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C81**MUNICIPAL PROFILE**

The Shire of Yarra Ranges is located on the eastern fringe of metropolitan Melbourne with a population currently estimated at 145,000.

The Shire balances a mix of urban and rural communities. Around 70% of the Shire's population live in the urban areas of the municipality (approximately 3% of its landmass). The rest is distributed throughout the remaining areas. There are over 55 suburbs, townships, small communities and rural areas within the Shire, making it one of the most diverse municipalities in the State.

There are approximately 244,700 hectares or 2447 km² of land in the Shire of Yarra Ranges, comprised of the following:

- 166,396 hectares (68%) of Crown Land, the majority of which is managed by the Victorian Government as State Forests, Reserves and National Parks.
- 73,410 hectares (30%) of private land, managed by land owners and occupiers
- 4,894 hectares (2%) of Shire of Yarra Ranges, managed by Council.

Many residents value living within or being in close proximity to the area's scenic and bushland environments and have therefore traded off suburban convenience for the lifestyle and rural benefits. Future planning needs to respect and reinforce this community value, while maintaining a diverse and sustainable future.

Environment

The Shire of Yarra Ranges has long been recognised as a special place for its natural beauty and diverse habitats. The combination of national parks, state forests, private gardens and its location on the doorstep of Melbourne all combine to make the area unique in its natural, cultural and amenity values.

The Shire contains some of the most environmentally important areas in Victoria, which are a significant factor in attracting residents and tourists. The mountainous landscapes and the Yarra River valley contain significant areas of remnant native vegetation, much of which is botanically and zoologically significant, providing important habitat for wildlife.

Vast tracts of public land in the upper reaches of the Yarra River (some closed catchments) supply approximately 80% of Melbourne's domestic water requirements.

Economy

Yarra Ranges has a diverse economy of around 10,000 businesses, which employ over 35,000 people. Manufacturing continues to represent the single most valuable sector of the economy, with construction, property and business services, retail trade and agricultural and other key sectors.

The Shire and in particular the Yarra Valley is gaining local and international recognition as a fine food and wine producing area. Each year, over 2.2 million tourists visit the area, including the wineries of the Yarra Valley and townships and gardens of the Dandenong Ranges.

Metropolitan Context Map

