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INTRODUCTION

Horsham is a major regional centre in western Victoria, located along the Wimmera River, approximately 300km north-west of Melbourne CBD and 190km north-west of Ballarat. Adelaide is located a further 450km west of Horsham. In terms of population, Horsham is the largest urban centre in the Wimmera Region, and provides a range of higher order commercial, community, entertainment, administrative and retail functions to an extensive rural hinterland.

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Municipal profile

Horsham Rural City Council includes the major centres of Horsham and Natimuk, and the localities of: Arapiles, Blackheath, Brimpaen, Bungalally, Clear Lake, Dadswells Bridge, Dooen, Douglas, Drung, Duchembegarra, Grass Flat, Green Lake, Greenland Dam, Haven, Jilpanger, Jung, Kalkee, Kanagulk, Kewell, Laharum, Longerenong, Lower Norton, McKenzie Creek, Mitre, Mockinya, Mount Talbot, Murra Warra, Noradjuha, Nurrabiel, Pimpinio, Quantong, Riverside, St Helens Plains, Telangatuk East, Tooan, Toolondo, Vectis, Wail, Wartook and Wonwondah.

The municipality has a population of 19,833 and covers an area of 4,267 square kilometres. Almost three quarters of residents live in the urban area of Horsham. Horsham is the major provider of retail, community and government services in the Wimmera, with dryland and broadacre agriculture being our major industry.

The Wimmera-Southern Mallee region is one of Victoria's most important agricultural regions, and broadly extends from the Pyrenees in the east to the South Australian boarder in the west, and from the Glenelg River in the south to the township of Ouyen in the north. As well as the Rural City of Horsham, the Wimmera includes the municipalities of Northern Grampians, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh and Yarriambiack. Other important towns in the Wimmera of relevance to Horsham include Warracknabeal (approximately 58km to the north), Stawell (67km to the east), Nhill (74km to the west) and Dimboola (36km to the north-west).

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Key issues and influences

The Horsham Rural City Council Plan 2017-2021 identifies the following key issues and influences:

Our economy is changing

- The farming sector is diversifying as new technologies and practices are being adopted to adapt to global economic and climate changes.
- The continued consolidation of farming enterprises to create larger corporate entities.
- Mining in the municipality may increase, providing economic activity and employment opportunities.
- Horsham has an international reputation in leading the way in cropping research.
- Horsham is a service centre for the region.
- Rollout of the national broadband network will provide opportunities for the business and community sectors.
- Changing technology will provide us with more innovative business opportunities especially around on-line retailing, e-commerce and social media.
- Water savings from the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline system will provide more economic/business opportunities.
- The Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal and surrounding precinct will provide numerous economic opportunities.

Our community is changing

- The municipality is continuing to experience some population increase, mainly with people moving to Horsham from surrounding areas. The rural areas of the municipality are experiencing population decline.
- The population is ageing, and baby boomers are looking to retire to a place that meets their needs.
- There is an increase in people from diverse cultures moving to the municipality.
- Areas within Horsham score highly on the SEIFA Index of Disadvantage.

To attract and retain people in the municipality, quality services and cultural activities are needed including.

- A range of public and private education facilities (from early years through to tertiary and lifelong learning).
- High quality acute, allied health, mental health and residential aged care services.
- A choice of specialist health services and preventative health care programs.
- Appropriate and affordable housing.
- State-of-the-art cultural venues and events.
- Opportunities for sport, recreation and physical activity (eg bike paths, Horsham Aquatic Centre).
- Efficient and effective public transport within Horsham and connecting to larger centres.
- Opportunities for social connection.

For the municipality to be a good place to live and preserve our natural environment it needs to:

- Have connected and accessible urban environments.
- Make greater use of assets such as the Wimmera River.
- Maintain assets that meet the community's needs.
- Better manage our green and hard waste and educate the community on recycling and energy efficiency.

