Profile of Pyrenees Shire

Pyrenees Shire was created in September 1994 by the amalgamation of the Shires of Avoca, Lexton and Ripon. It takes its name from the Pyrenees Range - a “fold range” which is almost entirely located within its municipal borders.

Regional Context

Pyrenees Shire is located in central Victoria between the regional centres of Ballarat and Ararat. It shares common boundaries with the City of Ballarat and Shire of Hepburn to the east, Golden Plains Shire to the south-east, Corangamite and Moyne Shires to the south, Rural City of Ararat to the west, Northern Grampians Shire to the north-west and Central Goldfields Shire to the north-east.

The Shire covers an area of 3457 square kilometres, extending approximately 90 kilometres in a north-south direction and 40 kilometres in an east-west direction. Despite its size, the Shire has only a small population, the majority of which reside in the towns of Beaufort and Avoca. There are a number of smaller townships and settlements located throughout the Shire however, which provide local services and facilities to surrounding rural areas and provide important foci for community activities and social interaction.

The Western, Sunraysia and Pyrenees Highways pass through the Shire and provide it with good connections to the surrounding region and to Melbourne. However the good external road connections combined with the small population has resulted in residents relying to some extent on the nearby regional centres and large towns for employment and to meet their needs for retail services, community services and entertainment. The spatial configuration of the Shire and its key features and items of physical infrastructure are shown on the Physical Framework Plan (refer Figure 1).

Physiography

The physiography of the Shire changes markedly over its length.

In the northern portion of the Shire, the Pyrenees Range is the dominating feature. This comprises steeply rising hills and ridges of predominantly uplifted sediments, the high point of which is Mount Avoca (760m) to the south-east of Landsborough.

To the east of the Pyrenees Range the land takes the form of a highland plateau and includes the extensive alluvial flood-plain of the Avoca River.

The Great Dividing Range passes east-west through the central portion of the Shire. This comprises steep ridges and hills at its western end (which contains the high points of Mt Cole, Mt Lonarch and Ben Major).

The Great Divide forms the watershed between two drainage systems. In this regard, the land to the north drains to the Goulburn-Murray River system via the Avoca and Wimmera Rivers and associated tributaries. The land to the south of the Divide drains to the Hopkins River system, via Mt Emu Creek (the major tributary of the Hopkins River) and its tributaries including Baillies Creek, the unnamed creeks in the Snake Valley area, and the Trawalla/Fiery/Middle Creek systems north of Beaufort. The rivers and streams in the Shire are relied upon extensively for urban water supply and/or agriculture.

The southern portion of the Shire is characterised by basaltic plains, formed when a succession of volcanic eruptions covered the pre-existing plains with basalt sheets. These plains contain a number of natural lakes and swamps where volcanic flows and pyroclastic material have closed off catchment outlets or created small catchments with internal drainage such as Lake Goldsmith. The remnants of volcanoes and other eruption points,
being visible over the plains for many kilometres, provide landscape interest and orientation points for people.

The physiographic variations in the Shire result in climate variations from north to south, with significant implications in terms of agricultural activities. In this regard, the areas in the northern portion of the Shire experience hot, dry summers and cool winters. Rainfall in the northern part of the Shire varies around 650mm per year, the majority in the April-October period. The climate in the southern part of the Shire by contrast is characterised by more temperate summers and higher rainfalls (usually in excess of 750mm) which also predominantly occur in the April-October period.

21.02-4

Population

The Shire has an estimated resident population (1996) of 6578.

Settlement in the Shire is based around historic rural service centres and former gold mining areas. In this regard, the majority of the Shire’s population resides in the towns of Beaufort and Avoca and in smaller townships including Amphitheatre, Landsborough, Lexton, Moonambel, Snake Valley and Waubra. In addition, there are significant rural-residential communities around the township of Snake Valley in the south-east part of the Shire, and in areas of small lot subdivision in rural areas (eg the areas to the north of Beaufort and extending to Raglan and Trawalla).

Table 1 shows the demographic composition of the Shire in 1986, 1991 and 1996. The table reveals that the Shire’s population decreased by less than 3% over the period 1986 to 1996 and available demographic indicators suggest that population growth has been relatively static since 1991.

