Moira Small Towns and Settlements Context Report

Contents

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Towns with a population less than 1,000 people comprise 53% of the total number of urban centres in Victoria. Whilst they only account for 2% of the total Victorian population, they represent important social and economic bases for their communities and rural surrounds.

The Moira Shire Council recognises the importance of the small towns and settlements within the municipality, and as such has engaged Spiire (formerly CPG Australia) to prepare a strategy plan for each of these places. The strategy plans will complement the strategic work already undertaken for the four major towns of Yarrawonga, Cobram, Numurkah and Nathalia, as well as the Regional Rural Land Use Strategy which provide strategic direction for the Shire's rural areas.

The towns and settlements for which a strategy plan is to be prepared include;

- Barmah (pop. 181)
- Bearii (pop. 136)
- Bundalong (pop. 336)
- Burramine
- Invergordon
- Kaarimba
- Katamatite (pop. 232)
- Katunga
- Koonoomoo
- Kotupna
- Lake Rowan
- Lower Moira
- Naring
- Muckatah
- Picola St James
- Strathmerton (pop. 474)
- Tungamah (pop. 287)
- Waaia
- Wilby
- Wunghnu
- Yalca North
- Yarroweyah

The location of these towns and settlements is shown in Figure 1.

When assessing the outlook for these small towns and settlements, this Strategy Plan has given consideration to a number of factors, including:

− Settlement history and background;
− What it means to live in a small town;
− Strategic influences including;
  − Town planning provisions;
  − Infrastructure and servicing;
  − Social influences;
  − Economic influences;
  − Environmental influences;
− Population levels and trends;
− Land supply and demand; and
− Location attributes and settlement hierarchy.

Importantly, the Strategy Plan recognises that not all small towns and settlements are the same, and therefore a "one size fits all" approach to these communities has not been adopted. Whilst there may be similar issues and influencing factors which can be addressed as part of a collective policy for the small towns, each community has an individual identity and future, and as such receives individual focus within this Strategy Plan.

1.2 Report Structure

The Small Town Strategy comprises two reports - context and strategy.

The Context Report provides the background to the current status and influences on the small towns of the Moira Shire. It identifies key issues and influencing factors (as described above), establishes principles for the final strategy, and provides an overview of the options for the Strategy.

The Strategy Report details the objectives and actions for the small towns and settlements, both collectively and individually. It includes recommendations for changes to the Moira Planning Scheme and a strategy plan for each settlement.

1.3 Consultation

The consultation process adopted for the preparation of the Small Towns Strategy Plan is an important component of this study. Engaging stakeholders in the development of ideas and concepts has been shown to give rise to a more collaborative approach to planning and achieving a greater sense of ownership, support and legitimacy of the plan which emerges. Consultation for this study has involved the participation of:

- Councillors
- Council officers
- Residents
- Landowners
- Servicing authorities, and
- Relevant government agencies

A community forum was held in Yarroweyah in December 2009 and a community meeting was held in Bundalong in January 2010. The consultation process sought to identify the issues facing the small towns and settlements at present, the preferred direction for growth and to ascertain the appropriate strategic planning direction for the next 15-20 years.

The comments received from the consultation sessions played an important role in the formulation of this draft Small Towns Strategy Plan. Attachment 1 provides details of the consultation program.

Further community input was sought on the draft Strategy when it is placed on public exhibition and at follow up consultation sessions with the Council officers and Councillors, the wider community and relevant government and agency groups in June/July 2012. Where possible this input has been included in the final strategy report.

Figure 1 – Moira Small Towns Study Area
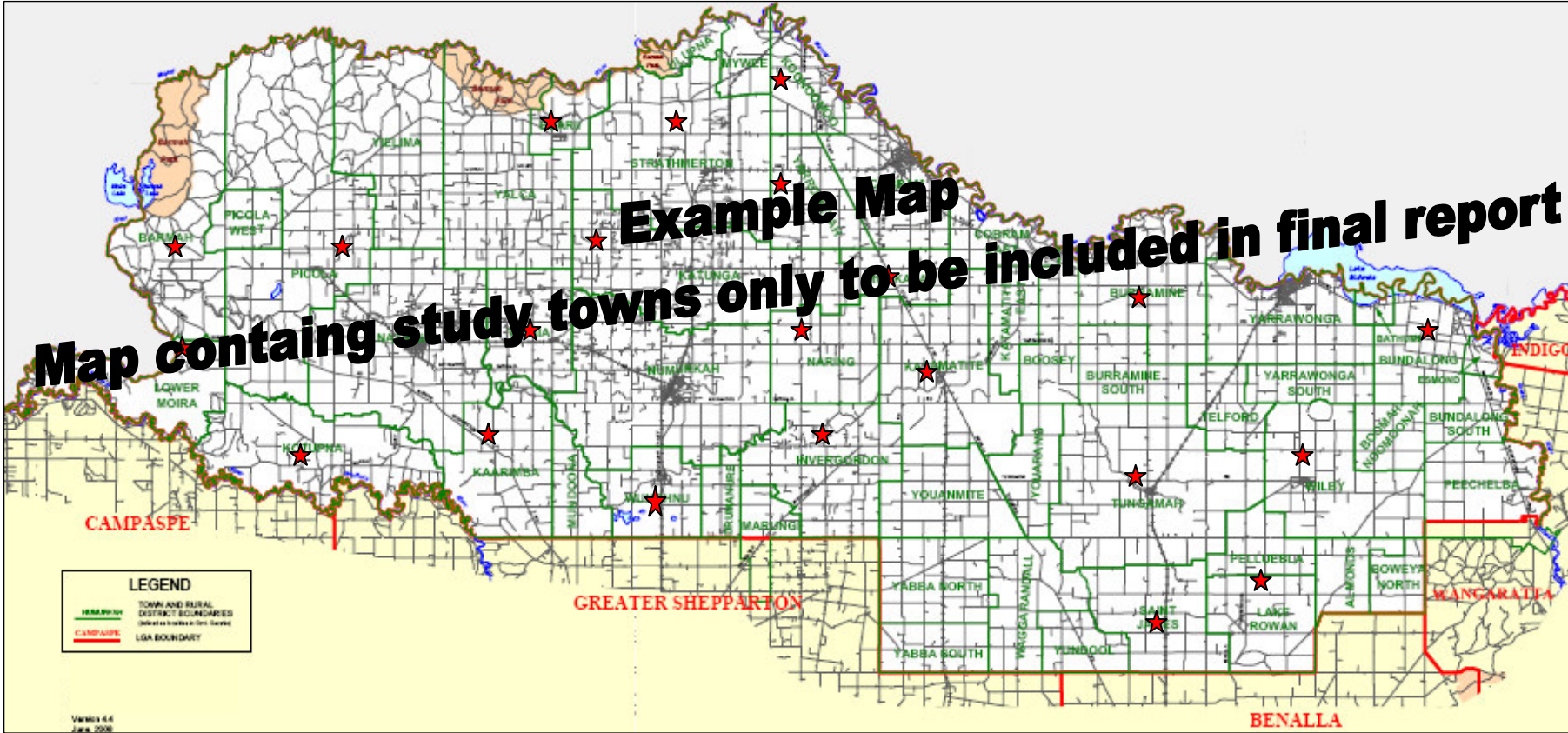
Source: www.land.vic.gov.au

2   Settlement History

2.1   Indigenous History

The traditional owners and first inhabitants of the Moira Shire were the aboriginal people. The Yorta Yorta people are the traditional owners of the Barmah area, along the Murray River. The Bangerang people are the traditional owners of a large area of land around the lower Goulburn including the towns of Katamatite, Yarrawonga, Numurkah and Cobram.

The indigenous history of the Moira Shire is evident in many of the place names which are still used today. Moira is thought to be the indigenous name for the area, used to describe the numerous reedy lagoons to be found there. Other indigenous place names include:

Barmah	= meeting place
Bundalong	= joined
Kotupna	= wiry grass
Picola	= rushing water
Tungamah	= brush turkey
Waaia	= crow
Wunghnu	= boomerang
Yarroweyah	= strong wind

Scar trees, indigenous artefacts and culturally significant sites have been identified in the Moira Shire.

2.2   Early Settlers

Early explorers, including Hamilton Hume and Charles Sturt, crossed the Goulburn and Murray Rivers and brought the area now known as the Moira Shire, to the attention of the squatters.

In the 1800's, squatters occupied vast stations throughout the Moira Shire mainly grazing sheep and cattle. The original stations were Yielima Station (45,400acres), Strathmerton Station (192,000acres), Kotupna Station (118,000acres), Lower Moira Station (64,000acres), Upper Moira Station (57,000acres), Kaarimba Station, Cobram Station and Yarroweyah Station.

The 1800's was a time of rapid change and development for the Moira Shire. Major milestones include the employment of aboriginal stockmen in the 1840's, the start of the goldrush in the 1850's which resulted in a shortage of skilled farm workers, and the beginning of timber milling in the Barmah forest in the 1860's.

In 1865 the Land Act and its subsequent amendments were developed, which led to the gradual subdivision of the huge stations into smaller properties and the number of landowners in the district increased. These early farmers were known

as Selectors as they would "select" the land they wanted (up to 320 acres), go to the Lands Office and acquire a land licence. The rent in the 1870's was 2 shillings per acre, per year, and after three years the freehold was theirs if they paid the balance of fourteen shillings per acre.

The increase in the number of landowners in the area led to the establishment of many schools throughout the district at this time including Kaarimba, Picola, North Picola, Kotupna, Burramine, Tungamah, Bundalong, Katunga, Yarroweyah and St James. Churches and hotels were also erected in most settlements as the local populations increased.

2.3 Irrigation District

The irrigation areas of northern Victoria were created following the drought of 1895- 1902. The associated unemployment and homelessness were the catalyst for public interest in rural settlement schemes supported through irrigation. In 1914 the Irrigation League was formed and the Moira district was progressively opened for irrigation. In the following years, further development ensued with the erection of more housing, development of towns and establishment of local hospitals and butter factories. The irrigation scheme and the drop in wheat prices in the 1920's brought with it a shift from large scale wheat farming to smaller scale dairy farming.

