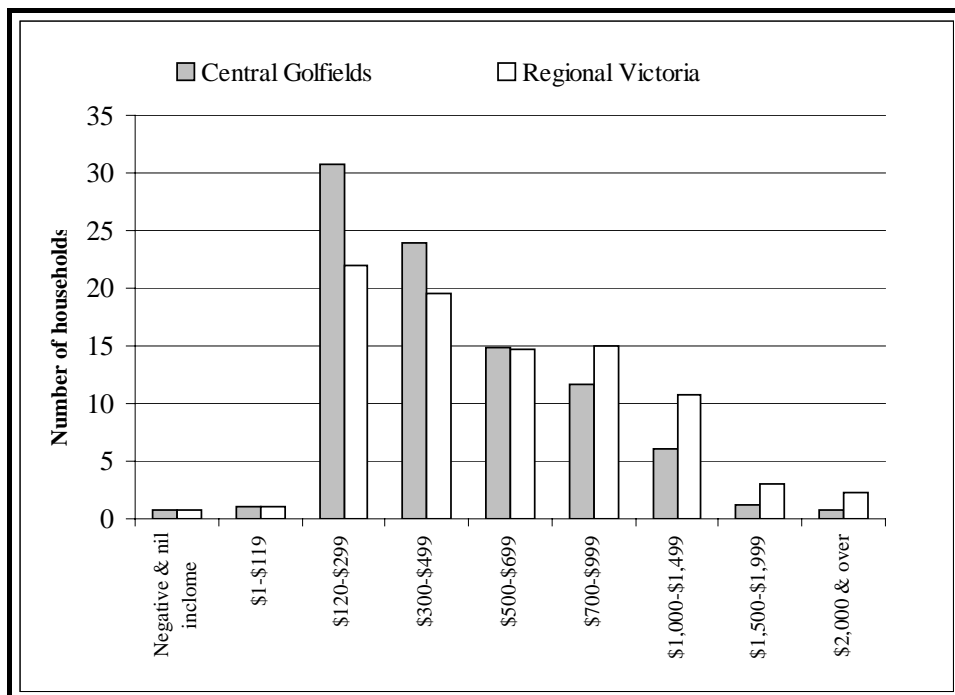
- An ageing population with high proportions in the 50-59, 60-69 and 70 + age groups.
- Lower proportions in the 25-34 and 35-49 age groups when compared with averages for Regional Victoria and the State.
- Households are generally of a smaller size with higher proportions of one and two person households and lower proportions of three and four person households.
- Lower proportions of families with children and higher proportions of families without children.
- A lower average household income with approximately 31.% of households with a gross weekly income of \$120-\$299 and 24 % of households with an income of between \$300-\$499.

POPULATION AGE STRUCTURE 1996 AND 2021; CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE



Source: Department of Infrastructure, 1996. Victoria in Future.

WEEKLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME 1996; CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE



Source: Department of Infrastructure, 1998. Regional Victoria in Fact.

21.02-6 Employment

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The workforce of the Shire numbers about 4,000. Central Goldfields Shire has a comparatively high level of manufacturing employment. Twenty-eight per cent of the

employed workforce is employed in manufacturing compared to 13.5 % for Regional Victoria. Proportions are high for both males and females in this industry group.

Wholesale and retail trade, community and business services are significant industry groups for employment which is largely due to Maryborough’s sub regional status as a centre that services a wide catchment area.

Agriculture is a significant but a declining source of employment in the Shire.

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Housing

Dwelling types in the Shire show considerable variation from State averages. Separate housing as a proportion of total housing stock is 10% higher (92.8% of dwellings) than the corresponding State average.

Home-ownership in Central Goldfields Shire is stronger than for the State with 56% of dwellings owned compared to 41.5% for the State. Private rental housing comprises 10.2% of housing stock in the Shire which is substantially less than for the State average (17.5%).

