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VC37**What is the current situation?**

Glenelg Shire was formed from the former municipalities of the City of Portland, Shire of Glenelg and most of the Shire of Heywood. The Shire embraces a geographical area of 6,212 square kilometres and is located in the far south-west of Victoria adjoining South Australia. The 1996 estimated resident population was 20,848 persons. About one-third of the Shire's land area is public land covering significant areas of reserved forest, Crown land, National Parks and coastal reserves.

The wider regional context of the Shire provides substantial economic strength. The deep water port at Portland is able to serve a region which is commonly known as the Greater Green Triangle and embraces the regional centres of Mt Gambier, Warrnambool and Horsham and surrounding rural areas.

The Shire's economy is based around service industries, timber production, grazing, fishing, and manufacturing. In terms of services and infrastructure, the Shire is fortunate that the larger towns of Portland, Casterton and Heywood are serviced by reticulated water and sewerage and provide a range of community facilities. Portland requires augmentation of its sewerage treatment infrastructure to ensure industrial capacity for the future. Infrastructure provision is lacking within the smaller towns of Dartmoor and Nelson and is a constraint on the development of these towns.

Major forces and trends which impact on the Glenelg Shire are:

- The Shire has one of only two aluminium smelters in the State.
- Cropping and grazing are decreasing in importance relative to timber production, fishing, tourism, services and value-added processing.
- Agriculture, despite some recent downturns and commodity price issues, is a major employer and is responsible for over \$75m worth of output annually. Beef, wool, lambs and milk are the principal commodities. The timber industry is worth over \$110 million and the fishing industry in excess of \$50 million to the Shire economy. Few regional areas in the State are able to draw upon such a scale and diversity of product.
- The role of the Port is increasing in relation to western Victoria and south-east South Australia. There is a need for the upgrading of supporting transport and storage infrastructure. There is potential for the port to act as a major maritime industry service centre.
- There is greater recognition of cultural heritage and the role of Portland and the south-west of the State as the birthplace of Victoria.
- In contrast to other areas of the State, there is a wide variety of horticultural product such as nurseries, vegetables, orchard fruit, cut flowers, viticulture and wine production. Collectively these have a small total value but offer considerable opportunities for further development.
- Tourism is of growing significance including the establishment of a maritime museum at Portland, and the better marketing of the entry points to the Shire from South Australia.
- There is greater awareness of and concern for the environment, sustainable land management, cultural heritage, the arts, education and training.
- The assessment of the existing natural resource base indicates that there are significant issues relating to dry land salinity, pest plant and pest animal invasion, soil erosion, stream erosion, coastal dune erosion, induced waterlogging, water quality deterioration and loss of flora and fauna diversity throughout the Shire. Sustained action on these issues will raise productivity and income levels, ensure a more sustainable economy and reduce environmental degradation.
- Population loss has been experienced in many rural areas and some small towns in recent years, while population growth has been slow in Portland. Based on current trends there will be a slight fall in the Shire's population over the next fifteen years unless specific actions are taken to reverse the trends. The Shire's goal is to reverse this population loss and aim for a

significant increase in population and household growth. In line with national trends there is likely to be an increasing proportion of aged persons in the community.

“Victoria in Future - The Victorian Government’s Population Projections for the State’s Local Government Areas 1996-2021” (Department of Infrastructure 1996) estimates that the Glenelg Shire’s 2011 projected population will be 20,721. Despite the projected fall in population due to projected lower household sizes, there will be a net increase of 124 occupied houses over the period. These changes are not expected to be uniform over the Shire with most growth occurring in Portland. The population aged over 60 years is expected to grow from 17.5% of the population in 1996 to 22.1% of the population in 2011.