2.4 Soldier Settlement Scheme

In July 1945, after World War II, it was suggested that the irrigation system be further developed to assist in the creation of settlement farms for returned soldiers. Approximately 2,000 hectares of land around Cobram, Strathmerton, Katamatite, Katunga, Waaia and Nathalia and 4,000 hectares around Numurkah were compulsorily acquired.

The soldier settlement farms had their size determined by an analysis of soil type and, averaging between 40 - 50 hectares, they were intended to support 45 to 50 milking cows. Initially the settlers were paid a weekly wage while the land was being prepared and then they took over 18 cows and were paid to do their own fencing and irrigating for twelve more months.

2.5 Farming

In the 1960's, small farms were still predominant, most dairy farms milking 50 or fewer cows. Since that time, innovations in the farming industry have increased productivity. Innovations in transport and machinery, improved crop rotations and advances in chemical engineering are just a few things that have resulted in increased production and increasing labour efficiency. In combination this has led to the return of larger scale farming enterprises to maintain competitiveness in the market, and ultimately has resulted in fewer farming families on the land.

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In recent years, several factors have impacted the local farming community including deregulation of the dairy industry which resulted in the expansion of many dairy enterprises, an unprecedented period of low rainfall which has resulted in decreased water allocations and a fall in international commodity prices leading to significant falls in the farm gate price for milk.

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3 Small Town Communities

Many of the settlements in the study area have a long and proud history. They have built their community over many years, with some families dating back to pre soldier settlement times and others finding themselves newly accepted into their chosen community. All the settlements in the study area have a sense of community, each at varying stages of development. A sense of community can be defined as:

"A feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met though their commitment to be together" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Sense of community has been associated with greater participation, perceived safety, social bonding, greater sense of purpose and perceived control and greater civic contribution. Evidence suggests that maintaining a connection to local farming increases the vitality and sustainability of rural communities.

Since the 1970's, the average life expectancy in rural Victoria has increased by approximately 10 years. Baby boomers are farming for longer, birth rates have dropped and many of the younger population are leaving small towns and rural areas to pursue their education, work and lifestyle opportunities elsewhere. Declining commodity prices and technological improvements in automation have also contributed to the decline in farm populations. In farming based areas such as Moira, these factors inevitably lead to a decrease in local populations.

Attracting new residents to an area is one potential way of overcoming these issues. Most people retire in the area in which they live however there is a growing trend for retirees to seek out preferred new locations to enjoy their retirement. Often these will be areas of high amenity, such as river environs areas which have promoted the 'tree-change' phenomena. Rural areas are also recently becoming very popular in attracting retirees, often escalating demand for farmland in 'lifestyle' areas for non-farming purposes.

As well as attracting new residents from metropolitan areas, retirees from the farms in the district often stay in the local settlement rather than move to a regional centre or larger town. Dairy farmers are more likely to retire at a younger age than other farmers due to the intense nature of dairy farming. The exit rate from dairy farming averages 6.5% per annum, 50% higher than the exit rate of sheep or beef farmers. Therefore, as anecdotal evidence suggests that many farmers wish to retain a connection with the land, these retirees provide another source population for the small towns.

The population within the study area is ageing. This is likely to result in many issues in the coming years including an increase in the need for support services locally or the relocating of these retirees to a location that can better service their needs. A settlement that can cater for the needs of their elderly may have a competitive advantage over other similar settlements, not only as they may be required, could potentially increase the availability of local employment opportunities, which could boost numbers of younger people.

The issue of locally available employment is a difficult one for small settlements. Originally small settlements relied on local farms and the related service industry for their employment base. With the ever increasing size of farms, modern and automated farming techniques, innovations in transport and a preference for industries to be based in larger towns, locally based employment opportunities are declining.

However, it is recognised that new technology capabilities and the flexibility of work practices are both contributing to the feasibility of greater numbers of people combining their residential and employment choices. Many people can now work where they want to live rather than have to live where they work. The relocating of these often skilled professionals to small towns does not only boost local population but can also provide locally available professional services.

Many of the issues facing the small towns within the study area are not unique to the Moira Shire. Studies of small town development from both Australia and overseas, have reported population decline, decreasing opportunities for employment and loss of youth among the problems faced by small towns. Despite these challenges, in summarising the research regarding small town viability, five key factors for community success have been identified. These are:

– Belief and Expectations
– Collaboration
– Local leadership
– Strategic Planning and Action
– Opportunism

Research has shown that a community's potential does not only depend on its location, climate and natural resources, but also on a positive mindset, enterprising spirit, shared values and organisational skills. Community pride and the ability to instigate and manage development locally are indicators for economically successful communities.

Collaboration and co-operation within a community strengthen a shared sense of identity and promote a participatory approach to decision making. The ability to develop shared visions and positively harness and manage community conflict enables a community realise their goals, to learn from their successful and

unsuccessful projects and maintain local interest and involvement in the long term.

Local leadership is seen as the key ingredient for effective community development. Communities require a core of local leaders who are committed to local economic development and possess the appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude to facilitate change. Emerging leaders, including, women, youth and members of minority groups, need to be identified, recruited and up-skilled to ensure a succession plan for local leadership and long-term community viability. Local leadership is discussed in more detail in Section 6.2.

A commitment to strategic planning processes over the long-term is a key ingredient for the economic success of small towns and settlements. Strategic planning processes include encouragement of a culture of community problem solving and establishing a mechanism of managing the development process. A realistic appraisal of the feasibility of potential opportunities and the ability to prioritise development options is required. In addition to these elements, there needs to be continuous promotion of the development strategy to the community and ongoing evaluation and adjustment of the community action plan.

Whilst strategic planning and formalised process to implement economic development are very important, some development opportunities can occur opportunistically. Inter-community networking can play a significant role in this area. By establishing and maintaining networks, communities can make others aware of their potential, identify opportunities where other communities see challenges and market their strengths to a broader audience.

The Small Towns Strategy recognises both the challenges faced by the communities in the study area and the existing capacity within these settlements to rise to these challenges. The concept of community capacity building is integral to the ongoing success of small towns and is discussed in more detail in Section 4.3 of this report and in the Strategy Report.

4	**Strategic Influences**

There are a number of factors which influence the growth and direction of all settlements, regardless of size. This section focuses on those factors which are influencing, or have the potential to influence the small towns and settlements of the Moira Shire.   In summary these can be listed or grouped as follows:

- **Land use planning policy and provisions** including the Victoria Planning Provisions and the Moira Planning Scheme
- **Servicing and infrastructure**, including transport
- **Social influences** including community expectations, community capacity building and local leadership
- **Economic influences** including agriculture and food security, retailing, tourism and industry
- **Environmental influences**, including biodiversity, high value agricultural areas, water availability, flooding and inundation, climate change and fire risk.

4.1	**Land Use Planning Policy and Provisions**

Land use planning within the study area is affected by numerous state and local policies and strategies, including:

State policy and strategy:

- Ministerial Direction#6 – Rural Residential Development
- Future Farming Strategy
- Blueprint for Regional Growth

Victorian Planning Provisions (VPPs) – (contained within the Planning Scheme):

- State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF)
- Zones
- Overlays

Local policy and strategy:

- Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) (contained within the Moira Planning Schemes)

4.1.1	**Key Themes of Strategic Policy**

The key themes and guiding principles of this policy framework are identified below.

Sustainable Settlements
Objectives of the SPPF include to:

"facilitate sustainable development that takes full advantage of existing settlement patterns, and investment in transport and communication, water and sewerage and social facilities."

Themes of sustainability and the links to use of existing infrastructure, consolidation, centres as the focus of activities and containment are echoed through planning policy.

In planning for urban settlements, the SPPF states planning authorities should plan to accommodate population growth over at least ten years; these settlements may include residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, institutional and other public uses.

The SPPF direction to endeavour to consolidate existing areas is reflected in the approved Katamatite Restructure Plan and the proposed Bathumi, Youanmite & Marungi Restructure Plans (refer to Section 4.4).

The Moira Planning Scheme has as a Settlement Strategy in Clause 21.04-4:
"Ensure that rural residential living is focused toward rural villages where a limited range of social and physical infrastructure can be provided. Settlements which can be viewed as rural residential villages include Picola, Tungamah, Katunga, Katamatite, Waaia, Bundalong, Strathmerton, Barmah and St. James as well as around larger urban settlements"

The Campaspe, Greater Shepparton and Moira Regional and Rural Land Use Strategy (RRLUS) describes the social, economic and environmental benefits of sustainable urban form, which is compact and focussed on existing infrastructure and does not compromise productive agricultural land. An objective of the Settlement Policy within the Moira Planning Scheme (Clause 21.04) is based on controlling future development of housing in rural areas to ensure that it is responsive to a demonstrated need and will not prejudice the long-term sustainability of farming.

Protection of Agricultural Areas
The objective of protecting agricultural areas from incompatible development is consistent and strong through strategic planning policy framework in Victoria.

In seeking to manage rural residential development, Department of Planning and Community Development Practice Note 37 Rural residential development (revised May 2012) requires that any proposed rezonings demonstrate, among other things, that they will not compromise natural resources. This is reinforced by the State Planning Policy Framework, included within the planning schemes as part of the VPPs, which includes agriculture as a significant component of economic development. It is seeks to ensure that:
"The State's agricultural base is protected from the unplanned loss of productive agricultural land due to permanent changes of land use and to

enable protection of productive farmland which is of strategic significance in the local or regional context. (Clause 17.05-1)."

The Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) within the Moira Planning Scheme also emphasises the value of agricultural land in the region and the need to protect agricultural land; particularly high value agricultural land.

Rural Subdivision and Dwelling Construction

Provisions relating to the subdivision of rural land generally relate to the protection of agricultural areas; that is, that subdivision of farming land is generally discouraged on the basis that it will impact upon agricultural areas. Similarly, planning schemes include controls to limit the construction of dwellings within rural zones.