Table 1: Demographic Composition 1986, 1991 and 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>No 1986</th>
<th>1986 %</th>
<th>RegVic %</th>
<th>No 1991</th>
<th>1991 %</th>
<th>RegVic %</th>
<th>No 1996</th>
<th>1996 %</th>
<th>RegVic %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-17</td>
<td>1590</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>1597</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>1329</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-49</td>
<td>1227</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>1522</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>1517</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-84</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 and over</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6722</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>6985</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>6578</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Infrastructure, 1997 Victoria in Fact, Interim report.

An Economic Profile and Prospects’ report prepared for the Shire in 1997 made the following observations about the Shire’s population for the 1981-1991 period:

- The 30-39 and 40-49 age groups increased over the periods 1981-86 and 1986-91 and were consistent with both Non-Metropolitan Melbourne and State of Victoria levels. This is important in terms of population growth given that people in these age groups are in the prime of their working lives.

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- The 20-29 age group declined over the same periods. In addition the proportion of people in this age group (1991) was well below both Non-Metropolitan Victoria and State of Victoria. Speculation as to the reasons for this include lack of employment opportunity, lack of tertiary educational opportunity (although it is noted that tertiary education opportunities are available in the nearby regional centres) and the attraction of metropolitan life.

- The population was more mobile than the average for rural municipalities.

- In terms of household income, 51% of households were in the lower annual household income bracket compared to Non-Metropolitan Victoria (41.9%) and Victoria (34%). This would appear to be due to the state of the agricultural sector and the limited number of executive jobs in the municipality.

- The population was almost exclusively comprised of people from English speaking backgrounds.

- Home ownership in the Shire (at 79%) was much higher than non-metropolitan Melbourne (71.4%) or Victoria as-a-whole (70.5%). This indicates a relatively stable population.

21.02-5*  
**Economy**

The economy of the Pyrenees Shire is heavily dependent upon primary industry, as indicated by the following Table (Table 2 Employment by Industry 1996). This shows that those employed in agriculture and forestry accounted for approximately one third of the 1996 labour force of 2330 persons. This partly accounts for the fact that the proportion of households in the Shire with income in the lower annual income bracket was substantially higher than for Victoria as a whole (ie due to the depressed state of agriculture).

**Table 2: Employment by Industry 1996**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
<th>Numbers employed as a percentage of total labour force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture Forestry</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, Gas, Water</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation, Cafes, Restaurants</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, Storage</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, Insurance</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property, Business</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt Administration, Defence</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, Community Services</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture, Recreation</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the Pyrenees Ranges area, viticulture is becoming a growth industry and has been identified in the Economic Profile and Prospects report as the foundation for a new and major industry for the region with significant tourism spin-offs.

Forestry is also a major industry within the southern portion of the Shire, being centred around Beaufort.

In terms of employment, community services (health and education) and recreation/personal/other services are also important industries and (in 1996) amounted to approximately 17% of the labour force.

Manufacturing is not a major employer in the Shire, although it has increased over the period since 1991 (by approximately 4%).

### Agriculture

Agriculture remains the major industry in the Shire. For the period 1994-95 the total value of agricultural commodities produced in the Shire amounted to $58 million - the key areas of production being wool ($32m), meat ($14m), hay production ($4.3m), grain ($3.8m), potatoes ($2m) and nurseries ($1m). Grape production accounted for $600,000 over this period.

The Economic Profile and Prospects report highlighted the over-reliance on traditional agriculture, which exposes the Shire’s economy (and therefore the well-being of its residents) to the vagaries of particular commodity markets. This is particularly the case with wool production. The report recommends that farmers diversify their agricultural activities - and identified agroforestry and grape production as two key opportunities.

### Rural Subdivision and Development

In common with other areas in Central Victoria, parts of Pyrenees Shire were the focus of intensive gold mining activity in the Nineteenth Century. Essentially this involved all that part of the Shire north of the Western Highway, except for the small area of basaltic plains and volcanic areas to the east of Trawalla and south of Waubra.

Areas of auriferous land extended also into the steep hills and mountains of the Pyrenees Range, and resulted in the creation of numerous small Crown Townships, set up to provide local and community business services to the burgeoning population of gold miners and their dependants.

