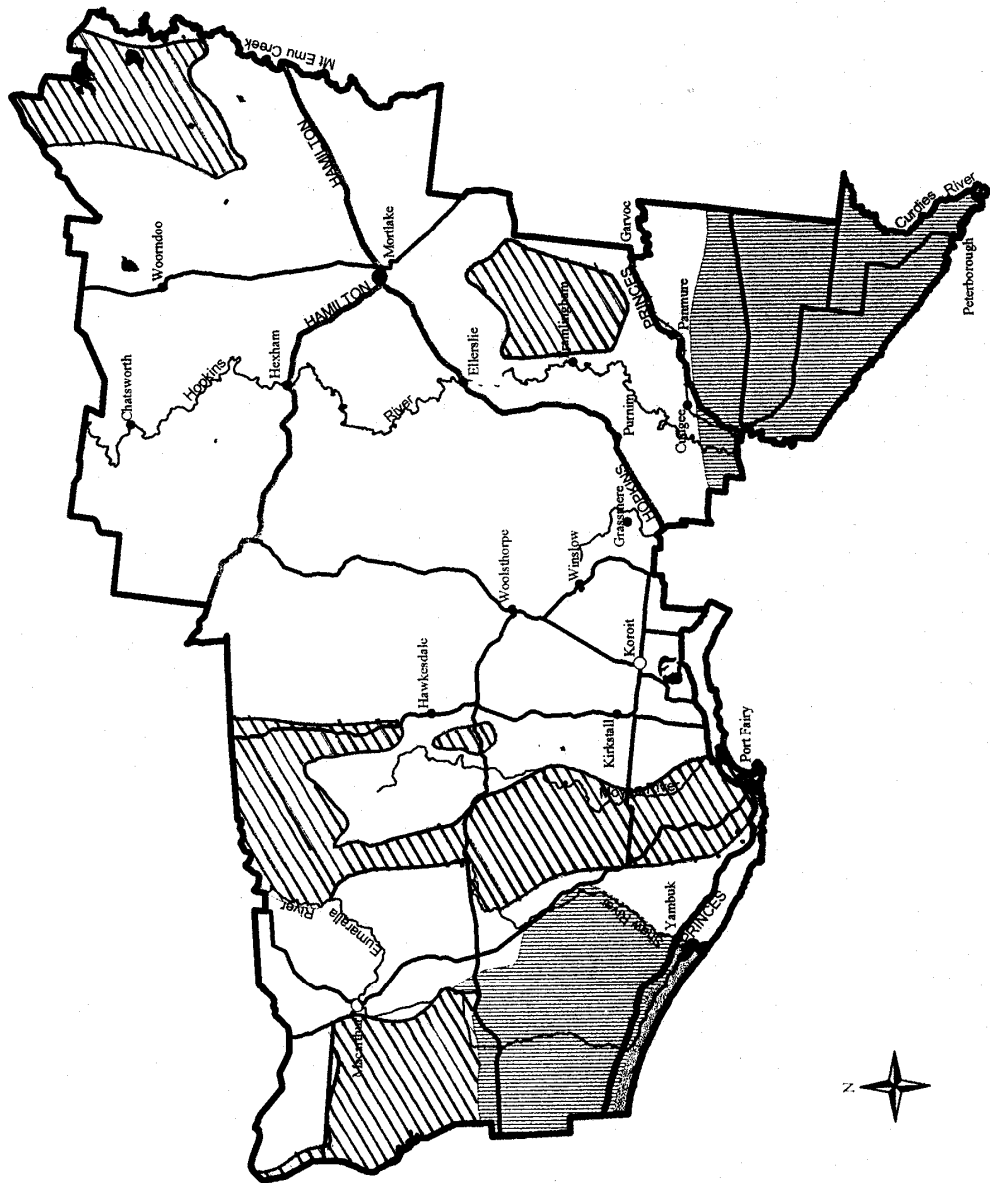
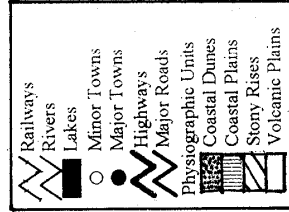


21.02 MUNICIPAL OVERVIEW

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In providing a framework for planning, management and development of the Moyne Shire, it is imperative to develop an overall profile of the municipality. A map of the Shire's physical characteristics is shown on the following page.

Location and features



Physiography

Location and features

The Shire is located in south western Victoria and occupies an area of approximately 5600 square kilometres. The Moyne and Hopkins Rivers flow through the municipality from north to south. The Hamilton and Princes Highways are the main road links through the municipality.

The Moyne Shire Council was formed in 1994 by the municipal amalgamation of the former Shires of Belfast, Minhamite and Mortlake, the Borough of Port Fairy and the Shire of Warrnambool, excluding the Bushfield/Woodford area, and parts of the Shires of Mount Rouse, Dundas and Hampden. The road network covers 3,490 kilometres. The administrative headquarters are located in Port Fairy, whilst the Council operates an office in Mortlake and Macarthur.

The Shire encircles the City of Warrnambool and shares common boundaries with Corangamite Shire to the east, Glenelg Shire to the west and with Southern Grampians Shire and the Rural City of Ararat to the north.