The Victorian Planning Provisions (VPPs) provide that, within the Farming Zone, lots created through subdivision must be a minimum of 40 hectares. Exceptions apply where:

− an alternative is nominated by the municipality in the schedule to the zone;

− the subdivision creates a lot for an existing dwelling; or—

− the total number of lots is not increased (i.e. in the re-subdivision of existing lots).

The Moira Planning Scheme, in the Schedule to the Farming Zone, provides for subdivision to a minimum of 100 hectares where land is identified as being within the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District. Areas outside the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District have a minimum subdivision of 250 hectares. Refer to Figure 2 – Goulburn Murray Irrigation District.

Through the Farming Zone, the use and development of a dwelling on a lot of 100 or 250 hectares (depending on whether the land is within the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District) or more is as of right, as long as it is the only dwelling. Otherwise, the use and development is discretionary; requiring local government approval through a planning permit.

It should be noted that through Moira Planning Scheme Amendment C51 the minimum subdivision and dwelling lot sizes maybe altered. Council have submitted the amendment to the Minister of Planning for approval.
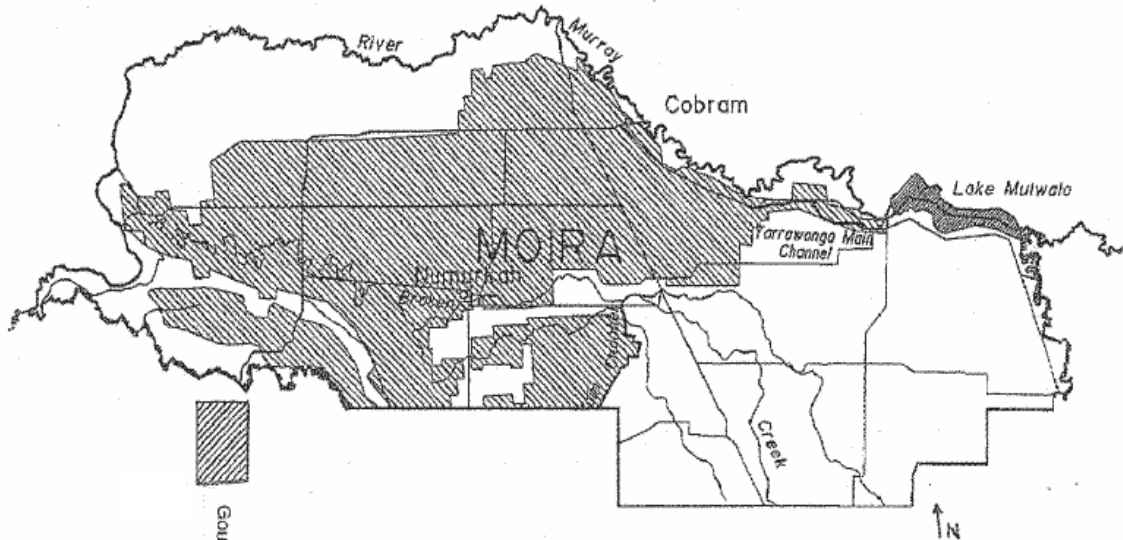
Figure 2: Goulburn Murray Irrigation District

Protection of Cultural Sites and Environmental Characteristics
There is strong policy support for the protection of both Aboriginal and European heritage sites.

The SPPF in Clause 15.11- Heritage, has as its objective:
"To assist the conservation of places that have natural, environmental, aesthetic, historic, cultural, scientific or social significance or other special value important for scientific and research purposes, as a means of understanding our past, as well as maintaining and enhancing Victoria's image and making a contribution to the economic and cultural growth of the State."

The Moira Planning Scheme states in Clause 21.02 - Vision for Moira:
"There is a desire for the local community to protect and enhance elements of historic, cultural and natural significance for the intrinsic value and continuity between our past and future generations."

Many of the small towns in the Moira Shire include sites of significance for Victoria relating to the indigenous culture, soldier settlement and the railway and forestry industries. The Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 provides the framework for the protection of Aboriginal Cultural heritage.

The Moira Heritage Study (2007) identified many culturally significant sites throughout the Shire, including in the small towns and surrounding areas. These include 19 churches, 14 halls, 5 war memorials, 13 cemeteries, 5 schools and 3 lock up cells. The report also identified significant heritage precincts in Katamatite, Tungamah and St James.

Figure 3: Examples of Sites of Historical Significance

Evans Brothers Sawmill (1898), Barmah

Coonanga Homestead (1866), Bearii

Slab Hut, Picola
Wunghnu

Post Office Cottage (1890),

Timber bridge over Sheepwash Ck, Kotupna

Uniting Church and Hall, Katamatite

Source: Moira Heritage Study, 2007

4.1.2 Planning Provisions

Day to day land use and development decisions are made based on planning controls, which are intended to reflect the directions of strategic planning. The primary planning control is the zone applied to a site. For the sake of brevity, only select zones and key purposes are described below.

Farming Zone

Purpose:

- To provide for the use of land for agriculture.
- To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.
- To ensure that non-agricultural uses, particularly dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.
- To encourage the use and development of the land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.
- To protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of an area.

The Farming Zone applies to the majority of the study area.

The minimum subdivision area and the minimum area for which no permit is required to use the land for a dwelling in the Farming Zone in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation Area is 100 hectares. The minimum area for these activities outside the Goulburn Murray Irrigation Area is 250 hectares.

Township Zone

Purpose:

- To provide for residential development and a range of commercial, industrial and other uses in small towns.

The Township Zone applies to many of the settlements within the study area.

A single dwelling on a lot does not require a planning permit within the Township Zone if sewage treatment, potable water and electricity can be appropriately provided.

Retail premises, including accommodation, require a planning permit. It is a condition of the use of land for industry that the amenity of the neighbourhood not be adversely affected.

Rural Living Zone

Purpose:

- To provide for residential use in a rural environment.
- To provide for agricultural land uses which do not adversely affect the amenity of surrounding land uses.

- To protect and enhance the natural resources, biodiversity and landscape and heritage values of the area.
- To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.

The only settlement in the study area to which the Rural Living Zone is applied is Barmah.

The minimum subdivision area in the Rural Living Zone is 8 hectares and the minimum area for which no permit is required to use the land for a dwelling is 8 hectares.

Low Density Residential Zone
Purpose:
- To provide for low density residential development on lots which, in the absence of reticulated sewerage, can treat and retain all wastewater.

Bundalong is the only settlement in the study area in which the Low Density Residential Zone is applied.

A lot in the Low Density Residential Zone does not require a planning permit for one or two dwellings if sewage treatment, potable water and electricity can be appropriately provided.

Public Conservation and Resource Zone
Purpose:
- To protect and conserve the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat or cultural values.
- To provide facilities which assist in public education and interpretation of the natural environment with minimal degradation of the natural environment and natural processes.
- To provide for appropriate resource based uses.

The Public Conservation and Resource Zone is applied to areas in Barmah and Bundalong.

Public Park and Recreation Zone
Purpose:
- To recognise areas for public recreation and open space.
- To protect and conserve areas of significance where appropriate.
- To provide for commercial uses where appropriate.

The Public Park and Recreation Zone is applied to many settlements within the study area.

Industrial 1 Zone

Purpose:

− To provide for manufacturing industry, the storage and distribution of goods and associated uses in a manner which does not affect the safety and amenity of local communities.

Strathmerton is the only settlement within the study area to which the Industrial 1 Zone is applied.

Urban Floodway Zone

Purpose:

− To identify waterways, major floodpaths, drainage depressions and high hazard areas within urban areas which have the greatest risk and frequency of being affected by flooding.

− To ensure that any development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage and is compatible with flood hazard, local drainage conditions and the minimisation of soil erosion, sedimentation and silting.

Within the study area, the Urban Floodway Zone is applied to areas of Tungamah and Wunghnu.

Overview of Zones

The settlements of Moira are variously zoned Farming; Low Density Residential; Rural Living and Township Zone. The extent of zone boundaries often does not reflect the patterns or use of land and there is evidence of inconsistent use of zone provisions.

There is considerable evidence from the comparative analysis of zoning plans, patterns of development and the proposed strategy to warrant a comprehensive review of zone provisions around settlements in the study area. This matter is referred to further in the Small Towns Strategy Report.

4.1.3 Review of Victorian Planning Provisions

Application of the New Rural Zones

While the provisions of the Farming Zones have been described above, it is worth noting the application of these rural zones. The 'new rural zones' were introduced into the Victorian Planning Provisions in June 2004 and were incorporated into the Moira Planning Scheme in 2006. The previous rural zones were replaced as follows:

- − Rural Zone to Farming Zone.
- − Environmental Rural Zone to Rural Conservation Zone.
- − Rural Living Zone to Rural Living Zone (provisions amended).
- − The Rural Activity Zone was also introduced as part of the new zones.

The direct replacement of zones within the study area, particularly the replacement of the Rural Zone with the Farming Zone, has resulted in a number of non-conforming uses within the Farming Zone. For example, schools, which required a permit under the previous Rural Zone, are now a prohibited use within the Farming Zone. While this does not impact on the ongoing operation of existing schools, it is likely to cause complications should a school need to extend or diversify its operations.

In applying appropriate planning controls, the Moira Small Towns Strategy should consider appropriate zones for uses that are critical to the settlements within the study area, such as schools. This will assist in removing possible impediments to the further development of these uses in the future.

Residential Zones Review
The State government's current review of the Residential Zones within the VPPs will affect the Residential Zones within Moira Shire however is unlikely to impact on settlements within the study area, which use the Township Zone, Rural Living Zone and Low Density Residential Zone over land identified for residential purposes.