Another common characteristic of this era was the working by miners and fossickers of small claims along valley floors where surface gold was readily apparent. Over a period of time these claims were converted to an entitlement for freehold ownership. As a result, extensive Crown Subdivision took place and widespread areas of rural land were alienated into small holdings. This also included some of the steepest and most environmentally hazardous land within the Shire.

Invariably lot sizes were unrelated to proper rural land management requirements and they now represent a serious impediment to the orderly future management of the Shire’s rural areas. In addition many of the original Crown Townships are now defunct and are undesirable for physical, social and environmental reasons.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
<th>Numbers employed as a percentage of total labour force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal, Other Services</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Classifiable, Non Stated</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2330</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS 1996 Census.
The pattern of subdivision within the Shire however, in no way reflects present patterns of settlement and land use. In the majority of instances, areas of extensive small lot subdivision are comprised in large and more or less manageable rural holdings. There has been and remains a serious concern however that speculative fragmentation of land ownership and ad hoc commitment of isolated small parcels to rural residential and other small lot rural development will cause serious planning problems including:

- Introduction of inappropriate and unusual land management practices (related either to under or over utilisation of the land).
- Destabilisation of agricultural land values and introduction of inappropriate rural land uses into established agricultural areas.
- Increased demand for provision of public services and infrastructure in remote rural areas (at major cost to the public purse).
- Vulnerability of people and property to wildfire.

Those areas of the Shire which have been substantially committed to small lot subdivisions are shown on the Physical Framework Plan (refer Figure 1). These areas generally comprise land which has been subdivided into areas of less than half of the minimum lot size now specified in Planning Schemes for subdivision in these areas; areas which have particularly severe environmental constraints and in which development of any kind should be minimised and areas where the design of the subdivision is seen to be particularly inappropriate in planning terms. Specific land management policies for these areas are identified in the Scheme - including a requirement for restructuring into generally larger, more manageable and more useable holdings of those areas which possess the most severe planning threats and problems.

### Urban Areas

The towns of Beaufort and Avoca and the smaller townships and settlements within which the majority of the Shire’s population reside are described in Part 5.

### Land Use Capability Assessment

A broad land use capability assessment has been undertaken for the whole of the Shire in order to:

- Identify the capability of different areas in the Shire to support various rural land uses.
- Identify areas of environmental sensitivity which have implications in terms of land management.

The land capability assessment has been used to development the Shire’s planning objectives and strategies in Part 5 of the Municipal Strategic Statement.

### Land Systems

The assessment was based on an analysis of Land Systems which were prepared by the former Land Conservation Council. This involves a classification of areas of similar geology, topography, soils, vegetation and landscape and their sensitivity to environmental deterioration.

