

CONTEXT

Central Goldfields Shire is located in central Victoria, approximately 140 kilometres from Melbourne. The Shire comprises some 1500 square kilometres of land and is one of the state's smaller rural shires.

The Shire is part of the Goldfields Tourist Region, which celebrates its gold and mining heritage.

Municipal boundaries are shared with Hepburn, Mount Alexander, Loddon, Pyrenees and Northern Grampians Shires.

Maryborough is the Shire's largest centre with a population of 8,003 people (Victoria in Future, State Government of Victoria, 2019) and is situated 164 kilometres from Melbourne and approximately 60 kilometres from Ballarat and Bendigo. The town provides a significant sub-regional hub of retail, industry and services for central Victoria.

Dunolly is the next largest township, followed by Carisbrook and Talbot, with hamlets at Bealiba, Moliagul, and Timor/Bowenvale.

The settlement pattern and agricultural activity of the 1860's and 1870's has broadly determined the land use patterns that the region relies on today. Small townships, although much fewer in number and size, continue to act as service centres for their respective farming hinterlands.

The Shire faces several demographic challenges including slow population growth, an ageing population and levels of disadvantage.

First inhabitants and traditional custodians of the area are the Dja Dja Wurrung.

The gold rush greatly influenced the landscape of the region and led to the development of several bustling townships which feature iconic heritage architecture.

The Shire has a competitive housing advantage with a choice of housing options and affordable real estate including significant heritage dwellings.

Central Goldfields Shire has an established manufacturing sector, expanding food processing sector and visitor economy. Agriculture is a significant but a declining source of employment in the Shire.