

## MUNICIPAL PROFILE

### Location

The Baw Baw Shire Council was created on December 2, 1994 from the former Shires of Buln Buln, Narracan and Warragul and part of the Upper Yarra Shire. With an area of 4,027 square kilometres, the Shire is located in West Gippsland in south-east Victoria between Melbourne's south eastern growth corridor and the Latrobe Valley. The Shire is a municipality of great natural beauty and is bordered by the Great Dividing Range to the north and the Strzelecki Ranges to the south. It has some of Australia's finest agricultural land at its heart.

### People

The population of the Baw Baw Shire in 2011 was 42,864, of which 28,229 resided in the six largest towns being Warragul, Drouin, Trafalgar, Yarragon, Longwarry and Neerim South. The projected population for the Shire to the year 2036 is estimated to be about 71,683. In common with State trends, the older age groups (70 years and above) are projected to increase at a greater rate than younger age groups.

### Natural Environment

The Shire's natural environment contains pristine areas of high habitat value, supports high quality water catchments, is endowed with excellent scenery and extensive areas for ecologically sustainable timber production. These natural environments, whether as contiguous catchments, roadside vegetation or remnants on public and other land, are an intrinsic good in themselves. They also provide spiritual, cultural and health benefits to residents and visitors. The remainder of the Shire's environments have been extensively modified for urban and agricultural development but also comprise highly valued landscapes. When these features and qualities are combined with the assets and facilities of the towns they provide a substantial quality of life. However some activities, although bringing economic and social benefits to residents of and visitors to the region, can have significant adverse environmental impacts on downstream users both within the Shire and in other municipalities. The Shire is also the home of several threatened flora and fauna species.

The high quality of the natural resource base, vulnerable habitats and the reliance on the natural environment for economic sustainability are major factors in policy development.

The high quality agricultural land located within the Shire and the region is an influential factor.

With continuing growth, particularly in Warragul and Drouin, there has been strong pressure to use high quality agricultural land for residential purposes.

### Economic Activity

The Shire has highly productive agricultural land and extensive agricultural infrastructure and investment.

It has a great capacity to support tourism given the Shire's proximity to Melbourne and its natural advantages (ski fields, parks, lakes, mountains, historic towns and local produce).

The development of tourism infrastructure such as alpine-based recreation, including skiing, has strengthened tourism. Now tourism in the Shire has a strong focus on nature-based activities, the landscape, rural ambience, produce of the area and the historic gold mining settlement at Walhalla.

The location and resources of the region provide a significant range of employment opportunities within the Shire in agriculture, horticulture, service industries, administration, and the region's education and health facilities

### Transport and Infrastructure

The Shire is well positioned to regional transport and infrastructure links with population and employment centres in the form of accessible telecommunication linkups, a high quality highway system, efficient railway links and direct access to Melbourne's ports.

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## **BAW BAW PLANNING SCHEME**

These transport links are focussed along the main east-west Princes Freeway transport corridor with a need to provide public transport and other inter town links for communities in the north and south of the Shire.

### **Reference Documents**

*'Baw Baw Settlement Management Plan', August 2013.*

*'BawBaw 2050 Community Vision 2010', Baw Baw Shire Council*

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