4.2   Servicing and Infrastructure

4.2.1   Water and Sewerage
Not all of the settlements within the study area have access to reticulated water or sewerage. The responsible authorities for these services are Goulburn Valley Water (GVW) and North East Water (NEW). Strathmerton is the only settlement that is currently provided with both reticulated sewerage and potable water however plans are underway to establish a reticulated water system in Bundalong and a reticulated sewerage system in Tungamah. Reticulated potable water only is provided to Barmah, Katamatite, Katunga, Picola, Tungamah, Wunghnu and Yarroweyah. Bundalong has a reticulated sewerage system and water treatment plant. The remainder of settlements rely on septic systems and water tanks. Wunghnu has a grey water treatment facility that is managed by council. A summary of the water and sewerage services provided to each settlement is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Water and Sewerage Services by Settlement

Settlement	Water	Sewerage	Authority
Barmah	Yes - Limited capacity	No service	GVW
Bearii	No service	No service	GVW
Bundalong	Plans for reticulated water supply by 2013 Yes, part town only	Reticulated service with water treatment plant	NEW
Burramine	No service	No service	GVW
Invergordon	No service	No service	GVW
Kaarimba	No service	No service	GVW
Katamatite	Yes	No service	GVW
Katunga	Yes – Large capacity, limited by infrastructure	No service	GVW
Kotupna	No service	No service	GVW
Koonoomoo	No service	No service	GVW
Lake Rowan	No service	No service	NEW
Lower Moira	No service	No service	GVW
Muckatah	No service	No service	GVW
Naring	No service	No service	GVW
Picola	Yes – Limited capacity	No service	GVW
St James	Yes – adequate capacity	No service	NEW
Strathmerton	Yes – Good capacity	Yes –adequate capacity	GVW
Tungamah	Yes – adequate capacity	In process of developing system	NEW
Waaia	No service	No service	GVW
Wilby	No service	No service	NEW
Wunghnu	Yes – Small capacity	No service	GVW
Yalca North	No service	No service	GVW
Yarroweyah	Yes – Good capacity	No service	GVW

The ability to provide reticulated services is fundamental to the form and density of development that can be provided within in the study's settlements. Without reticulated sewerage, townships are reliant on septic tanks or equivalent efficient disposal systems. The ability for septic systems to manage sewerage without causing contamination is dependant on the soil characteristics within each of the settlements. Ability to accommodate septic systems and the type of systems used also determines the density at which dwellings can be located.

Within many of the existing settlements, however, lots have historically been created to a relatively small size, often without taking this into consideration. Both

planning policy and environmental guidelines strongly support the provision of reticulated waste water treatment, with the most recent Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) guidelines stating that any lots less than 1 hectare should be provided with reticulated services.

Servicing of settlements is more affordable where capacity of an existing treatment facility can be utilised. For example, settlements within 18 to 20 kilometres of major town may not require their own treatment facility; rather, sewage could be more cost effectively pumped back to the major town's facility for treatment.

Cost efficiencies are also gained where there are a higher number of dwellings to be serviced in closer proximity to each other. Further, it is noted that reticulated services are best provided at subdivision stage. However, individual cost estimates would need to be provided for any settlements proposed to be serviced in order to get a genuine understanding of the implications.

While provision of reticulated sewerage and water can have high upfront costs, the potential for long term damage to the environment where these services are not provided needs to be considered. Before the provision of reticulated services is discounted, an assessment needs to be undertaken of the long term costs of these impacts. If it is determined that reticulation is not appropriate, it may result in recommendations of how environmental impacts can best be addressed.

4.2.2 Gas

Settlements within the study area which has access to a reticulated gas service, supplied by APA group, are Strathmerton, Katunga and Yarroweyah. Each of these settlements has capacity in the current service for limited growth. All other settlements within the study area use bottled natural gas. There are no plans for extension of a reticulated service to any of these settlements in the future.

4.2.3 Electricity

All of the settlements within the study area have access to an electricity supply. Developers are responsible for the costs associated with the connection of power to new sites. The future supply and capacity of this system is not seen to be of relevance to the future planning of the settlements within the study and therefore has not been included as part of this strategy.

4.2.4 Telecommunications

The Australian Broadband Guarantee is an initiative of the federal government which provides all Australian residents with broadband services that reasonably compare to broadband services available in metropolitan areas. The choice of broadband services available depends on which broadband service providers are operating in each specific area and what technology they are using.

4.2.5 Public Transport

Public transport within the study area is limited and where available is provided by bus. Bus services are provided by V-Line and are greatly varied throughout the study area. School buses are provided during term time, and there is some capacity for these same buses to provide limited community services between school hours. In addition to these, some settlements have access to a community transport service, which assists those who qualify (medically) to gain access to larger centres. While they provide valuable access opportunities for some members of the community, these services are generally not suitable for commuters.

One of the goals of Moira Social Plan (2009) is to "Improve transport options to ensure all members of the community are able to access health and community services and reduce isolation". Proposed actions for this goal include lobbying the State Government for increased public transport in Moira and participation in a Community Transport Project. A full list of which settlements are provided with public transport is available in Attachment 1– Settlement Services Audit in the Strategy Report.

Previous discussions with Department of Infrastructure suggest that re-opening of train lines or provision of additional stations to serve any of these communities is unlikely to be considered viable in the near future. It was noted that the cost of building a train station could potentially fund a bus service for fifteen years. Notwithstanding this, it is noted that existing closed lines are being retained by VicTrack to allow for potential future transport needs if required.

4.3 Social Influences

4.3.1 Community Capacity Building

Small rural communities have long shown the pride and the strength that comes from having a common purpose and a shared love of where they live. When community members come together the strength of collective action can be extraordinary. However, as has already been discussed, the viability of many small settlements is under threat due to several factors including farm restructuring, improvements in transport, regionalisation of services and declining population. In recent years, the responsibility to manage social, economic and environmental pressures has been seen to depend on the people who live in these rural communities. For communities to respond positively to change they require social capital, which is most simply defined as "the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively" (Kilpatrick & Falk, 2001).

Increasing social capital is a form of community development and capacity building. Community development or community capacity building is defined as "enhancing the skills and confidence of the local community to articulate its own concerns and visions" (Dibden & Cheshire, 2005). There has been much

research in recent years about community capacity and why some towns thrive while others flounder. One theme that has emerged from the research is that when asked "whose job is it?", in the least innovative communities the answer is "theirs" and in the most innovative communities the answer is "ours" (Plowman et al, 2003). The over-riding conclusion is that, in small towns, the community itself has an important role in helping to shape its own destiny, taking on board external influences, but largely identifying its own opportunities to create a viable future.

In 2006, the Victorian Government produced the Indicators of Community Strength report. The report assessed Local Government Areas (LGAs) across the state and assessed each against a number of pre-determined indicators. The report found that the residents of Moira reported higher levels of participation in Close Personal Networks, Associational and Community Networks and Governance Networks than other Hume and regional Victorian LGAs (Attachment 3). The report highlighted that different communities are facing different issues and that taking a "one size fits all" approach to addressing the issues to improving these indicators is unlikely to work. It also noted the importance of involving local communities in planning and decision- making and providing flexibility in the design of programs and funding arrangements which support local community initiatives.

4.3.2 Moira Community Building Program

In 2002, the Moira Shire commenced its Community Building program, which used a facilitator to help six small towns in the shire to develop community action plans. Originally, the program adopted the same format for all the towns in the shire, regardless of size and other factors, however in 2004 the program became more flexible to reflect the different characteristics and needs of the towns. By 2005, 24 towns in the Moira Shire had developed Community Action Plans and in 2006/07 these plans were updated, community forums were held and new community co-ordinators were nominated.

This model of community building works well because it is flexible, has community involvement and support, has Council support and is a Community Capacity building model focusing on developing strengths within the community. The Community Building process is also supported by council's Community Leadership Program and Community Grants Program. Through these programs the community coordinators can learn new skills and gain much needed community funding for their priorities.

4.3.3 Local Leadership

The governmental push in recent years for communities to take on the responsibility for their own success and be more self-reliant has led community developers to focus on producing and supporting local leaders to sustain their communities. To combat rural decline, State government funded programs aimed at rejuvenation of small towns (see Attachment 2) have been developed however,

most of these programs carry with them an expectation that the community will provide leaders to co-ordinate activities and access funding. In some regional areas, it may be difficult to find people with the skills and motivation to take on projects such as these and without strong leaders, towns may miss out on government supported opportunities to inject life into their town and work towards positive regional development.

The importance of strong leaders in the success of a community has been identified in many studies. There is strong anecdotal evidence of a relationship between the quality of community leadership and the rate and type of local development.   It is thought that building social capital through leadership programs can help communities respond positively to change and, that a link exists between improved social capital and economic outcomes for a community.

The community leadership approach is not just about producing leaders but also about providing leadership for the benefit of the community as a whole. It is based on the premise that development of the individual enhances the community's capacity to identify opportunities and address local needs in innovative ways.

Traditionally, local communities had strong leaders who had lived there for many generations and felt some responsibility to contribute to their community. Volunteering with the CWA, the local Fire Brigade, sporting clubs or other community groups was seen not only as an opportunity to contribute to the viability of the town but also as an opportunity to socialise and network. Economic restructuring has impacted on the ability of the local people in some areas to commit their time to volunteering for the benefit of the community. For example, to cope with the need to increase productivity due to economic demands, many farmers have increased the size of their farm in order to achieve economies of scale. Increased farm size, increases demand on the time of the farmer and his family, which can result in decreased time available to commit to civic activity.

The youth population is seen as an integral part in maintaining community viability and vitality as they are the potential leaders of tomorrow, however youth out-migration is posing a serious problem for many rural communities. Empowering this young population and providing a sense of belonging through leadership development has been suggested as one way to stem the outflow of the youth population and provide succession for our existing community leaders. Research shows that although young people are more likely than older people to be involved in organised sport and recreation activities, they are less likely to be members of decision-making boards or committees.

Once participants graduate from leadership programs, many are unsure of what to do next. An effective leadership program should not only increase individual skills but also develop leadership pathways and foster leadership succession in rural communities. One of the reported benefits of a community leadership program is

the potential to form an alumni group, enabling networking between emerging and existing leaders, which ultimately leads to an increase in community activity through the maintenance of motivation and communication. Another benefit of the formation of alumni or leaders networks is the idea that a problem shared is a problem halved. Just as interagency collaboration between government departments has been seen as an efficient and effective way of reducing duplication of services and maximising resources, a similar model of collaboration could be used between leaders of different communities to increase the efficiency and maximise the effect of their efforts.