The Shire has a coastline of over 90 kilometres extending westward (with the exception of the City of Warrnambool) from Curdies Inlet near Peterborough, to a point near the mouth of the Fitzroy River approximately mid-way between Port Fairy and Portland. The western portion of the Shire extends some 50 kilometres inland from Port Fairy, whilst the eastern portion extends some 90 kilometres inland.

The coastline provides an important recreation, leisure and tourism asset as well as providing significant environmental, conservation and social values and experiences.

The Shire is predominantly rural based with a focus on grazing agriculture. Wool and prime lamb production are the most significant grazing activities throughout the Shire. Dairy and beef production are also agricultural pursuits that occur throughout the Shire. Aquaculture and cropping are other important agricultural activities.

Regional landscape character

A landscape character assessment of the coast was undertaken on a regional basis as part of the Great Ocean Road Region Strategy (Great Ocean Road Landscape Assessment Study, 2003) and the Coastal Spaces project (Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study 2006). An analysis of broad landscape character types was undertaken for the region, focussing on the distinctions between landscape character types and their capacity to accommodate different types of development. The key purpose of the assessment was to determine how development can be managed in different types of landscapes.

Within the Moyne Shire's coastal area, the Great Ocean Road Landscape Assessment Study identified the Western Coastal Cliffs as a significant landscape comprising a section for Port Campbell and a section for Nirranda.

The Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study identified the following significant landscapes along the Shire's coast:

- Lake Yambuk to Port Fairy Coast
- Port Fairy to Warrnambool Coast
- Tower Hill and Environs

Development pressures

The majority of development pressure in the Shire relating to landscape character is occurring in coastal areas. This is primarily centred on existing townships as well as between towns, and is largely residential or tourism related. Development between

settlements is occasionally occurring on previously subdivided lots, and often on highly visible sites.

Dwellings that are being constructed in coastal areas are also more often permanent or semi-permanent homes, as opposed to holiday shacks. As a result they are larger, more 'imposing' dwellings, that are designed to maximise coastal views and often protrude above existing vegetation. The development of more permanent homes is also resulting in the development of additional infrastructure, and in turn, additional dwellings.

Though there are still B&B and small scaled accommodation developments occurring between townships, there is increasing pressure for substantial tourism developments in coastal and 'wilderness' locations throughout the Region. Signage, car parking and viewing platforms are other tourism related development pressures being experienced.

Other infrastructure pressures include wind farms and natural gas pipeline and processing plants in the coastal hinterland, and telecommunication and electricity towers throughout the landscape. Commercial timber plantations are also continuing to be developed inland.

Historical development

Prior to white settlement the northern portion of the Shire was occupied by the Kirrae, Buloke, Tjapwuurong, Gourditch-mara and Gunditjmara Tribes. The Peek Whunrong Tribe roamed in small bands along the southern coast and banks of rivers between Portland, Kirkstall and the Hopkins River. The Barath gundidji clan occupied the mouth of the Curdies River. The Mallungundidji clan was centred on Griffith Island and was the only Victorian Aboriginal community to be based on an island along the open coast. Given the nomadic nature of various tribes many of the groups occupied the same areas across the Shire at different times. Following European contact Aboriginal missions were established at Lake Condah and Framlingham in the 1850's.

Port Fairy was first settled by Europeans in 1828. Whalers and sealers from Tasmania established a lucrative whaling and sealing industry on nearby Griffith Island until the mid 1840's. Trade at the port reached a peak during the 1850's. Wealth created by the Victorian gold rush and surrounding farms created significant town growth. The Port Fairy area continued to prosper until the 1930's depression. Following the Second World War there was a resurgence in the rural economy creating more growth for the township. Today, an increase in tourist visits, holiday homes and people seeking to develop a rural lifestyle has kept Port Fairy's population constant as surrounding areas generally experience a decline.

The Koroit area was first settled in 1837 by Scottish and English farmers. Between the 1840's and 1850's there was a substantial influx of Irish settlers due to the poor economic conditions in Ireland, the availability of small land holdings and the tenancies created by absentee landlords on the rich volcanic soils. The Koroit area developed further after the discovery of gold in Victoria. Prices for wheat and agricultural produce increased because of the need to supply the growing gold rush population. The wealth created between 1860 and 1880 by potato, pea, hay, dairy and pig production is reflected in the design of the town buildings. Farming had continued to be the mainstay of Koroit's economic activity until recently, when prices for agricultural goods declined, or other growing areas closer to the Melbourne market developed. Today the Koroit township is slowly increasing in size, attracting Warrnambool commuters or retirees seeking a rural based lifestyle.

The northern area of the Shire including the Mortlake area was settled in the 1850's. Large pastoral stations developed along with the dairying industry. Smaller farms were established by soldier settlement and the closer settlement schemes. Farming continues to support Mortlake, however changes in farm practice has seen the slow decline in population in the northern portion of the Shire in recent years.

Population characteristics

The Shire's overall population has undergone gradual decline since 1981. This is reflected by the 1981, 1986, 1991 and 1996 Census which recorded permanent populations of 16,806, 16038, 16142 and 15,894 respectively for the area now encompassed by the Shire.

The 1996 population of the three main urban centres of Port Fairy, Koroit and Mortlake was 2557, 1515 and 985 respectively, with the rural areas and small townships and rural settlements accounting for the balance of the Shire's population.