

21 MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT

31/05/2007
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21.01 MUNICIPAL PROFILE

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The Corangamite Shire was formed in September 1994 and comprises the former municipalities of the Town of Camperdown, the Shires of Hampden and Heytesbury, part of the Shire of Otway, and small parts of the Shires of Mortlake and Warrnambool. It has an area of 4,600 square kilometres, and extends approximately 120km north to south and 45 km east to west.

Corangamite Shire is part of the Western District of Victoria. It lies between the Glenelg Highway in the north and the Great Ocean Road in the south. It is also traversed in an east-west direction by the Hamilton and Princes Highways. These highways are important links to major centres of population at Geelong to the east, Ballarat to the north east, and Hamilton and Warrnambool to the west.

The topography of the shire is variable. In the north, there are relatively flat plains with a large number of lakes that are part of a system that has international significance. The volcanic cones in the centre of the shire are also significant. In the south, the landscape is more undulating. The coastline is a key feature of the shire and the offshore rock formations, which include the Twelve Apostles, attract large numbers of tourists.

Population

The Corangamite Shire had an estimated resident population in 2001 of 16,675. Camperdown is the largest township in the shire with a population of 3,130 [2001 census]. The next largest townships are Terang [1,862] and Cobden [1,420]. These townships, and other smaller settlements, have developed as service centres for the surrounding rural areas. The coastal townships of Princetown and Port Campbell service the tourism industry and there is a small fishing industry based at Port Campbell.

With the exception of Port Campbell, the population of townships in the shire had been declining by up to 12%. However, during the last census period half the townships have increased their population and the others have reduced their rate of decline. The total increase in population in towns was 312 persons and the total decrease was 96 persons. The primary source of decline in population numbers in the shire was from the 'rural balance' which declined by 541 persons from 8,175 to 7,163 [Towns in Time]. The most significant increases have been experienced in Port Campbell (+178) and Timboon (+102). This shifting in population is expected to continue as the farming community ages, changes in rural operations occur and city dwellers seek an alternative lifestyle along the coast or in a rural setting.

Victoria in Future demographic projections, based on preliminary 2001 Census data, estimate the maintenance of the population in the southern half of the shire at around the 8,000 person mark. In the north the continued decline is expected from just under 11,000 to match the south at around 8,000 by 2031. Interestingly, the estimates for dwelling numbers are predicted to rise over this period by about 1,000, with the majority of this increase expected up to 2011.

Consistent with broader trends, the population of the shire is projected to age with the proportion of the population over the age of 60 increasing from 21% in 2001 to 28% in 2011 and the proportion 19 years and under decreasing from 29% to 25% over the same period.

Agriculture

The shire has large areas of highly productive agricultural land. The northern areas are used mainly for grazing, both sheep and cattle, with some cropping. In the south, the land is

mainly used for dairying. The Heytesbury dairy settlement area, which was one of the state's largest agricultural developments, is in this part of the shire.

Agriculture is by far the most important segment in the local economy with the various agricultural industries generating approximately \$242 million worth of product and this represented 4.66% of Victoria's agricultural production.

Milk production contributed \$154 million or 63% of the total agricultural production of the shire. In 1993, this represented approximately 11.5% of Victoria's total milk production. The wool, beef and cropping segments are also significant.

In 1995, forty-six percent of the shire's workforce was engaged in the agricultural, forestry and fishing industries. Manufacturing, using milk as the raw product, is an important industry in the shire.

Tourism

Tourism forms a significant and growing part of the shire's economic base. The Port Campbell National Park and the Bay of Islands Coastal Park combine to form a linear reserve along 65 km of Victoria's southern coastline. The parks' sheer cliffs and gorges, the arches and the off-shore stacks form one of the most scenic and best known coasts in Australia. The parks contain significant examples of coastal environments, including diverse heathlands, which provide a refuge for a wide range of plants and animals. Wetlands, coastal cliffs, off-shore islands and rock stacks provide habitat for many bird species. The parks' diversity of natural values, outstanding coastal scenery and accessibility along the Great Ocean Road make them attractive for sightseeing, nature observation, fishing, surfing and walking. Parks Victoria estimated that, in 2001/2002 just under 3 million people visited the Port Campbell National Park and 0.75 million visited the Bay of Islands Coastal Park. These figures exceed previous projections and a growth rate of about 10%pa in tourist numbers is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. This places great pressure on infrastructure in the coastal area and provides impetus to attract tourists inland. Identification, development and promotion of inland features is being pursued by the community and council.

Landscape

As well as the natural attractions along the coastline, the shire has a number of significant natural landscape features. These include the volcanic cones and crater lakes, and the extensive lake system that has Ramsar classification. Of particular note are Lake Gnotuk and Lake Bullen Merri and their surrounds which are both internationally recognised for their scientific, environmental and landscape significance.

Heritage

The cultural heritage of the Shire is rich and is comprised of both natural and built items and places. Much is represented in the layout and pattern of historic rural townships, individual buildings, precincts, monuments, significant gardens, formal plantings and tree lined avenues, rural holdings such as dry-stone boundary fences, homesteads and outbuildings and Aboriginal cultural heritage sites. Significant cultural heritage items and places include the old Timboon township including its grave site and hotel, Timboon railway trestle bridge, Finlay Avenue and Manifold Street Conservation Precinct in Camperdown, the collection of fine local architect designed homes and rural homesteads, the historic townscape of Skipton, Camperdown Botanic Gardens, Mt Leura, Mt Sugarloaf and Mt Elephant reserves, the hundreds of lineal kilometres of rural dry stone walls, as well as several honour avenues. There is also a significant number of registered Aboriginal cultural heritage sites within the Shire which include mounds, middens and burial remains.

These sites are a significant part of the attraction of the area as a place in which to live, visit, do business and invest.

Infrastructure

The availability of water and sewerage infrastructure has an impact on the ability of townships to grow. Wannon Water is the body responsible for the provision of water and sewerage infrastructure for a majority of the Shire of Corangamite, with Central Highlands Water at Ballarat being responsible for the Skipton township.

All townships have piped water supplies usually provided from the Otways via the North Otway Pipeline. Port Campbell and Timboon are supplied from a deep groundwater aquifer. Generally, current supplies are adequate and works in progress or planned are aimed at improving water quality.

Camperdown, Cobden, Port Campbell, Terang and Timboon are served by sewerage treatment plants. Wannon Water is planning expansion works in the industrial waste water treatment plant for Camperdown and an expansion at the Port Campbell plant. Lismore, Derrinallum, Noorat, Glenormiston and Darlington do not have reticulated sewerage services at this time but opportunities to rectify this are being pursued.

Central Highlands Water extended the Ballarat urban water supply to Skipton in 2003. Investigations for the provision of sewerage to the township are nearing completion and should be commissioned in mid 2005.