It is felt that effective community leadership will not only help address the complex economic issues faced by rural communities but also have the added benefit of encouraging social well being and improving community viability. The Moira Shire recognise that leaders, existing, emerging and potential, require access to leadership development opportunities and support networks to build upon their current leadership skills and abilities and to contribute to the well being of their communities. In response to this need, the Moira Shire Community Leadership Program was developed. The program provides leadership training, development and networking skills for Community Action Group volunteers and aims to boost community participation. The program is free and participants work on a project related to their community work.

4.3.4 Population Movement Trends

The most common reason for people moving to a rural setting from a metropolitan setting is for lifestyle, often associated with retirement or employment. Some reasons for moving to rural settings have been noted as:

− Retirees cashing in equity in metropolitan homes and choosing the less expensive rural housing option;

− "downshifting" to a slower pace of life often associated with rural living;

− The high amenity of rural areas in terms of landscapes and recreation;

− Perceived lower levels of crime, safety, congestion and a desire for space;

− Lower cost of housing and cost of living in comparison to larger urban centres.

The ageing of the population, the increasing cost of property in cities and the coming increases in the retiree population suggest that more people may choose to live in rural areas instead of cities in the future. These new comers often bring new cultures, skills and networks, and these can be crucial to the continued sustainability of many small towns.

4.4 Economic Influences

4.4.1 Neighbouring Regional Centres

The Moira Shire is bordered on the Victorian side by the municipalities of Campaspe, Indigo, Greater Shepparton, Wangaratta and Benalla. Over the

Murray River, the New South Wales shires of Murray, Berrigan and Corowa are to the north of the Moira Shire. Naturally, settlements within the study area interrelate with the surrounding area. Of particular relevance to this Strategy, there are a number of service centres beyond the study area (in addition to the four major towns within the Shire - Yarrawonga, Nathalia, Numurkah and Cobram) which play an important role for the local communities.

Shepparton plays a significant role in servicing the communities in the southern portion of the study area. With a population in the order of 60,500 (ABS, 2011), it provides hospitals, educational institutions (a combination of public and private, primary, secondary and tertiary), sale yards, and retail, commercial and recreation opportunities. As well as being connected into the study area, Shepparton provides direct road access to Melbourne.

Echuca is located to the west of the study area, within the Shire of Campaspe. With a population of 13,708 (ABS, 2011), it provides considerable social and community support to a wider catchment, including a variety of retail and banking opportunities, medical services, schools and recreation facilities.

Kyabram is another township in the Shire of Campaspe which services communities within the study area. With a population of 7,321 (ABS, 2011), Kyabram provides a range of community facilities, including two primary and one secondary public school, and one private school that combines primary and secondary education.

Wangaratta is located to the south east of the study area and has a population of 17,687 (ABS, 2011). It provides a range of community facilities, including retail and medical services, three high schools, nine primary schools and a TAFE campus.

These external service centres influence the hierarchy of settlement within the study area. In planning for the future of settlements, these external centres and the services which residents can access there need to be considered.

4.4.2 Farming

Viable agricultural land use is the most important economic asset to the communities of the Moira Shire. In particular, intensive irrigated agricultural production and associated food processing industries are a focus within the area. Approximately 21% of all employment in Moira is associated with agriculture in on farm jobs. The Shire hosts a variety of primary, secondary and tertiary agricultural activities. The main agricultural industries include horticulture, cereal, oilseed, livestock and dairy production.

Dairy is the most significant industry in the shire generating $160 million per annum and is also the most significant industry in terms of land area. Horticulture

generates approximately $80 million in gross value agricultural production and accounts for 3% of the land use in the irrigated areas of the Shire. There are also a large number of mixed farms in both dryland and irrigation areas running beef, sheep and lambs as well as dairy young stock. Irrigated mixed farming occurs on the fringes of the irrigation area where the soils are more variable.

An analysis of farm incomes reveals that 33% of farms are generating less than $100,000 gross farm income. About 40% of these are livestock businesses generating less than $50,000 per annum suggesting that they are part time businesses with other off-farm income. Farm businesses generating over $100,000 per annum (27%) are under significant economic pressure with changing global economic circumstances and may need to consider increasing farm scale, introducing a more intensive production system or increasing off farm income. A large proportion of these are dairy businesses and for those looking to increase farm scale they will need access to land in larger allotments and unencumbered by unnecessary infrastructure such as housing.

4.4.3 Retail

Several of the settlements within the study area have one or more retail outlets. This ranges from one or two establishments in some towns, such as Picola, to a well established retail precinct, such as that found in Strathmerton.

Businesses in small towns experience severe competitive pressure from larger retail centres due to attractions such as their comprehensive range of businesses and services, economies of scale offered by larger retail stores and the "social outing" aspects associated with a trip to a larger centre. With a declining customer base, enterprises in small towns may not be able to sustain the level and quality of their services. As a result, service provision may decline and a reduction in activity levels in the towns is set in motion.

Retail establishments in the smaller settlements in the Moira Shire do not only have to compete with other towns within the shire but also the larger regional centres and towns within proximity which fall outside the shire boundary such as Shepparton, Echuca, Wangaratta and Benalla.
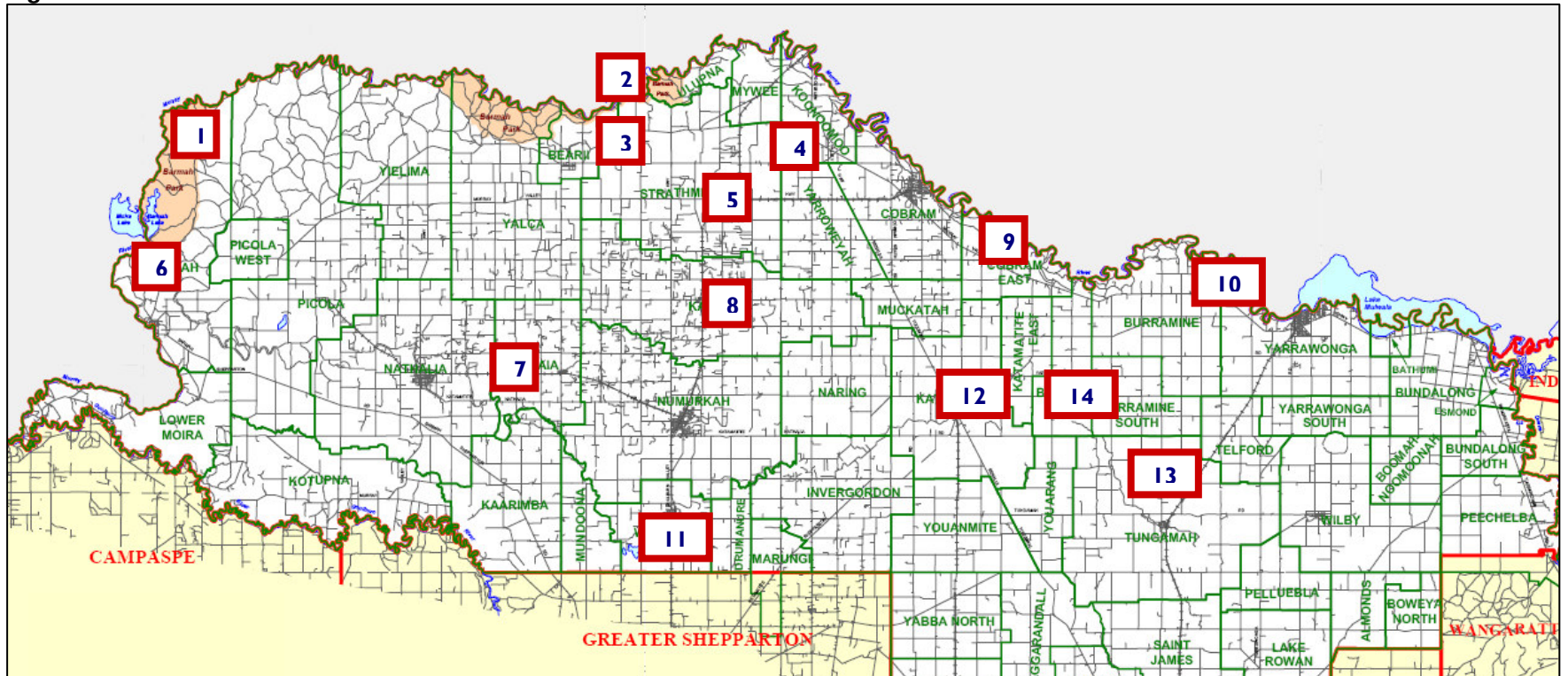
4.4.4 Tourism

There are many tourist attractions scattered throughout the small towns and rural areas of the shire. Tourism in the Moira Shire is dependent upon several factors, including the protection and enhancement of natural assets, such as the Murray, Goulburn and Ovens Rivers and the Barmah Forest, as well as protection and promotion of areas of historical significance. The small towns in the study area offer a range of attractions including farm stays and cottage industries, historical buildings and sites, camping areas, opportunities for water based activities and sporting events. There are also regular events held such as the Wine and Jazz

Festival at Katunga, the Tractor Pull at Waaia and the Barmah Muster. A number of these attractions have been included on Figure 4 – Tourist Attractions.

Tourism can provide multiple expenditure benefits to small towns in the form of coincidental spending. For example, tourists may come to view a particular site in a town, and then stay for lunch at the pub, fuel up their car at the petrol station and browse through the antique shop.