The Land Systems groupings (based on geomorphic distinctions) for Pyrenees Shire are shown in Figure 2. A simplified summary of the main characteristics of these Land Systems and an assessment of the environmental hazards associated with each Land System and the implications of these hazards in terms of land management is set out in Table 3 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Systems (geomorphic groups)</th>
<th>Geology and Topography</th>
<th>Average Annual Rainfall (mm)</th>
<th>Soils</th>
<th>Native vegetation</th>
<th>Environmental hazards and land management implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> Alluvial</td>
<td>Recent alluvium Plains - almost level</td>
<td>375 - 625</td>
<td>Red calcareous sodic duplex soils; grey-brown calcareous sodic clay soils, uniform texture; variable grey soils liable to flooding</td>
<td>Woodland - grey box, yellow gum, red gum, black box</td>
<td>Generally low erosion hazard throughout, though destruction of topsoil occurs with over-cultivation; widespread salting in the alluvial plans to the north of the Great Dividing Range (where native vegetation has been cleared for agriculture); flooding on present flood terraces. Very suitable for agriculture and to other uses including small lot rural development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TS</strong> Tertiary Sediments</td>
<td>Tertiary sediments - gravels, clays Undulating plains</td>
<td>375 - 750</td>
<td>Mottled red-yellow duplex soils with ironstone</td>
<td>Whipstick mallee - blue, bull, and green mallee Woodland - grey box, yellow gum Open forest - grey box, yellow gum, red ironbark</td>
<td>Moderate sheet erosion hazard if the vegetation is disturbed; high gully erosion hazard exists in the drainage lines; significant wind erosion can occur (and is confined to sandy soils on tertiary sediments); extreme infertility. Existing vegetation should be maintained; discourage small lot rural development along drainage lines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong> Basalts</td>
<td>Recent basalt Undulating plains</td>
<td>500 - 750</td>
<td>Grey calcareous sodic clay soils, uniform texture, coarse structure; red-brown shallow stony gradational soils; black clay soils, uniform texture; red stony gradational soils; red calcareous sodic duplex soils</td>
<td>Woodland - grey box, yellow gum, white box</td>
<td>Minimal to moderate erosion hazards; low permeability and shrink-swell characteristics on plains and lower slopes; rocky terrain of upper slopes. Low carrying capacity and sparse vegetation makes this land system generally unsuitable for small lot rural development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PS1</strong> Palaeozoic Sediments 1</td>
<td>Palaeozoic sediments: interbedded slates, sandstone, quartz reefs Gentle ridges</td>
<td>375 - 625</td>
<td>Yellow-red shallow stony gradational soils; red sodic duplex soils; red sodic duplex soils, coarse structure; yellow sodic duplex soils</td>
<td>Whipstick mallee - green, blue, bull, and kamarooka mallee Open forest - red ironbark, grey box yellow gum, red stringybark</td>
<td>Applies to Palaeozoic Sediments I, II, and III Hill crests and upper slopes have high incidences of sheet erosion. Sheet erosion is also significant on the gentler slopes because of the slow rate of entry of water into the subsoils (this hazard decreases towards the higher rainfall zones where a protective vegetation layer is more easily maintained); high gully erosion exists on the yellow sodic duplex soils that predominate in drainage lines; widespread salting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PS2</strong> Palaeozoic</td>
<td>Palaeozoic sediments:</td>
<td>500 - 625</td>
<td>Yellow-red shallow stony gradational soils; yellow</td>
<td>Open forest - stringybark, red box, long-leaf box, red</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3  Land Systems Description - Pyrenees Shire
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Systems (geomorphic groups)</th>
<th>Geology and Topography</th>
<th>Average Annual Rainfall (mm)</th>
<th>Soils</th>
<th>Native vegetation</th>
<th>Environmental hazards and land management implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sediments II</td>
<td>interbedded slates, sandstones, quartz reefs Broken ridges</td>
<td></td>
<td>gradational soils</td>
<td>ironbark, grey box, yellow gum</td>
<td>where native vegetation has been cleared. Existing tree cover should be maintained and increased particularly on hill crests and upper slopes; Further development should be discouraged on steeper ground; permanent perennial vegetation (timber/pasture) should be planted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS3 Palaeozoic Sediments III</td>
<td>Regional metamorphics: interbedded slates, sandstones Prominent ranges</td>
<td>500 - 625</td>
<td>Yellow-red shallow stony gradational soils; yellow stony gradational soils</td>
<td>Open forest - messmate, blue gum, candlebark, yellow box, red stringybark, red box, long-leaf box, grey box, yellow gum</td>
<td>Steepness and stony surfaces cause high sheet erosion; severe gully erosion in drainage lines; Salting on lower slopes below cleared areas. Existing tree cover should be maintained on hill crests and upper slopes and further development discouraged in these areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Metamorphics</td>
<td>Contact metamorphics: interbedded slates, sandstones Ridges</td>
<td>400 - 750</td>
<td>Yellow-red shallow stony gradational soils; yellow stony gradational soils</td>
<td>Open forest - red stringybark, red box, long-leaf box, grey box, yellow gum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1 Granite I</td>
<td>Granite, granodiorite Gentle hills</td>
<td>375 - 625</td>
<td>Yellow sodic duplex soils, coarse structure; mottled red-yellow duplex soils with ironstone; yellow sodic duplex soils</td>
<td>Woodland - red gum, yellow box, grey box, yellow gum Open forest - grey box, yellow gum, red stringy bark, red box, long-leaf box</td>
<td>Impermeable hardpan restricted moisture storage; heavy rain saturates the profile impending movement of machinery. Sheet erosion on slopes and gully erosion if inadequate vegetation. Not suited for small lot rural development; existing tree cover should be maintained and new plantings encouraged on slopes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2 Granite II</td>
<td>Granite, granodiorite Steep hills</td>
<td>375 - 750</td>
<td>Pale-brown coarse sand soils, uniform texture; mottled red-yellow duplex soils with ironstone</td>
<td>Woodland - manna gum, messmate</td>
<td>Removal of vegetation can lead to massive landslips; severe gully erosion in drainage lines. Not suitable for development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b) Natural Features