The median house price level is around \$70,000 giving the Central Goldfields Shire a competitive housing advantage.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE

Industry

Employment by Industry	Employed Persons		
	No	%	Rvic%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	329	8.2	12.4
Mining	34	0.8	0.5
Manufacturing	1,115	27.9	13.5
Electricity, gas and water	26	0.6	1.4
Construction	170	4.2	5.9
Wholesale trade	116	2.9	4.7
Retail trade	615	15.4	14.4
Accommodation, cafes, restaurants	148	3.7	4.5
Transport and Storage	143	3.6	3.3
Communication Services	41	1.0	1.5
Finance and Insurance	78	1.9	2.4
Property and business services	141	3.5	5.8
Govt. administration and defence	152	3.8	4.2
Education	259	6.5	7.5
Health and community services	353	8.8	9.9
Cultural and recreational services	41	1.0	1.7
Personal and other services	127	3.2	3.3
Non-classifiable and not stated	113	2.8	3.0

Source: Department of Infrastructure, 1998. Regional Victoria in Fact.

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Natural Environment

The Region has a Mediterranean climate with warm to hot dry summers, and cold, wet winters.

Land management types in the Shire include high riverine plains in the Dunolly, Bealiba and Natte Yallock areas; volcanic plains and rises at the Moolort Plains and at Talbot and east of Carisbrook; metamorphic plains and ridges south of Bealiba and west of Dunolly; granite to the south of Bealiba and south east of Bealiba; and sedimentary hills and rises around Maryborough, Dunolly and Carisbrook.

Central Goldfields Shire contains significant areas of remnant vegetation, notably its stands of Box-Ironbark forest. Maryborough is surrounded by ironbark forest. The Shire is located within the heart of the Box-Ironbark ecosystem. Box-Ironbark vegetation communities have been identified as a priority for protection. Less than 15% of Box-Ironbark vegetation remains in Victoria. Other remnant vegetation include grasslands and grassy woodlands, riparian and wetlands. There is significant roadside vegetation under Council management.

The Box-Ironbark forests of the Central Goldfields Shire provide habitat for a wide diversity of flora and fauna which are unique to this ecosystem (Maryborough Bushland Conservation Study 1995). Golden Wattles, spring wildflowers and the striking Red Ironbarks are characteristic features of the region.

Prominent features of the natural landscape include Paddy's Ranges State Park and Mt Bealiba Range.

Large tracts of land managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment are used for timber production. The area has the potential for the harvesting of native hardwood species for furniture production.

The Shire is in the south west of the Loddon River catchment. Several creeks including the Bet Bet, Emu, Timor, Tullaroop and McCallums Creeks, traverse the Shire and the Avoca River forms part of its western boundary with the Pyrenees and Northern Grampians Shires. Other major water features include Lake Cairn Curran, and Tullaroop and Laanecoorie Reservoirs.

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Agriculture

The gross value of agricultural production in the Shire in 1996-97 was around \$19.7 million.

Cropping is significant and comprises wheat, lupins, canola (and other oil seed), peas, lucerne, oats and other fodder crops. Crops are harvested for local, national and export markets. Beef and sheep raising are also well represented. Productive irrigated agricultural enterprises with water supplied from the Loddon River are located to the north of the Shire.

A small but important honey industry is focused on the Box Ironbark forests. There is a growing interest in viticulture in the shire and an established and expanding wine industry in the nearby Pyrenees district.

Land degradation problems such as soil erosion, soil salinity and algal blooms in creeks and reservoirs have the potential to affect levels of productivity of the agricultural industry in the longer term.

Major Vic Grain Terminals are located at Dunolly and Moolort and a minor facility is located at Bealiba.

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Industry and Business

The Shire's economy is reliant on a strong manufacturing base. The main areas of manufacturing activity are printing, publishing, meat and poultry products and a range of

food processing including honey and confectionery. These industries include national and international companies and are export oriented.

The Maryborough region has long been a region which has actively pursued and facilitated the development of industry. Recent expansions of existing industries and establishment and relocation of several new industries demonstrates the Shire's manufacturing potential.

A small number of national companies such as Nestle, Macphersons and Capilano Honey have establishments in the Maryborough area. Other major industries include Australian Printing Group, P&N Engineering, Davis Poultry and Penney and Lang Abattoirs. Most industrial activity is found in small industries located in the Maryborough-Carisbrook area. The larger companies are generally reliant on value adding to agricultural products.

Gold mining has again become very active in the Shire and general region, including substantial new exploration activity. Timber furniture making is an emerging industry.

