

## **21.01 SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE KEY ISSUES AND STRATEGIC VISION**

01/08/2013  
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### **21.01-1 Municipal profile**

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The Southern Grampians Shire (the Shire) is located 290 kilometres west of Melbourne and 500 kilometres south-east of Adelaide, in the geographical heart of south-west Victoria.

The Shire covers an area of 6,652 square kilometres, and contains three main land systems: the Dundas Tablelands, the Victorian Volcanic Plains and the Grampians. Primary production is the major land use in the Shire (81%). Conservation is another major land use, including the Grampians National Park, Mt Napier State Park and other public land (16%), in addition to forestry and extractive industry (2%).

The Shire had a total population of 17,564 in 2009. Hamilton is the Shire's regional centre, and housed around 60% of the total population - 10,231, in 2006 (ID Consulting, 2009). The Shire is projected to experience steady population growth throughout the next 20 years, with an estimated 2026 population of 17,709.

Approximately 24% of the Shire's population is aged 60 years and over and this is forecast to increase to around 33% by 2026. Families are the largest household type within the Shire accounting for 68.6% of total households.

Hamilton is supported by a network of smaller settlements which house a further 15% of the population, including Balmoral, Branxholme, Byaduk, Cavendish, Coleraine, Dunkeld, Glenthompson, North Byaduk, Peshurst, Tarrington and other smaller farming communities. The Shire's towns typically function as a mix of agricultural service centres, commuter towns and tourism destinations.

Following agriculture and forestry (20.3%), the most important employers in the Shire are health (12.1%), retail (11.3%), construction (7.6%), education and training (7.4%), manufacturing (5.9%), public administration and safety (5.9%), accommodation and food services (5.6%), and professional, scientific and technical services (3.3%).

The Southern Grampians is renowned for its quality health and education sector, which serve communities well beyond the Shire's border. The Shire has a range of important local industries, with strengths in mineral sands processing, cutting tool manufacturing and agricultural and building materials manufacture.

The indigenous custodians of the Southern Grampians area were the Bunganditj, Guditjmarra and Tjapwurong Aboriginal people. European settlement dates from 1837, with land used mainly for grazing. The Shire contains a range of heritage buildings and places of State and National significance.

### **21.01-2 Southern Grampians Shire in the region and the State**

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The Shire is the only inland municipality in the Great South Coast Region, and adjoins the municipalities of Ararat, Moyne, Glenelg, West Wimmera, Horsham and Northern Grampians. It is located in the Glenelg and Hopkins catchments and a small portion of the headwaters of the Portland catchment, and is within the area managed by the Glenelg – Hopkins Catchment Management Authority.

The Shire is centred on the junction of the Glenelg, Hamilton and Henty Highways which link to all major centres in western and south-western Victoria and south-eastern South Australia. The Shire is serviced by passenger air services to Melbourne and other connecting flights scheduled from the Hamilton Airport.

The Shire is well positioned in relation to the south-west coast. It has direct road and rail transport links to the deep water port at Portland, and is connected to the south-east of South Australia with its strong focus on timber, horticulture and viticulture, and to the

grain and other dry land products of the Wimmera and Mallee to the north by major highways.

The Southern Grampians is world renowned for producing fine wool; however through diversification into meat production, the Hamilton Regional Livestock Exchange (saleyards) has risen to become Victoria's third largest with a turnover of up to 1.2 million sheep and prime lambs, and 50,000 cattle.

The Shire's primary industry base now includes a greater proportion of large-scale cropping, hay production and horticulture. Significant growth is expected to continue in agro-forestry, mining and renewable energy.

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#### Key planning issues

The key planning issues affecting the Shire include:

- Supporting the regional role of Hamilton.
- Maintaining and enhancing the viability and liveability of the Shire's smaller towns.
- Protecting the Shire's environmental and cultural assets.
- Protecting the Shire's agricultural capacity.
- Providing infrastructure effectively and efficiently.
- Facilitating new and expanding economic development opportunities.
- Planning for an ageing population.
- Addressing environmental risks, including flooding, bushfire and landslip.

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#### Southern Grampians Shire Council Plan 2009 – 2013

The Shire's vision is to be Australia's most liveable provincial community.

This is supported by the objectives to:

- *Provide the people of the Southern Grampians Shire with the highest standards of good governance.*
- *Plan for and foster economic growth and prosperity.*
- *Ensure a wide range of quality services are available to our community.*
- *Help communities in our Shire feel strong and safe.*
- *Pursue environmental sustainability in our Shire.*

Planning Scheme related strategies to achieve these objectives include:

- *Using the Southern Grampians Planning Scheme and the Shire's Open Space Management Plans to protect the Shire's tourism features, particularly its heritage and natural environments.*
- *Using our planning controls to ensure we can offer a broad range of quality housing and lifestyle options to prospective residents.*
- *Creating a contemporary arts and cultural precinct around the Hamilton Art Gallery, cinema, library and Performing Arts Centre.*
- *Building walking and cycling infrastructure to significantly increase these modes as commuter and leisure options.*
- *Continuing to provide support and services to our smaller towns which enables these communities to flourish.*

- *Advocating for planning controls to be applied to intense forms of agriculture which may affect water availability, biodiversity or land management in our shire.*
- *Investigating the need for change to the Southern Grampians Planning Scheme which would improve habitat protection.*
- *Planning and monitoring the availability of land for industrial development.*
- *Undertaking a review of the Southern Grampians Planning Scheme and preparing a Hamilton Structure Plan to address important issues which affect new investment including a heavy vehicle route strategy and retail and office precincts in Hamilton.*
- *Ensuring that planning for Hamilton's central business area lays the foundation for a vibrant, accessible, attractive shopping precinct.*
- *Completing strategic and master planning for significant projects so that the Shire is fully prepared and well positioned to access Federal and State Government funding programs.*
- *Enacting policies and providing information and facilitation which are aimed at encouraging new investment in tourism infrastructure and services.*

**21.01-5**01/08/2013  
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The Vision Statement for land use planning and development builds on the Shire's Corporate Vision and establishes a desired future. The Vision for the Shire is to:

- Encourage and support uses and development which more efficiently use and manage land, water and other finite resources;
- Diversify the economic base of Hamilton, the smaller townships and the rural areas by actively attracting further investment, generating new employment opportunities and strengthening the role and identity of Hamilton as a regional service centre;
- Protect and promote the cultural and environmental heritage of the Shire; and
- Manage the natural resources in a sustainable way to; secure the Shire's environmental assets, improve water quality and supply, and the condition of the catchments and environmental flows of the Shire's rivers and streams.

Strategies and actions by the Shire and the community, together with specific initiatives and the provisions of the planning scheme revolve around the pursuit of six integrated objectives:

- *Progressive improvement in the condition of the natural resource base by linking with regional catchment strategies.*
- *Support for the agricultural economy, the further diversification of production and a progressive shift to sustainable land management.*
- *A strengthening of Hamilton's capacity to compete as a regional centre so as to better capture the local and regional economic opportunities.*
- *Adding value to local primary products through processing, distribution, research and marketing, particularly in the sheep/wool and beef industries and new agricultural industries like horticulture and particularly timber.*
- *Continuing to support and grow a quality tourist and recreation product based on strategic regional positioning of product linking to other regional products, the built and cultural heritage, the natural features and the quality of experience which the Shire offers.*
- *Ensuring that the needs of existing residents, particularly services and facilities for the growing aged population and young persons looking for work, education and training, are met at a local level or through being part of a regional network.*

