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C26(Part 1)**MUNICIPAL PROFILE**

Wangaratta is a strategically located regional centre in northeast Victoria with national road and rail and highway access and convenient access to Albury-Wodonga, the Murray River and Victoria's alpine areas. The urban settlements of Wangaratta and a number of rural townships are surrounded by productive rural land. The fertile river valley of the Ovens River and King River and the foothills of the Great Dividing Range are defining features of the municipality.

The municipality has a large range of lifestyle, economic and recreational opportunities and services that are valued by both residents and visitors. Demand for residential opportunities in the area will continue to grow. The Wangaratta Planning Scheme and other guiding strategic Council documents are premised a 2 percent per annum population growth rate until the 2030 period. This growth rate is based on growth demand in northeastern Victoria generally, the economic and lifestyle locational advantages of the area and the potential supply of residential land and services.

The *Rural City of Wangaratta Council Plan 2004 –2008* outlines the following profile for the municipality:

Located in North East Victoria, the Rural City of Wangaratta is 235 kilometres north east of Melbourne and 647 kilometres south of Sydney on the Hume Freeway. Wangaratta is the municipality's largest urban centre, with approximately 18,000 residents. Everton, Glenrowan, Oxley, Milawa, Moyhu, Peechelba, Springhurst, Whitfield, Whorouly and Eldorado are some of the larger rural centres.

The region is renowned for world class wineries, gourmet food, spectacular scenery, historic legends, cultural heritage and access to numerous State and National Parks. An extensive river system, which includes the Ovens and King Rivers, winds through the townships that dot the valleys and plains, meeting at Wangaratta.

Families are well served by 21 primary schools, three secondary schools, one specialist school, one TAFE Institute and many childcare and kindergarten facilities. There is also a centre for continuing education. The municipality provides strong recreational, commercial, educational, tourism and health facilities, including a modern private hospital. It has diverse industry and economic stability and is the regional headquarters for several state government agencies.

The Rural City of Wangaratta's location in beautiful North East Victoria allows residents and visitors to enjoy the best nature has to offer. Cycling, bushwalking and fishing are some of the favourite leisure activities where people can reap the benefits of a perfect location. Akin to the natural beauty is the superb array of gourmet food and fine wines available in an ever changing seasonal environment.

The Rural City is proud of its heritage with the memory of Australia's most well known bushranger, Ned Kelly, captured and preserved in and around the historic township of Glenrowan.

Wangaratta is officially titled "Australia's Capital of Jazz" due to the incredibly successful Wangaratta Festival of Jazz and Blues held annually in November. One of many special events hosted within the Rural City, this festival has been acknowledged as a Tourism Victoria Hallmark Event and Tourism Australia's "Most Significant Regional Festival".

Population 25,667 Area 3,764 sq. km