Figure 4 – Tourist Attractions

Key

1	Barmah Forest	8	Glenarron Farm & Monichino Wines - Katunga
2	Ulupna Island	9	Woodhaven Herbs & Lavender, Rosebrooke Farm, Fyffefield Wines
3	Murray River Horse Trails & Aintree Farm – Bearii		& Byrramine Homestead
4	Big Strawberry – Koonoomoo	10	Rich Glen Olives - Burramine
5	Cactus Country & Ruby Rose Collectables – Strathmerton	11	Lochleilan Farmhouse Cheese, Canoe trees, Market - Wunghnu
6	Historic Sites, Gondwana Coanoe Hire, Kingfisher Cruises,	12	Historic Buildings & Antiques - Katamatite
	Dharnya Centre & Barmah Muster – Barmah	13	Historic Buildings – Tungamah
7	Wildlife Park & Tractor Pull – Waaia	14	Boosey Cheese

4.4.5 Industry

Due to the intensity of agricultural production in the region, food processing industries are a prominent feature. The processing industry stimulates economic activity, providing employment opportunities and creating wealth for the local communities. Manufacturing industries in the study area include Bega Cheese in Strathmerton and Monichino Wines in Katunga.

4.4.6 Food Security

In its most basic form, food security is defined as "access by all people at all times to the food needed for a healthy life. Achieving food security means ensuring that sufficient food is available, that supplies are relatively stable and those in need of food can obtain it". While food security is being increasingly considered by local governments, the Department for Primary Industry notes that "Australia's rate of food self sufficiency is 176%. Therefore, a lack of food for our population is a relatively low risk, even given climate change and Asian growth scenarios." However, it is noted that changes in economic and environmental conditions could result in a change in Australia's food self sufficiency. Further, food security is frequently a welfare and sustainability issue, as some people are not able to afford to buy fresh food or have access to low 'food mile' produce.

VicHealth's promotion of food security focuses on seeking to ensure that all communities have regular access to healthy food. The VicHealth Healthy Eating – Food Security Investment Plan 2005-2010 states that strategic planning to improve food security needs to consider three key elements:

− Addressing the socio-cultural, built and natural environments and economic determinants of healthy eating.

− Population groups on low incomes, with a disability, who are chronically ill, single parents with dependent children, Kooris, new arrivals (refugees or asylum seekers) from culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

− Population groups living in low socio economic index areas (SEIFA) in Victoria.

While the study area includes highly productive agricultural land, this should not be confused with residents having easy access to fresh food supplies. Rather, ensuring local access to local food should be balanced against the tendency to argue for larger agricultural land holdings with a tendency to 'export' food. Agricultural figures for the region show that production consists primarily of dairy and other agricultural products for export markets with local supplier, Murray Goulburn, being the largest single exporter of containerised freight from the Port of Melbourne (Greater Shepparton City Council, 2008).

4.5 Environmental Influences

4.5.1 Biodiversity

The Moira Planning Scheme highlights the importance of the Shire's natural features and bioregions and the role they play in supporting native flora and fauna. While large areas of the Study Area have been highly modified through agricultural activity, there remain areas of high ecological significance. The key biodiversity assets of the Shire include:

− Barmah (RAMSAR wetland);

− Broken Boosey State Park;

− The Murray, Goulburn and Ovens Rivers;

− Nationally listed fauna (Superb Parrot); and

− State listed species (Grey Crowned Babbler, Bush Stone Curlew, Yarran Wattle).

Many of the sites and the native species that they support are significant and require management to conserve their values. These sites are sensitive to modifications in land use, waterway management actions, flooding, drainage and catchment management. The quality and extent of native vegetation is an indicator of catchment health.

The major vegetation types in the Shire are severely depleted (Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2008). Most of what remains is along roadside reserves, along the rivers and streams, on public land and as small patches on private land. This vegetation provides key habitats for threatened species and also provides important ecosystem services. Much of this native vegetation is protected within a number of existing legislative Acts and State policies.

4.5.2 High Value Agricultural Land

The Campaspe, Greater Shepparton and Moira Regional Rural Land Use Strategy (RRLUS) identified the agricultural quality of land within Moira. The conclusion drawn was:

Based on the assessment of soil types, subdivision patterns, irrigation infrastructure and climate, land in the rural areas is generally considered to be productive agricultural land that is of strategic importance to Shire economy. It is important that planning controls reflect this value and they encourage protection and retention of land for agriculture both now and in the future, particularly Group 1 and 2 soils around urban centres.

It is recognised that to secure some parts of the shire for agriculture, other parts, even though they may have good soils, will need to be available to lifestyle living. Existing constraints to furthering agricultural objectives in these areas may include the arrangement of adjacent property, access to infrastructure and conservation

values. However, this will be determined by further analysis of rural living needs.

As identified in the RRLUS, Group 1 and Group 2 soils are found south and east of Cobram and north of Katamatite and around Invergordon North (Figure 6 – Land Capability). These soils have few disabilities for irrigation and are suitable for horticultural crops, vegetables, perennial and annual pastures and summer fodder crops. Elsewhere, especially towards the fringes of the irrigation areas, the soils are more variable with Group 1 and Group 2 soils interspersed with Group 5 and Group 6 soils. This variability limits the agricultural options and these areas are commonly used for mixed farming.

The RRLUS identified the "Agricultural Development Areas" for Moira (Figure 6), located north of Nathalia around Picola, south of Nathalia along the irrigation channel between the Goulburn River and Broken Creek and west and south west of Yarrawonga.

There is no soils data for the dryland areas of the Shire, however, the agricultural industry data shows that dryland cropping of winter cereals and grains is significant as is dryland livestock production. This suggests that dryland areas have soils suited to agricultural production.

Protection of the agricultural land resource from inappropriate use, development and subdivision is a fundamental priority of the Shire. In addition to discouraging inappropriate use and development on agricultural land, Council is also committed to providing a variety of minimum subdivision sizes within the Shire's Farming Zone to facilitate sustainable agricultural enterprises. Environmental sustainability of land will be critical to the long-term maintenance of land as the key asset of agricultural productivity. Protection and enhancement of this asset needs to occur through all avenues of development control and proactive policies of Council.

4.5.3 Water Availability

A key resource to agriculture within the study region is water. Irrigated agriculture relies on groundwater, surface water and in some instances, recycled water while forestry and dryland agriculture rely on water from rainfall. The dairy industry relies heavily on water for irrigating pasture, watering stock and cleaning dairy sheds.

In the past, irrigated farm businesses in the Shire have enjoyed a relatively secure supply of water. They now face intense competition for scarce water resources. In the face of greater climate variability, strong population growth and continued low rainfall, this competition is likely to increase. Included in this competition in the water market is non-farm demand to provide environmental allocations to improve the water quality of river ecosystems.

Maximising the benefits from available water supplies is critically important to the long-term growth and prosperity of farm businesses and communities. Enabling water to move to its highest value use through the market, managing an efficient allocation and entitlement system, and improving delivery infrastructure and on-farm water efficiency will remain important tools for farm businesses in the future.

Figure 5: Water Consumption for Agriculture in Victoria

Source: ABS Water Account, 2004-05
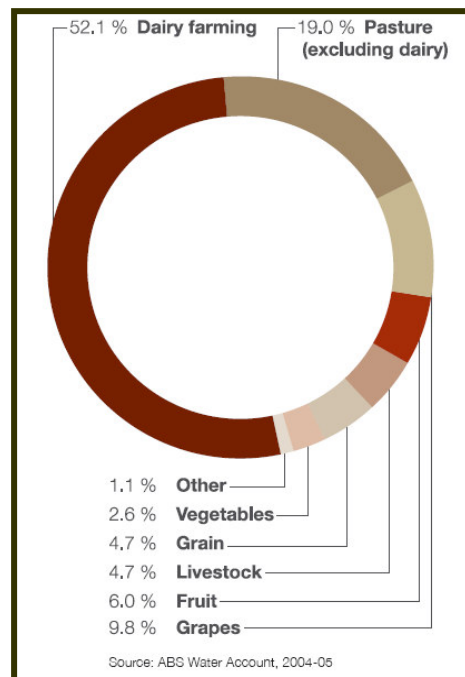
4.5.4 Septic Systems

Land capability also describes capacity of soils to accommodate septic treatment systems. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are areas within the study area where use of septics is causing pollution. In some circumstances, this appears to have occurred within townships with a reliance on septics where existing subdivision lot sizes and land capability cannot reliably deal with the septic system. Where settlements reliant on septics are proposed to be expanded, consideration needs to be given to the long term cumulative environmental impacts.

4.5.5 Flooding and Inundation

Another significant consideration in the future land use planning of settlements in the study area is the risk of flooding and inundation.

Identification of areas subject to flooding and inundation is provided by the Urban Floodway Zone, Rural Floodway Overlay and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay of the Planning Scheme. However, it is noted that the coverage of these Overlays

is not always comprehensive and some areas are currently under review. As such, impacts will need to be assessed for any locations identified for potential future development.

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority has provided specific information in regard to individual settlements in the Moira Shire to assist in future land use planning. These recommendations have been included in the individual Settlement Appraisals, in the Strategy Report.