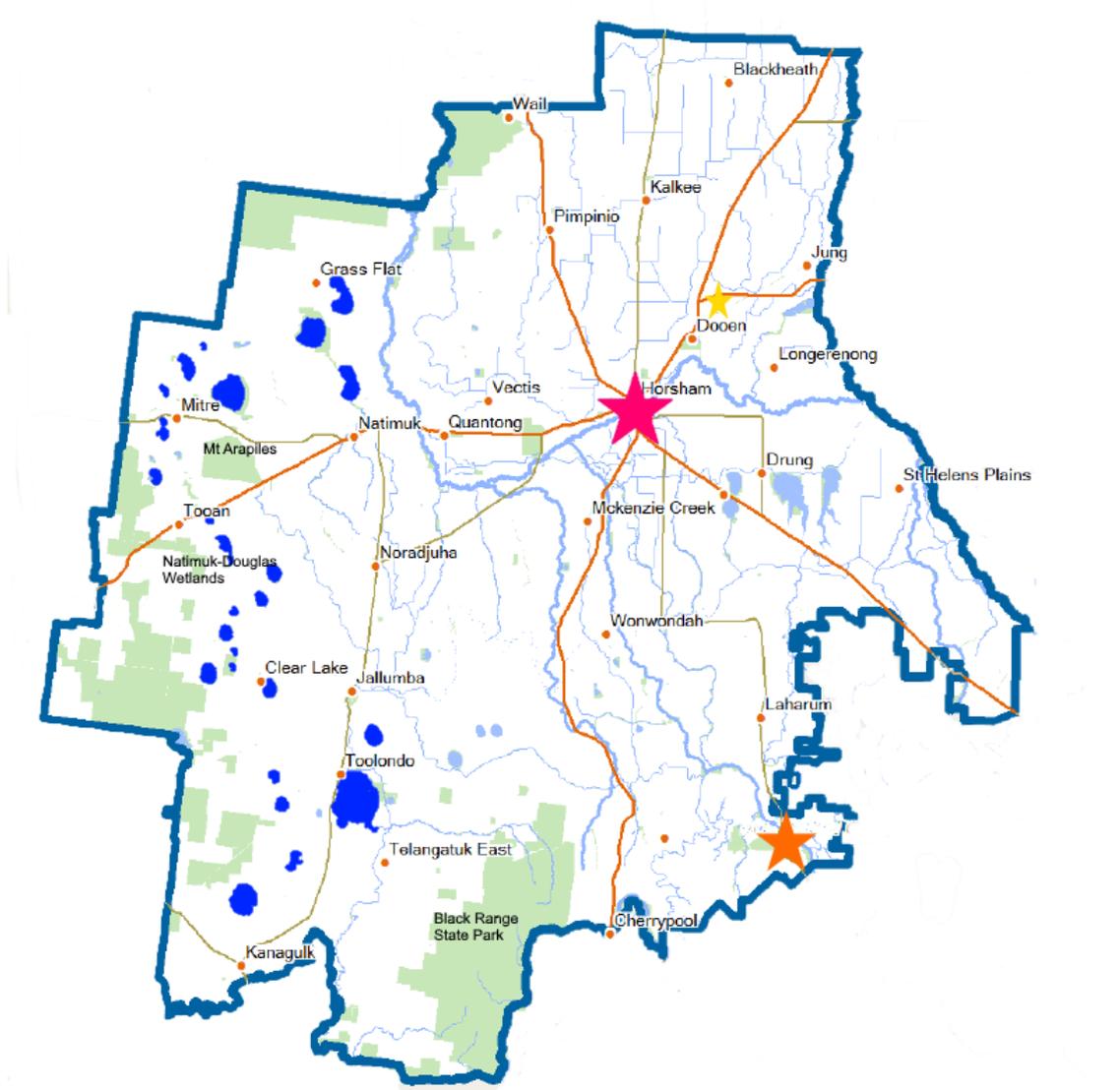
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Vision and strategic framework plan

Horsham Rural City is a great place to live – vibrant, inclusive and welcoming.

Figure 21.01-1A Horsham Strategic Framework Plan



-  Horsham Regional City
-  Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal
-  Wartook Valley
-  Town/Settlement
-  Significant Wetland