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MUNICIPAL PROFILE

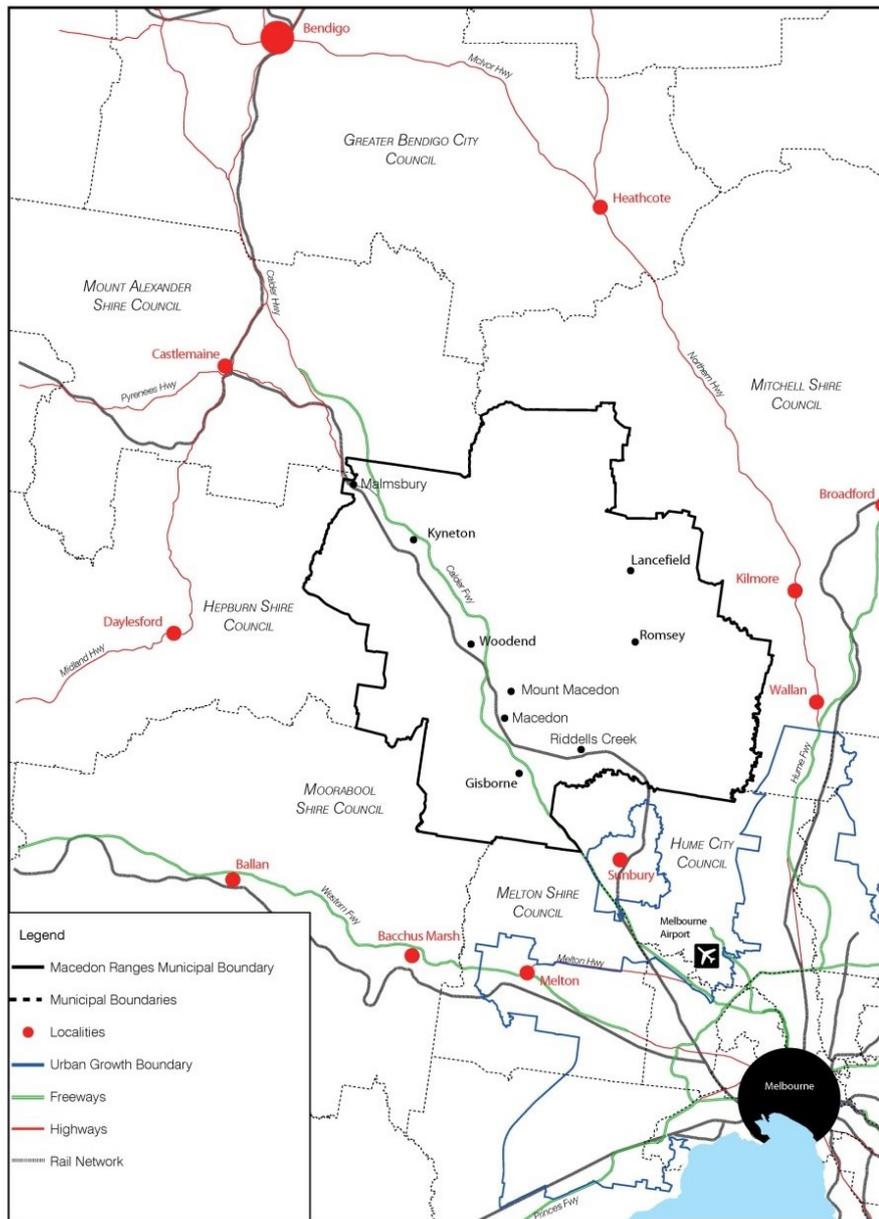
General

The Macedon Ranges Shire, which is 1,747 square kilometres in area, is predominantly rural in character and includes established towns and villages. In 2011 the Shire had a population of 42,800 people (ABS Estimated Resident Population). The population of the Shire is ageing; by 2036, approximately 25% of the population will be over 65 years (extrapolated from VIF 2012).

The Shire is part of the traditional land of the Dja Dja Wrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri peoples.