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Figure 6: Land Capability
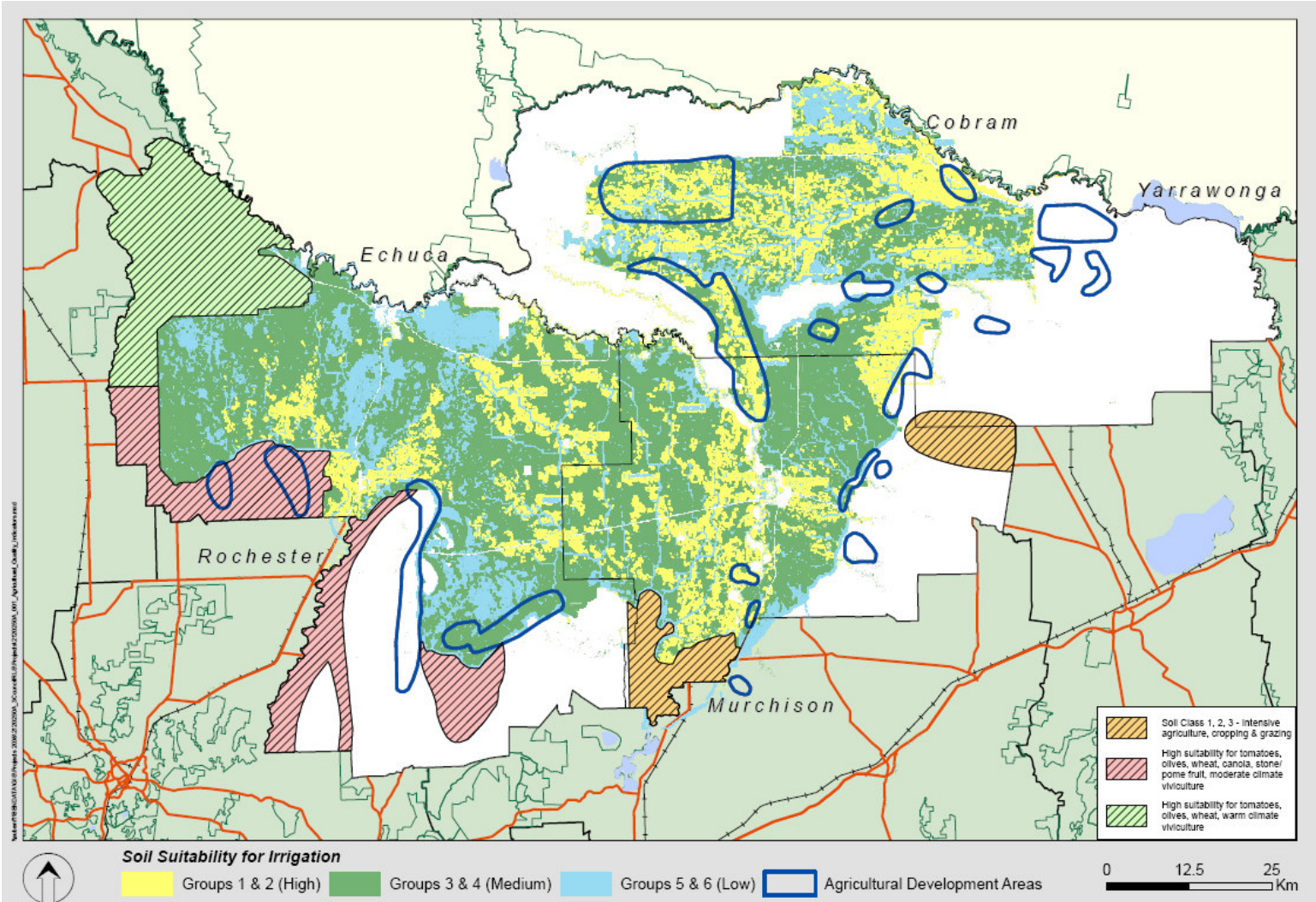
Source: Campaspe, Greater Shepparton and Moira Regional and Rural Land Use Strategy (2008)

4.5.6 Fire Risk

After the experiences of the devastating Victorian bushfires in February 2009, several procedures and policies have been implemented by the Country Fire Authority (CFA) in collaboration with local councils. These include developing Township Protection Plans and identifying Neighbourhood Safer Places – Places of Last Resort. At the time this report was written, there were no Township Protection Plans or Neighbourhood Safer Places relating to the study area.

In November 2011, new bushfire planning provisions were introduced to all Victorian Planning Schemes including the Moira Planning Scheme through Amendment VC083. This amendment included:

− Introduction of a new bushfire planning policy in the SPPF to replace Clause 13.05;

− Introduction of a new Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) to replace the Wildfire Management Overlay at Clause 44.06;

− Introduction of new particular provision for Bushfire Protection at Clause 52.47 that applies objectives, standards and decision guidelines under the provisions of the BMO;

− Introduction of a new particular provision at Clause 52.48 that consolidates and updates planning permit exemptions for bushfire protection purposes (the Interim Measures at Clause 52.43 have been amended to only apply to Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme);

− Amend Clauses 42.01, 42.02, 42.03, 44.01, 44.02, 52.16 and 52.17 to address vegetation removal when creating defendable space and reducing the risk from bushfire;

− Introduction of a range of consequential changes that include defining defendable space, changing WMO references to BMO and updating wildfire references to bushfire.

No land within the Moira Shire is currently mapped with the BMO therefore many of the provisions do not apply.

4.5.7 Climate Change

While there are differing opinions regarding the impact of climate change, from a planning perspective, the potential effects need to be considered. According to the independent government economic research agency (ABARE, 2007), climate change is likely to impact upon agricultural uses both through the changing capability of the land, which is influenced substantially by the availability of water through rainfall as well as through the changing trade environment (a result of climate change impacts on production globally).

CSIRO scientists claim that the Australian climate is noticeably changing. Since the 1950s the region has experienced a warming of 0.1 degrees Celsius per year

and the CSIRO predict an overall increase of temperatures by up to 5 degrees by 2070 (relative to 1990). As a result it expected that there will be an increase in the number of summer days over 35 degrees, a reduction in frost days, more frequent and longer droughts, drier soil and increased bushfire risk.   Annual precipitation is expected to decrease but extreme heavy rainfall events are set to become more intense. If these changes occur, they have the potential to impact major sectors including agriculture, water, biodiversity, forests and community health.

With more adverse impacts predicted in other areas of Australia, "Australia is projected to be one of the most adversely affected regions from future changes in climate change in terms of reductions in agricultural production and exports." (ABARE 2007).

Primary producers and industries relying on agricultural production are among the most vulnerable to potential climate change impacts. For example, without action, scientists predict up to 20 per cent more drought months over much of Australia by 2030, with serious impacts on agriculture. These changes in climate may impact the viability of some agricultural uses within the study area, for example, with increasingly dry weather, it could be anticipated that broad-acre cereal cropping will grow at a greater rate.

The Campaspe, Greater Shepparton and Moira Rural Regional Land Use Strategy (2008) states:

Although the effect of climate change is relatively unknown, it is prudent to be planning for farming in a dryer climate, with less reliable rainfall and more limited water supply. The potential negative impacts on horticulture and dairying from diminishing water supplies provides further catalyst for aligning land use policy with significant investment around water security across the region.

The Moira Small Towns Strategy needs to give consideration to changing patterns of agricultural uses in relation to impact this may have on future land use planning both within agricultural areas and settlements so as to provide flexibility throughout the rural zoned land to respond to opportunities and constraints as they arise.

4.5.8   Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme

The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) is a concept proposed by the Federal Government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Although the details of a future CPRS, or if it will be introduced, are unknown at this stage, the potential impacts of a CPRS are considered in planning for the future of the small towns in the study area due to their relationship with the surrounding agricultural lands.

Agriculture is Australia's second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. Agricultural emissions, primarily methane emissions from livestock and cropping,

contribute around 16 per cent of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. Research is currently being conducted to consider approaches for reducing agricultural emissions. At a Federal level, a technical group of industry experts has been formed to develop and evaluate a range of policy options to inform this process.

The CPRS proposed by the Federal Government in 2009 was in the form of an emissions trading scheme using a cap and trade mechanism. The cap - an upper limit on the country's carbon pollution that will be reduced in future years – aims to achieve the environmental outcome. The ability to trade aims to harness the pollution reduction opportunities throughout the economy so that the economic cost of meeting carbon pollution reduction targets are reduced. Under the CPRS, the government proposes to set an annual limit (or cap) on the total amount of carbon pollution that can be emitted under the scheme, within Australia, with the cap being gradually lowered, reducing the level of carbon pollution produced each year.

While agricultural emissions may not be covered by the CPRS, the cost of some emissions intensive inputs to farming, such as electricity, fertiliser and fuel, would be expected to rise under the proposed scheme. It is the intention of the proposed CPRS to create incentives to use these inputs more efficiently throughout the economy, including use by farmers and other agricultural businesses.

4.6   Conclusion

In this section, the strategic influences that affect many small towns, including those in the study area, have been presented. These factors all have an impact on population change, settlement development and land supply. The impacts will be explored with specific reference to the small towns in the Moira Shire in the following sections.

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5 Population Levels and Trends

5.1 Population

The following population statistics have been derived by using the statistics for the Moira Shire and then subtracting the statistics relevant to the four major towns. This method was used to fully represent the residents of the small towns of the Moira Shire including those in the rural surrounds which fall outside the designated town boundaries.

Table 2: Moira Shire Population

Location	Population						
	0-4 years	5-14 years	15-24 years	25-54 years	55-64 years	65+ years	Total
Moira	1735	3698	2945	9748	3919	6076	28124
Cobram	425	749	653	2064	760	1370	6018
Nathalia	113	256	200	622	260	450	1902
Numurkah	250	484	412	1268	483	945	3841
Yarrawonga	397	791	614	2079	936	1975	6793
Moira Small Towns / Rural Areas	**550**	**1418**	**1066**	**3715**	**1480**	**1336**	**9565**
% of Moira Population	**31.7%**	**38.3%**	**36.1%**	**38.1%**	**37.8%**	**21.9%**	**34%**

Source: ABS Census Data (2011)

As a collective, the small towns and their rural areas within the Shire represent a significant portion of the population (34%). Although much focus is often placed upon the larger towns within the Shire, the economy of Moira is underpinned by agriculture, located in and around the small towns.

Table 3: Small Town and Rural Areas Population Growth / Decline by Age

Census	Moira Small Towns / Rural Areas Population						
	0-4 years	5-14 years	15-24 years	25-54 years	55-64 years	65+ years	Total
2001	834	2171	1316	5128	1338	1280	12067
2006	655	1832	1296	4543	1520	1343	11188
2011	**550**	**1418**	**1066**	**3715**	**1480**	**1336**	**9565**
Growth	- 284	-753	-250	-1413	+142	+56	-2502

Source: ABS Census Data (2001, 2006 & 2011)

As shown in Table 3, in regard to the age structure of the small towns as a collective, there has been a decline in number of people aged less than 55 years and an increase in the number of people aged above 55 years. This increase in the 55+ year's population is mostly due to the ageing of the existing population. Whilst some decline in the 25 -54 year cohort and an increase in the 55+ age group is consistent with the changes to the overall age structure for Victoria, and indeed throughout Australia as the "baby-boomers" age, the discrepancy between the two groups (-1413 compared to +142) shows that the change is not simply due to the population progressing to the next age group. The large decline in the 25 – 54 year group, and the associated decline in the 0 – 14 year groups, suggests that working age adults and their families are moving away from the small towns for study or enhanced employment opportunities. Whilst this trend is experienced by many rural and regional towns, efforts should be made to balance this decline through new employment opportunities and further economic development.

