

**21.01**19/01/2006  
VC37**MUNICIPAL PROFILE**

Horsham Rural City has a population of 17,807 people, of which almost 13,000 live in the regional centre of Horsham. Approximately 400 people live in the historic township of Natimuk, and the balance of the population reside across the rural areas of the municipality and in a number of smaller settlements.

The regional centre of Horsham is the focus of commerce, industry, education, health and government activity of the Wimmera. The centre is estimated to serve a regional population of 50,000 people extending from Stawell and Balmoral to the south, north to Hopetoun and west to the South Australian border.

Horsham has excellent road and rail linkages to capital cities, regional centres and other towns in the Wimmera and Western Victoria. The regional centre is located 300 kilometres north-west of Melbourne on the Western Highway, the most direct road and freight route between Melbourne and Adelaide. The 'Overlander' interstate passenger train and a large number of goods trains pass through the Rural City on their way to Adelaide and Western Australia. Horsham is also linked to the deep water port at Portland via the Henty Highway.

Horsham Rural City Council controls an area of 4340 square kilometres of the flat open plains of the Wimmera. The Wimmera River traverses the municipality from east to north and the municipality is part of the catchments of the Wimmera and Glenelg Rivers. The region has been described as one of the most reliable grain growing areas in Australia, and is home to 10% of the state's sheep flock.

The Grampians National Park which forms the south eastern boundary of the municipality, is one of the state's most popular natural tourist attractions, whilst Mt Arapiles near Natimuk, is a renowned rock climbing venue. These mountains are the dominant natural features of the otherwise flat plains of the Wimmera. Little Desert National Park which occupies the north-west portion of the municipality, and the lesser known Natimuk-Douglas Wetlands, consisting of more than thirty lakes, also have significant conservation values.

Horsham Rural City Council is bounded by five municipalities: Hindmarsh and West Wimmera Shire Council to the west, Yarriambiack Shire Council to the north, Northern Grampians to the east, and Southern Grampians along the southern boundary.