

21.01 CONTEXT

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21.01-1 Regional Profile

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Murrindindi Shire is situated northeast of metropolitan Melbourne, bordering the municipalities of Strathbogie, Mitchell, Mansfield, Whittlesea, Nillumbik and Yarra Ranges. The municipality forms part of the Melbourne metropolitan peri-urban interface and is linked to these areas by the Melba, Maroondah and Goulburn Valley Highways and the Whittlesea-Yea Road.

The existing road network provides ready access to metropolitan Melbourne, the Hume Freeway and Melbourne International Airport. With its proximity to metropolitan Melbourne, Murrindindi Shire has significant locational advantages with ready access to and from a world class city for business, leisure and employment.

Features of regional significance in the municipality are Lake Eildon, the Goulburn River and valley, the Strathbogie Ranges, the Melba, Maroondah and Goulburn Valley Highways, the Great Dividing Range and the Lake Mountain Alpine Resort. All of these regional features are of economic and social significance to Murrindindi Shire, influencing its land use planning.

21.01-2 Municipal Profile

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Murrindindi Shire extends from the Kinglake Ranges and Great Dividing Range in the south to the Strathbogie Ranges to the north. The municipality comprises 3,873 square kilometres, of which 48% is public land. The Melba, Maroondah and Goulburn Valley Highways and the Whittlesea-Yea Road all provide excellent access to and from the municipality.

The Kinglake Ranges divide the Port Phillip and Westernport catchment to the south and Goulburn Broken catchment to the north. Important public land areas in the municipality include the Kinglake National Park, Lake Eildon National Park, the Cathedral Ranges State Park, Murrindindi Scenic Reserve, the Goulburn, Yea and Acheron Rivers and areas of State Forest.

The estimated residential population (ABS) for Murrindindi Shire was 13,494 as at 30 June 2013. The towns of Alexandra, Yea, Eildon and Marysville are serviced. Other larger towns are Kinglake and Kinglake West – Pheasant Creek. Smaller towns and settlements include Buxton, Flowerdale, Glenburn, Molesworth, Narbethong, Strath Creek, Taggerty, Taylor Bay, Thornton, Toolangi and Yarck, with other smaller settlements existing throughout the municipality. A number of towns and areas have a strong tourism focus, including Eildon, Marysville and the Kinglake Ranges.

Murrindindi Shire has a vast range of natural features and built attractions that contribute significantly towards the municipality's environment, economy, character and appeal for both residents and visitors. The municipality's character and appeal is formed through its high amenity rural and natural landscapes, Lake Eildon, diverse public land areas and features, rivers and river valleys, native vegetation biodiversity, heritage and attractive townships. Natural features form a vital part of the ecological health of the municipality's environment.

Murrindindi Shire has a diverse economy, with key economic sectors in the municipality being:

- Agriculture, aquaculture, horticulture and viticulture.
- Tourism, hospitality and conferencing.
- Manufacturing and engineering.
- Retail and trade services.

- Education, including outdoor education.
- Health care and social services.
- Forestry and timber processing.

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C54**Key Issues and Influences**

Key issues and influences affecting the use and development of land in Murrindindi Shire are:

- Sustainable development and growth potential: Creation of long term economic sustainability for the municipality. There are opportunities to accommodate additional residential growth in the municipality. Conserving, reducing and effectively managing resource use is essential to creating ecologically sustainable development.
- Proximity to Melbourne: The proximity to metropolitan Melbourne has a major influence on the Murrindindi Shire, creating growth, employment and lifestyle opportunities in an attractive environment.
- Regional features: The presence and role of regional features such as Lake Eildon and Lake Mountain Alpine Resort, providing a range of lifestyle, recreation, economic and tourism benefits and opportunities.
- Environment and landscape: The pristine environment, rich biodiversity, significant public land areas and high quality landscape, form an essential part of the municipality's character, liveability and economy. Protection of the natural environment is critical for the continued economic and social well-being of the municipality.
- Townships and built environment: A range of dispersed and diverse townships offer high liveability and high quality built environments.
- Agriculture: The recognition and protection of the Goulburn River valley and other areas as high quality agricultural land, with further opportunities to diversify and value add to agriculture.
- Tourism: A significant tourism industry based on the natural environment, with further potential for expansion.
- Heritage: The identification, protection and conservation of places of cultural heritage significance, adding to the amenity and appeal of the municipality.
- Environmental risks and natural disasters: Future planning for land use and development must fully consider environmental risks and natural hazards. These hazards and limitations include flooding, bushfire risk and erosion risk.
- Climate change: An increase in greenhouse emissions has led to accelerated climate change. Land use planning must best manage climate change through reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing vulnerability to projected future climate change impacts such as more frequent, intense or uncertain weather events.