The extent to which particular Land Systems may be used for various purposes is also influenced by the existence of natural features such as streams, drainage lines and areas prone to flooding or water logging, prominent hills and ridgelines, areas of forest and water catchments. These and other significant natural features for the Shire are shown in Figure 3 and include:

- The Pyrenees and Great Dividing Ranges;
- Significant high points within these ranges including Mt Cole (800m), Mt Lonarch (788m), Ben Major (610m), Mt Avoca (747m) and Mt Warrenmang (537m);
- Lake Goldsmith, Black Lake and Lake McLaren in the basalt plains in the southern part of the Shire.
- The Avoca River.
- The Bet Bet Creek Valley system.
- Mt Emu Creek and tributaries including Baillies Creek, Trawalla Creek and Fiery Creek.
- Other noteworthy creeks including Mountain Creek (Moonambel), Middle Creek (Warrenmang), Malakoff Creek (Landsborough) and Wattle Creek.
- Public forest areas (eg Mt Cole, Waterloo, Beaufort and Snake Valley).
- Areas of remnant native forest which, except for widespread distribution in the southern slopes of the Great Dividing Range both north and south of Beaufort, are mainly confined to outliers of the main public forest blocks.
- The basalt scoria cone zone area to the east of Lexton including the granite features of Mt Ercildoune and Mt Misery and the extensive low lying areas to the west of these features.
- Low lying areas on the basalt plains in the southern part of the Shire which are also subject to inundation.

(c) Planning Constraints

A Land Use and Development Constraints Plan (refer Figure 4) has been prepared which highlights the various constraints to land use and development which have been identified as a result of the land capability assessment and consideration of relevant background information. The most severely constrained areas include:

- The privately-owned steep hill country associated with the Palaeozoic III, Metamorphic and Granite Hills II land systems. In these areas the strictest control is required over development and vegetation removal in order to prevent problems of erosion and land degradation.
- The extensive area along the Avoca River, particularly between Avoca and Natte Yallock, which is potentially liable to flooding by a 1 in 100 year probability flood. For the purpose of this analysis, these areas have been delineated in the manner as shown in the former Avoca Planning Scheme. It should be noted however that the extent of the affected land is not yet confirmed, but is to be investigated by the Flood-plain Management Unit of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment as part of its current 5 year programme of investigations.
- Areas along other creeks and streams which are also considered to be potentially affected by 1 in 100 year probability floods - and which are also programmed for investigation by the Flood-plain Management Unit of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.
- Catchment areas for potable urban water supply.
- Areas on the basaltic plains in the southern and eastern parts of the Shire which are subject to inundation or other drainage problems.

In addition to the above mentioned areas which are affected by physical and environmental constraints, there are other areas which are so inappropriately subdivided that some form of restructuring should be required. These are generally those areas which are in larger land holdings (despite their subdivisional configuration) and in which there is little or no commitment to small lot (rural residential or hobby farm) use. These preferred restructure areas are also indicated in Figure 4.

(d) Catchment Management

The Pyrenees Shire is covered by three water management authorities - Wimmera, North Central and Glenelg Hopkins. These Catchment Management Authorities were created on 1 July 1997, to replace the Catchment and Land Protection Boards (CALPs). These Authorities adopted existing CALP strategies and are now in the process of adopting new strategies based on more recent and accurate information. The following excerpts outline the key issues for each Authority:

**Wimmera**

The Wimmera Catchment Strategy outlines future resource management by prioritising the issues as appropriate. Dryland salinity and surface water quality are the only issues identified as very high priority. High priority issues are gully and tunnel, and sheet and rill water erosion, chemical contamination, pest plants, pest animals, groundwater water quality, loss of flora and fauna, and drainage floodplain management.

