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C25**MUNICIPAL OVERVIEW**

Strathbogie Shire is set amid the picturesque Strathbogie Plateau, which extends to the fertile plains of the Goulburn River and beyond. Situated midway between Melbourne and Albury, the 3,302 square kilometre municipality includes the major towns of Euroa, Nagambie, Avenel and Violet Town. Smaller townships are also spread throughout the municipality which are predominantly used for rural living purposes.

Settlement

The population of the Shire is estimated at 9,169 (ABS, 2001) and it is projected to rise to 10,018 by 2011. The population of the Shire is ageing. In 2001, 27.81% of the population was aged over 60 and this is projected to rise to 29.10% by 2006 and 33.69% by 2011.

The Shire is also coming under pressure to develop rural land for lifestyle purposes. The experience of Shires on the Melbourne fringe indicates that the pressure for rural lifestyle development will continue to grow, and if left unplanned, could have significant adverse impacts on the rural landscape, and the operation and ongoing viability of existing agricultural activity.

Rural Living and low density residential is occurring in dispersed locations in an “ad hoc” manner throughout the Shire.

Environment

The Shire is located within the Goulburn Broken Catchment which is part of the Murray Darling Basin. Important regional waterways include the Goulburn River (on which are Lake Nagambie and the Goulburn Weir), the Seven Creeks and Hughes Creek. The Goulburn River is recognised under the Heritage Rivers Act as a river of national importance.

The Ironbark forests of the Goldfields bioregion extend across central Victoria and into the western end of the Shire, west of the Goulburn River. These forests have high biodiversity values and are also characterised by soil types prone to erosion. They require careful management and protection from inappropriate subdivision and fragmentation.

Economic Development

The Shire of Strathbogie is known as the “Horse Capital of Victoria”. It is home to a number of thoroughbred and general horse studs and associated training facilities. Council supports the ongoing development of the equine industry, particularly for its rural employment and investment opportunities.

Furthermore, Strathbogie Shire has many features to complement its traditional agricultural base of wool, grain and cattle. There has been significant growth in agribusiness, with the equine, pig, mushroom and chicken industries augmenting a long-standing viticulture sector. The Shire supports the development and expansion of agribusiness and value adding support industries, and has locations ready for most development opportunities.

A range of agricultural industries and developments require buffer distances to protect the amenity of adjoining or nearby properties and land uses. Council supports such uses particularly where they are associated with the generation of local employment and are ecologically sustainable.

The health, community services and education sectors account for 14% of all employment in the Shire (379 persons). The industry is considered important due to the large number of persons employed. The Shire also supports a strong and emerging manufacturing sector which represents 13% of the total number of employees from the Shire.

The Shire boasts a range of food producers. Emerging food industries include wine production and intensive agriculture eg. herb production, hydroponics and intensive animal

husbandry. It is estimated that the area planted for viticulture has increased by more than 150% over recent years. This trend has seen large areas planted for premium wine grape production in the Strathbogrie Ranges and along the Goulburn River around Nagambie.

The Mangalore Airport is a regional airport with the capacity to support a diversity of air traffic. The Airport is located in the southern portion of the Shire, between the Hume Freeway and the Goulburn Valley Highway. Council envisages a future role for the airport as a major industry node for aviation training and possibly for intermodal transport and industry development.

Mangalore Airport is potentially the most important infrastructure element within the Strathbogrie Shire in respect to long-term sustainability of the Shire for intensive food production, processing, packaging and export markets.

The Mangalore Airport has strong potential to develop into a major transport hub, offering multi-modal opportunities and airport related commercial, industrial, residential developments and associated aircraft traffic.