

## **21.01 MUNICIPAL PROFILE**

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### **21.01-1 Location**

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The Colac Otway Shire is located in the south-west of the State, approximately 2 hours drive from Melbourne. The Shire has an area of approximately 3,500 square kilometres and a 2006 census population of 20,294. The Department of Planning and Community Development predicts that the Shire will experience a minor population increase to the year 2025 (up to 22,500).

### **21.01-2 Settlement**

18/06/2009  
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The Shire's major urban centre is Colac, which has an estimated 2007 population of approximately 11,600. Colac is located approximately 75 kilometres west of Geelong, 140 kilometres south west of Melbourne and 100 kilometres south of Ballarat. Apollo Bay is the Shire's other main centre and had a 2006 permanent population of approximately 1300 people. It lies 75 km south of Colac and is a key settlement along the Great Ocean Road. In addition to these two major towns, there are approximately 22 smaller settlements located throughout the Shire.

### **21.01-3 Environment**

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The Shire includes some of the most scenic and environmentally sensitive land in Victoria including the Great Otway National Park and 90km of coastline served by the Great Ocean Road. Approximately 43% of the land in the Shire is Crown Land.

### **21.01-4 Cultural Heritage**

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Colac Otway Shire has a rich and diverse history and includes a number of important Koori heritage areas. Post- European heritage is a microcosm of much of Victoria's history from the days of earliest permanent settlement in the 1830s. The Shire has played an important role in Victoria's growth through pastoral activity; through the dairy industry and farming; through the forest industry, as well through the tourist industry.

### **21.01-5 Economic Development**

18/06/2009  
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The Shire provides diverse employment opportunities through a range of primary industries, tourism and commercial and community services. The region is well supplied with existing infrastructure in terms of power and water and is well placed to take advantage of future proposals to extend the natural gas grid, although it is noted that there are some localised infrastructure constraints throughout the Shire.

The Shire is located along three key traffic routes - Princes Highway, Hamilton Highway and the Great Ocean Road. There is a regular railway service between Colac and Melbourne to the east and Warrnambool to the west. The Shire has excellent access to the Melbourne and Avalon Airports. This transport network provides the Shire and its industries excellent access to both domestic and international markets.

### **21.01-6 Regional**

18/06/2009  
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The Shire is an active partner in the G21 Regional Alliance together with Greater Geelong, Surf Coast, Golden Plains and Queenscliff and participating local organisations and businesses. The Shire is also an active partner in the Great South Coast municipal group together with Corangamite, Glenelg, Moyne and Southern Grampians Shires and Warrnambool City Council.

The Council is committed to an integrated approach to planning in the Shire through meaningful consultation with its stakeholders. Council is committed to give effect to the Regional Catchment Strategy; the Victorian Coastal Strategy; the Otway Forest Management Plan; and the Great Ocean Road Region Strategy.