

OVERVIEW OF THE YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE

Yarriambiack Shire is located in the north-western part of Victoria. The Shire was created on 19th January 1995 following the restructure of the Shire of Karkaroc, the Shire of Dunmunkle, the Shire of Warracknabeal, and the Shire of Wimmera. The Shire has an area of 7,158 square kilometres which extends from the Wimmera River, just north of the Grampians in the south to the centre of the Mallee in the north.

The Shire's estimated population in 1996 was 9,077 persons. More than two-thirds of the population live in urban centres above 200 people. Approximately 2,671 people live in Warracknabeal, the largest town in the Shire.

The main employment sectors within the Shire are agriculture, community services, and wholesale and retail trade. These industries are major components of the economy of the Shire and are very important in the service role of the smaller townships.

Most townships within the Yarriambiack Shire have excellent community and sporting facilities which have the potential for hosting special events.

Yarriambiack contains significant areas of Mallee Parks and reserved Public Lands which protect some of the least disturbed Mallee ecosystems in Australia. High quality areas of cultural, historical and conservation value include Wyperfeld National Park, Paradise Flora and Fauna Reserve, Outlet Creek, Wathe Flora and Fauna Reserve and Albacutya Reserve. These parks and public reserved lands contain outstanding areas of semi-arid wilderness and large areas of Mallee stands in south eastern mainland Australia.

Some of the key elements and trends which impact on Yarriambiack Shire are:

- Agriculture is the major employer in the Shire and is worth \$165m. per year;
- A declining population base which is projected to decrease by about 1000 by 2011 if there are no specific actions to reverse the trend;
- An increased proportion of the population being aged;
- The declining population base resulting in the loss of facilities and services;
- The bulk of the population lives in urban centres and will continue to do so in the planning period;
- Manufacturing opportunities in Yarriambiack have the potential to be further increased as occurred between 1981 and 1991, when turnover in manufacturing locations almost doubled, the number of locations in manufacturing increased threefold and the number of persons employed in manufacturing increased in the same order;
- Continuing restructuring of the local and regional economy, rationalisation of and new methods of delivery of many community services, and changing workforce requirements;
- Greater awareness and concern for the environment, sustainable land management, cultural heritage, the arts, and education and training;
- Technological changes that will reduce isolation, lessen the importance of location of economic activity, and reduce the need for some employment areas;
- The significant contribution to the agricultural production of the State, especially in terms of grain, cropping, lamb and wool; and
- The emergence of potentially new industries such as ecotourism based on the unique natural resources of the region, mineral sands recovery, services and value adding of primary products and diversification of agricultural production, such as deer, emus, and native flowers, etc.