

**21.03**19/01/2006  
VC37**KEY INFLUENCES**

Strategic directions for the Shire will need to recognise the key influences that are likely to have an impact on land use planning and management of resources in the Central Goldfields Shire.

Later sections of the MSS identify the issues arising from these influences and include objectives, strategies and implementation measures to address the issues.

**Maintaining population and service levels of urban centres**

Maryborough is not expected to experience significant population growth over the next ten years. Maryborough however performs important regional functions as a centre for retail and commerce, employment and community services. Consolidating Maryborough's role will continue to be a major focus of Council's strategic planning initiatives.

Townships in the Shire are generally experiencing population decline or stability. Townships such as Dunolly, Carisbrook Talbot have important roles as local community centres. Their roles are also related to tourism, heritage and alternative residential lifestyle. Enhancing the opportunities afforded by these roles and maintaining existing levels of services in the Shire's towns requires a balanced approach to planning and development of the Shire

**Regional co-ordination**

Regional co-ordination is particularly important due to Maryborough's central regional location and its location that is equidistant from Ballarat and Bendigo. Proximity to other medium sized centres (Castlemaine and Daylesford) presents opportunities for regional co-ordination.

Council will need to maintain and strengthen links and partnerships with other municipalities and regional organisations in a range of areas including economic development, employment and training, tourism and catchment management. Central Goldfields shares the same tourism themes (gold heritage) with several regional centres and towns and also shares the same natural resource management issues as other municipalities in the Loddon dryland catchment.

Whilst Central Goldfields has its own local identity, Council sees the need to be part of a larger sub regional identity. This has been demonstrated in tourism promotion and in the provision of regional education and community services. Council will pursue and encourage further linkage with Ballarat and Latrobe University and further development of its BRIT TAFE Campus.

**Industrial development**

Maryborough has a long established reputation for assistance to industry and enterprise development. Diversification of Maryborough's manufacturing base, clustering within industries and continuing the export focus of local products (food and paper products, woodworking and woodcraft, books, skins, engineering, meat products) is fundamental to the Shire's industry and business strategy.

In order to assist existing and new industries a range of industrial lot sizes and locations need to be made available, including larger greenfield sites for the longer term establishment of larger industries, particularly cluster development of the printing Industry.

## **Housing**

Affordable housing is an economic and lifestyle strength of Central Goldfields. Council will continue to encourage the provision of innovative residential housing construction that is well designed, energy efficient and affordable.

Demographic features of the Shire and its urban centres will influence the housing mix and residential densities. These features include ageing population, smaller household sizes and comparatively lower levels of household income.

## **Agricultural productivity**

Land use planning needs to respond to the changing nature of agriculture. Recent growth of olives, essential oils, viticulture, wine making and horticultural industries in the Shire are examples of the changes that have occurred in Central Goldfields.

The agricultural sector makes a valuable contribution to the shire, region and State's economy. Poor land management practices will have a negative impact on the future productivity of agricultural areas in the Shire. The planning scheme is a major instrument by which Council can prevent unplanned urban and town expansion, retain farm sizes in productive units, and promote sustainable land management.

## **Protecting water quality and quantity**

Protection of water quality and maintaining water supply are priority issues in the Loddon River and Avoca River catchments. Poor land use planning decisions and land management will influence both water quality and quantity in the catchments. Of particular importance is the need to ensure that effluent disposal systems in unsewered areas are located and maintained to minimise the risk of pollution to waterways.

Water supply in the catchments needs to be carefully monitored. There are an increasing number of dams being constructed in the catchment within the shire. Dam siting and the size of dams need to be controlled to safeguard water quantity in the catchments.

## **Protecting biodiversity**

Retention of native vegetation will protect biodiversity and improve the health of the catchment. Box ironbark forests in the shire are vital flora and fauna habitats. The Vegetation Conservation Strategy for the North Central Catchment Management Authority Region (1997) emphasises the protection and enhancement of existing native vegetation, establishing networks and consolidating conservation reserves, weed control and protection of threatened vegetation communities. Biodiversity strategies at the State and regional level are important documents that need to be taken into account in land use and development decisions in the shire.

While the Central Goldfields Shire has a high level of biodiversity, it also contains a substantial number of threatened species. Threatened flora species include Buloke, Small Milk-wort, Clover Glycine and Scented Bush-pea. Threatened Fauna species include Swift Parrot, Powerful Owl, Brush-tailed Phascogale and Striped Legless Lizard.

### **Protecting and enhancing heritage**

The Shire's heritage is an important resource providing a distinctive local identity for urban settlements. It is the resource upon which much of the shire's tourism is founded. Indeed gold heritage is the core product and strength of Victoria's "Goldfields" tourist region. The success of the tourism industry will therefore depend on the extent to which heritage streetscapes, places and areas are protected and presented.

The heritage and landscape setting of the shire's towns are important elements of their lifestyle and "urban village" character. Establishing further heritage precincts, undertaking urban design strategies and providing protection in the planning scheme for more heritage buildings and areas are some of the ways in which council responds to important heritage issues.