Location and regional context

The Macedon Ranges Shire is approximately 60km north-west of Melbourne, midway between Melbourne and Bendigo. The Shire sits within the identified hinterland of Melbourne (Clause 11.05-2), being part of the extensive peri-urban region surrounding the built-up areas of Melbourne. In 2011, 46.6 percent of the Shire's working residents travelled outside of the area to work (ABS Census 2011).



Settlement

Urban growth over the past decade has been the greatest in the south of the Shire (in Gisborne, Romsey and Riddells Creek), with more modest growth occurring in Woodend, Kyneton, Malmsbury, Lancefield, Macedon and Mount Macedon. Gisborne and Kyneton continue to be the major population and employment centres within the municipality.

The Shire's rural areas provide important buffers between urban areas and the Melbourne metropolitan area.

Natural environment and landscapes

The Macedon Ranges Shire contains many areas of state, regional and locally significant remnant vegetation, and landscapes. A feature of the natural environment is the diversity and contrast of landscape types including forested ranges, river valleys and wide vistas of rural landscapes.

The Shire is renowned for its rural character, semi-rural lifestyle, landscapes and forests, and unique natural features such as Hanging Rock and Mount Macedon. These features have attracted residents and visitors since the early 1900s and continue to do so today.

The forests and bushland areas, including the Macedon Regional Park, Cobaw State Forest, Wombat State Forest, the forested area leading into Woodend locally known as the Black Forest, and bushland areas in the south of the Shire, are highly significant natural resources with flora, fauna and habitat values.

Natural resource management

The Shire is within the catchments of the Campaspe and Coliban Rivers and Five Mile, Deep and Jacksons Creeks. Extensive areas are declared Special Water Supply Catchments.

High quality soils are situated between Lancefield, Heskett and Romsey; between Macedon and Riddells Creek; east and west of Kyneton; and north-east of Gisborne due to the existence of granitic soils round Romsey.

A significant portion of the Macedon Ranges Shire is designated for agricultural purposes. Large farm holdings are predominantly located in the northern part of the Shire. Farming areas make a valuable contribution to the Shire's economy and include broad acre cropping and grazing, as well as specialist activities such as viticulture, timber plantations and the equine industry. Traditional farming activities are declining in favour of more intensive agriculture, such as vineyards and other horticultural pursuits.

Environmental risk

Environmental risks include bushfire and flooding with much of the Shire at risk from bushfire.

Built environment and heritage

The character and heritage of the local townships is renowned. The high quality country lifestyle and towns with their own distinctive character are key attributes of the Shire. The Shire has sites of pre- and post- contact heritage significance. Heritage buildings and streetscapes - particularly in Kyneton, Gisborne, Woodend, Romsey, Lancefield, Mount Macedon and Malmsbury - contribute to the amenity and character of these towns.

Housing

Macedon Ranges Shire has little diversity in the housing stock. Ninety-five per cent of dwellings are detached houses, yet 54 per cent of households are just one or two persons (ABS Census 2011).

Economic development

Economic development activities within the Shire include tourism, retail, health, government, education and agriculture. Almost all commercial, industrial, civic and employment opportunities are in the four main towns of Kyneton, Gisborne, Woodend and Romsey. Local industrial areas are an important source of employment in some towns, and tourism is an increasingly important component of the local economy.

Transport

The Calder Freeway and the Melbourne-Bendigo rail line form a major transport corridor which serves the western side of the municipality. The Calder Freeway is fully duplicated between Melbourne and the northern towns of the municipality. The fast train service now runs between Melbourne and Bendigo. The Melbourne-Lancefield Road forms the eastern spine providing direct access to Melbourne Airport. While the north-south transport services are strong, east to west links are relatively limited.

Community development and infrastructure

The Shire has high quality community infrastructure and provides a range of community health and wellbeing services and facilities, many of which are focused in Kyneton, Gisborne, Woodend and the larger towns. Existing community infrastructure and services have capacity to accommodate some residential growth.

There is a high level of interconnection between towns for community services. Residents commonly travel to other towns to access services not available in their own community.

Malmsbury, Kyneton, Tylden, Woodend, Macedon, Gisborne, Riddells Creek, Romsey and Lancefield all have reticulated wastewater systems.