**North Central**

The regional priorities for the North Central Region are salinity, biological diversity, waterways and water resources, soil health, pest plants and animals, regional development. For each of these priorities, the Board has developed a range of programs and sub-programs that are recommended for implementation. Within each program there are priority actions requiring immediate funding and implementation.

**Glenelg Hopkins**

The issue-based priority actions for the Glenelg Hopkins region are:

- Develop and implement a regional surface and subsurface water quality management (nutrient management) strategy.
- Implement a waterway and drainage management program for the region.
- Development and implement a native vegetation retention program and detailed management plans.
- Develop and implement an integrated network of parks, reserves and habitat corridors for the region.
- Develop and implement an integrated pest plant program for the region.
- Develop and implement an integrated pest animal management program for the region.
- Review, modify and implement the salinity management program.

The issues identified in these catchment strategies have been taken into account in the preparation of the Municipal Strategic Statement.
Heritage Planning

Municipal heritage profile

Within the Pyrenees Shire is evidence of a rich gold mining history. Physical evidence of this history is identified in numerous quarries, batteries, alluvial workings, adits, mines, water races, dredge ponds and mullock heaps. Another highly significant part of the Shire’s heritage is its tangible evidence of 19th and early 20th century development that initially resulted from the gold rushes. Both within and outside several of the Pyrenees Shire townships are commercial, public, civic, religious and residential buildings, homesteads, infrastructure, cemeteries, monuments, archaeological sites and landscapes that help to define the heritage values and cultural identity of the municipality.

A large proportion of the Shire’s cultural heritage remains, particularly within the townships and centres of Avoca, Beaufort, Landsborough, Moonambel, Snake Valley and Waubra. Other culturally significant places are also found in other areas including Natte Yallock, Navarre, Percydale, Redbank, Crowlands, Bung Bong/Homebush, Lexton and Amphitheatre.

Key influences

The Pyrenees Shire takes pride in the value and range of its cultural heritage in its towns and outlying rural areas. The retention of heritage areas and places (places of both individual and contributory significance) and mining-related areas provides opportunities for valuable interpretation. These interpretive opportunities are important in helping to make the Shire more sustainable through tourism and as a basis for future planning and development in townships. The former mining areas and related settlements also contribute to this interpretive potential, particularly the mullock heaps and related workings visible in the landscapes and especially those visible from the townships.

Commercial development in the larger towns has affected their historic and architectural amenity through the loss of important heritage assets. This in turn has created some interest in the community about the benefits of protecting and conserving buildings, streetscapes, landscapes and infrastructure that contribute to the identity of the Shire today. Conversely, a lack of population growth and development in some of the smaller, outlying towns has also resulted in the loss of heritage assets through the lack of maintenance and sustainable use. A number of outlying mining sites and related workings are recognised as a significant physical legacy of the Shire’s gold mining history. Apart from the northern half of the Shire where heritage assessments have been carried out, no planning strategies or heritage interpretation has been developed to assist with maximizing the heritage value and tourist potential of sites within the Shire.

The Avoca Shire Heritage Study (1995) for the northern area of the Shire (that includes the townships of Avoca, Landsborough, and Moonambel) and the Pyrenees Shire Heritage Precinct Study (2001) for the southern area (including Beaufort, Snake Valley and Waubra) are critical tools in providing an understanding and appreciation of the Shire’s heritage assets. Due to financial constraints, not all identified and assessed heritage places (including mining sites and related workings) in the northern half of the Shire have been incorporated into the planning scheme. Those places outside the heritage areas are to be considered for incorporation in the medium (2 year) term.

The Shire is also committed to heritage conservation through its heritage advisory service. This free service provides advice from a qualified heritage practitioner on issues relating to restoration or additions to heritage places, new work in heritage areas and possible funding opportunities through state and federal governments. The service assists both owners of heritage places and Council’s planning staff to achieve optimum heritage outcomes as well as fostering public awareness and involvement about the importance of conserving the Shire’s heritage.
Further funding is needed to expand on more detailed heritage assessments for the southern half of the Shire (for research and assessments of those individual places within and outside the township precincts identified in the Pyrenees Shire Heritage Precinct Study), and for preparing heritage and design guidelines that help alleviate the potential conflict between the heritage conservation and redevelopment objectives.