21.02-11 Retail and Commerce

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Maryborough has a strong retail sector. There is approximately 34,000 square metres of ground floor retail and commercial space in Maryborough. The Central Business Area (CBA) trades strongly within a primary catchment of approximately 17,000 people including the populations of Maryborough, Avoca, Bealiba, Carisbrook, Dunolly, Moonambel, Redbank and Talbot as well as the Shire's rural and rural residential areas. Weekly or fortnightly shopping trips are typically made to Maryborough. Limited expansion of the Maryborough CBA will be required in the future.

Dunolly has the role of a district service centre and provides a good range of retail, business, entertainment and recreation services for the town and district population it serves. Other urban centres have convenience type stores serving local and district populations.

21.02-12 Infrastructure

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Maryborough is served with reticulated sewerage and water. Bealiba, Carisbrook, Dunolly and Talbot have reticulated water supplies. Central Highlands Region Water Authority (CHRWA) is responsible for reticulated water and sewerage at Maryborough. CHRWA is to provide reticulated sewerage connection services for Carisbrook in 2000-2001. Water supply to these urban centres is supplied from Evansford and Tullaroop Reservoirs.

Supply of water and the provision of sewerage to the north of the Shire are the responsibility of Coliban Region Water Authority. Water supply to Dunolly and Bealiba is available from Laanecoore Reservoir. Coliban Water propose to sewer Dunolly in 2001 as part of their Envirosafe 2000-2001 program.

Natural gas is supplied to Maryborough and Carisbrook. A natural gas transmission pipeline supplying the Wimmera towns of Ararat, Stawell and Horsham runs from Carisbrook to Ararat.

Rail lines bisect the Shire. The Ballarat to Mildura line traverses the shire from the south to the north and the Castlemaine to Ararat line from the east to the west. These rail lines carry large tonnages of freight mainly wheat, oats and other bulk seed crops, fertilisers, bulk fuel and general parcel freight.

The Ararat-Dunolly rail line (via Maryborough) is standard gauge whereas the Melbourne-Mildura lines are broad gauge. A large portion of Western Victoria is serviced by standard gauge rail. Dunolly and Maryborough are serviced by both standard and broad gauges. Grain silos at Dunolly are used to tranship grain between gauges.

Urban and rural settlement is served by several State and local roads. The Pyrenees Highway crosses the shire in an east -west direction, passing through Maryborough and Carisbrook and providing links to the Calder and Sunraysia Highways. A local network links Maryborough with the townships of Carisbrook, Dunolly and Talbot. VLine buses

provide passenger services to Castlemaine, Ballarat and Melbourne. A Goldfields Highway linking Maryborough with Bendigo and Ballarat is a strategic objective.

21.02-13 Heritage

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The world's largest gold nugget “The Welcome Stranger” (2,360 ounces) was found near the town of Moliagul. The Shire's goldfields heritage includes historic centres of Maryborough, Dunolly and Talbot. Maryborough's 19th Century civic precinct, Princes Park and the magnificent late Victorian Railway Station are outstanding examples of Maryborough's built heritage. The main streets of Dunolly and Talbot are among the most intact heritage streetscapes in the goldfields region.

Comprehensive heritage studies (post European settlement) have been undertaken for Maryborough and all districts of the Shire.

Local tourism is an important and growing industry for the shire and is based around the heritage of the gold period associated with the historic townships of Talbot, Dunolly, Bealiba, Carisbrook, Majorca, Amherst, Timor/Bowenvale and Betley. Maryborough's well preserved heritage features including the civic precinct and the railway station have significant tourist attraction. These townscapes are complemented by environmental features such as the Box Ironbark forests including Paddy Ranges State Park.

21.02-14 Tourism

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The Shire's tourism potential is related to its genuine and intact goldfields heritage. The Shire has the potential to play a more prominent role in the Goldfields Tourist Region. The “Golden Way” Touring Route offers a range of attractions on the old gold route. The Shire benefits from its proximity to the “Goldfields Spa Pyrenees Region” located between the regions of Ballarat and Bendigo.

The recent restoration of the Maryborough Railway Station and its emergence as an icon tourist venue together with other heritage and tourism initiatives have improved the local tourism environment and promotion of the Central Goldfields.

The recent increase in tourist visits to the nearby spa and wine districts provides opportunities for tourism accommodation services in the Central Goldfields Shire.