Further work is also required for examining other potential heritage promotions and benefits such as heritage restoration or garden competitions, development of heritage walks, heritage awards and financial incentive schemes.

**Objectives, strategies & implementation**

**Objective 1**

To conserve and enhance individual places and precincts of cultural heritage significance in relation to 19th and 20th century settlement and associated development.

**Strategies**

- Promote places of individual cultural heritage significance (significant at a state or local level) by ensuring that conservation, enhancement and any development contribute to their significance.
- Discourage demolition of heritage places whilst using discretion to support the removal of later modifications where this will enhance their heritage significance.
- Promote the preparation of conservation management plans for key or complex heritage places prior to seeking planning and building approvals and the commencement of works.
- Promote community awareness about the heritage values of the Shire through the heritage advisory service.
- Promote and retain physical evidence of the Shire’s important gold history in the mining sites, mullock heaps and related workings.
- Promote and retain significant views to mining sites from the townships such as Snake Valley and Avoca.
- Assess proposed developments in heritage areas to have regard and respect for the character, integrity and composition of the areas.
- Retain contributory places in heritage precincts because these places “contribute” to the historic and architectural amenity of the local areas.

**Objective 2**

To promote respectful and sympathetic new work for sites and buildings in heritage areas.

**Strategy**

- Promote and facilitate development in heritage areas that responds to the character, form, scale and context of its surrounding environment and makes a positive contribution to the heritage area through innovative design.

**Objective 3**

To conserve individual places of known Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.
Strategy

- Establish appropriate planning guidelines and provisions to protect known Aboriginal heritage places from inappropriate development and ensure where appropriate that proposals respond to the character, form, scale and context of these places.

Implementation

These objectives and strategies will be implemented by:

- Using policy and the exercise of discretion
  - Utilising the Local Planning Policy to protect culturally significant heritage places and areas.
  - Applying the Pyrenees Shire Heritage Precinct Policy Report (an incorporated document) which includes specific local heritage objectives and policies for each of the heritage precincts, together with policy maps and lists of relevant heritage places within the precincts.

Applying zones and overlays

- Applying the Heritage Overlay to identified heritage places and precincts of cultural significance.

Undertaking further strategic work

- Undertake more detailed research and assessments of potential individually significant heritage places in the southern area of the Shire (identified in the Pyrenees Shire Heritage Precinct Study 2001) through the preparation of detailed citation sheets that include a brief history, description and statement of significance. Those places found to be of state or local significance should then be included in the schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the planning scheme after a process of public consultation and review.
- Incorporate those individual heritage places (including mining sites and related workings) in the northern half of the Shire that are outside heritage precincts into the planning scheme, after a process of public consultation and review.
- Develop heritage and design guidelines for existing places and new work in heritage areas.
- Establish strategic planning objectives and heritage interpretation for historic mining sites, areas and related workings in the municipality;
- Establish strategic planning objectives and undertake further heritage studies (particularly for the former Shires of Ripon and Lexton and in areas which may be identified as having Aboriginal cultural heritage significance) as and when the necessary resources become available.

Other actions

- Continue the provision of a part-time heritage advisory service that offers restoration and architectural advice to property owners of heritage places.
- Investigate and liaise with state and federal government heritage departments and agencies for funding opportunities for the preparation of promotional schemes and financial incentives for owners of heritage places.
- Establish a heritage committee to assist with heritage award and interpretation programs and the administration of financial incentives, with the ultimate aim of building a partnership between the Council and the community.
References


21.02-11 Areas susceptible to Wildfire

The risk of wildfire in the Pyrenees Shire is extreme in some areas. In appropriate cases detailed fire management plans will need to be prepared in conjunction with Country Fire Authority.

All applications for development in the Shire, particularly where the area is known to be subject to high risk from wildfire (whether a Bushfire Prone Area declared under the Building Regulations or an area covered by a Wildfire Management Overlay or otherwise), should be assessed having regard to the need for preventative measures by way of design and siting of buildings and works, or land use restrictions.