5.2 **Employment**

The main area of employment in the small towns and rural areas of the Moira Shire is the agricultural industry (refer to Table 4). Throughout the study area there is a wide range of agricultural enterprises including dairy farms, broadacre cereal and cropping farms, orchards and vineyards. The agricultural industry forms the base for the manufacturing industry in the area including Bega Cheese at Strathmerton and Monichino Wines at Katunga.

Statistics for employment by industry for the 2001 ABS census are only available for the towns of Bundalong, Katamatite, Strathmerton, Tungamah and Wunghnu.

Despite the decreasing population of the small towns as a collective, the figures for employment show an increase in the number of people working in each of these towns from 2001 to 2006 (ABS Census 2001 & 2006). In Bundalong the main areas of increase have been construction, retail trade and accommodation, restaurants and cafes. In Katamatite, employment in construction, retail trade and transport services have shown the greatest increase. For Strathmerton there has been a decrease in the number of jobs in manufacturing and retail trade and an increase in construction, health and education based employment. Tungamah has shown an increase in employment in the areas of construction, wholesale and retail trade, accommodation and food services and administration services. Wunghnu's areas of employment that have shown the largest increase in numbers are manufacturing and health services.

Table 4: Industry of Employment for Individual Towns
Source: ABS Census Data 2006

Note: Columns for Bearii, Burramine, Koonoomoo, Kotupna, Naring, Muckatah, St James and Yalca North are marked "Data Not Available".

Industry of Employment	Barmah	Bundalong	Invergordon	Kaarimba	Katamatite	Katunga	Lake Rowan	Picola	Strathmerton	Tungamah	Waaia	Wilby	Wunghnu	Yarroweyah	Total
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	7	6	190	57	18	363	42	172	20	9	135	34	14	210	1277
Manufacturing	4	21	47	11	8	87	10	34	86	18	15	14	26	90	471
Electricity, gas, water & waste services	0	6	8	0	0	9	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
Construction	3	18	18	9	12	37	7	12	15	19	17	5	7	36	215
Wholesale trade	0	6	0	0	0	23	4	9	12	8	9	4	0	20	95
Retail trade	0	19	35	0	15	50	15	24	16	13	22	6	20	52	287
Accommodation & food services	9	9	11	0	4	29	7	11	13	12	7	8	5	24	149
Transport, postal & warehousing	7	9	21	0	9	28	6	16	10	8	4	6	4	22	150
Financial & insurance services	0	5	0	0	0	6	3	4	0	3	4	0	0	8	33
Professional, scientific & technical services	0	0	10	6	5	15	3	0	6	0	0	0	6	13	64
Administrative & support services	0	0	14	3	3	15	5	3	6	9	4	0	0	9	71
Public administration & safety	0	6	15	0	0	22	6	15	4	3	3	0	6	9	89
Education & training	4	4	27	7	4	29	0	18	11	3	14	4	3	17	145
Health care & social assistance	0	15	30	6	8	55	10	30	12	6	19	16	14	46	267
Other services	3	3	21	3	0	12	8	7	9	3	13	9	8	22	121
Inadequately described / Not stated	4	0	10	3	6	17	3	9	0	5	7	0	0	9	73
Total	**41**	**127**	**457**	**105**	**92**	**797**	**129**	**220**	**273**	**106**	**113**		**113**		**3536**

(Total row also shows St James = **119**.)

6 Land Supply and Demand Context

6.1 Data Analysis

Analysis of the information on building approval data for new dwellings can provide an insight into population growth. Table 5 illustrates the number of dwelling approvals for the small towns from 1998 to 2012. Those towns not listed have either not had any dwelling approvals granted in the period from 1998 – 2012 or dwelling approvals may have been included in the statistics of a nearby, larger town.

Table 5: Dwelling Approvals 1998 - 2009

Year	Settlement													
	Barmah	Bearii	Bundalong	Katamatite	Katunga	Koonoonoo	Picola	St James	Strathmerton	Tungamah	Waaia	Wilby	Wunghnu	Yarroweyah
1998	3	2	5	2	1	0	1	1	6	2	3	0	3	6
1999	3	2	8	5	3	1	1	1	5	0	4	0	4	4
2000	4	1	2	2	5	3	0	1	3	1	3	0	5	3
2001	2	1	14	2	3	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	4	1
2002	2	4	16	2	5	0	0	1	5	1	1	0	3	4
2003	2	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	8	2	0	0	1	4
2004	2	0	21	4	5	0	0	0	8	2	0	1	1	3
2005	3	3	13	7	1	0	0	1	3	3	1	4	6	4
2006	2	0	6	4	5	0	0	0	3	2	6	4	1	9
2007	2	2	13	1	1	1	1	0	4	2	1	1	2	0
2008	1	1	9	4	4	0	0	0	3	0	2	3	0	0
2009	2	1	14	3	5	1	1	0	4	2	1	0	3	2
2010	4	0	17	4	1	3	1	0	3	1	0	1	1	0
2011	1	1	16	3	3	0	0	1	4	0	1	0	1	0
2012	0	2	8	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	3	0
Total	33	21	170	43	45	9	7	6	64	20	25	17	38	42

Source: Moira Shire Housing Permit Data

The town of highest growth from 1998 – 2012 was Bundalong with 170 dwelling approvals. Bundalong is a rapidly growing town and very popular tourist destination due to the proximity of Lake Mulwala. Bundalong has a large non-resident population who use their dwellings as holiday houses.

6.1.1 Existing Dwelling Stock

As per the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, the study area has just over 6,700 dwellings which represents 55% of the total dwelling stock in the municipality. There is little diversity in housing stock in the study area, with 94% of the occupied dwelling stock being separate houses. This preponderance of separate houses is slightly higher than the housing stock within the four district towns (Nathalia, Numurkah, Cobram and Yarrawonga). Approximately 82% of the housing stock in the district towns is separate houses, which is also less than the regional Victorian average (89%). The four district towns offer more diversified housing opportunities with 16% of its housing stock in semi-detached or flat/units/apartments compared to just 1% in the study area (refer Table 6). With the ageing of the population, as discussed in Section 5.1.1, the lack of lone person dwellings (townhouses/ flats / units) in the study area may result in retirees relocating to the district towns to access this style of dwelling.

Table 6: Dwelling Characteristics

	Occupied Dwellings					Total Dwellings including unoccupied
	Separate House	Semi Detached / Townhouse	Flat / Unit	Other	Total No. of Occ. Dwelling	
Small Towns & Surrounds	3829	8	26	191	4054	6778
Moira Shire	9184	262	800	300	10546	12314

Source: ABS Census 2006

As can be seen in Table 6, at the time of the 2006 census there were 2724 vacant dwellings in the small towns and rural surrounds. This equates to 40% of the dwelling stock in the study area. In the four district towns, approximately 14% of the dwelling stock was unoccupied. It is not clear why this is the case in small towns however it is most likely that the majority of these dwellings are located in the rural surrounds rather than in the towns. The number of vacant dwellings in the study area could be influenced by the following factors:

- Decreasing local population due to consolidation of farms and regionalisation of services leading to out-migration from towns and villages;
- Advances in farming technology have facilitated the consolidation of farms and decrease in required workforce;
- Old and derelict buildings have remained standing as there is no value in demolition and no demand for the land however they are uninhabitable.

This excess of housing stock could potentially affect housing prices in the study area due to decreased demand. It is difficult to define housing prices for the study area due to the variety of land sizes and agricultural capability across the region. Figures for house prices do not differentiate between a house in the town and a house on a farming property. Median house prices for the settlements in the study area are provided in Table 7 however are only meant as a general guide as, due to the above factors, prices may vary greatly in any one area.

The median sales price is the middle price that properties sold for. For example, if there were seven houses that sold in the settlement in a year, the median price would be the property with the fourth highest price.

6.1.2   Forecast Population

No forecast population for the study area are available. The forecast population for the Moira Shire predicts an increase in population of approximately 5000 people by the year 2026 (Victoria in Future, DSE, 2008). Census data from 2001 and 2006 however, shows a decrease in the populations of the study area of 879 people. There are individual towns within the study area that have increased in population between the 2001 and 2006 census. These towns include Bundalong (+34), Tungamah (+55) and Wunghnu (+32).

Table 7: Median House Prices

Settlement	2007	2008	2009
Barmah	$143,000	$140,00	$80,000
Bearii	$61,000	$140,000	$94,000
Bundalong	$580,000	$147,500	$625,000
Burramine	$330,000	-	$337,000
Invergordon	$176,000	$160,000	$162,000
Kaarimba	-	$200,000	-
Katamatite	$215,000	$175,000	$160,000
Katunga	$175,000	$165,000	$180,000
Kotupna	-	-	-
Koonoomoo	$310,000	-	$320,000
Lake Rowan	-	$300,000	-
Lower Moira			
Muckatah	-	$235,000	$235,000
Naring	$190,000	$170,000	$154,100
Picola	$107,500	$85,000	$49,500
St James	-	-	$155,000
Strathmerton	$207,000	$125,000	$156,000
Tungamah			
Waaia	$185,000	$186,000	$200,000
Wilby			
Wunghnu			
Yalca North			
Yarroweyah	$405,000	$220,000	$215,000

Source: RP Data, 2009 (accessed at rpdata.com.au)

6.2 Planning Impacts

The supply and demand analysis presents some challenges for planning within the study area.

Census population figures show an overall decrease in the population of the study area however, some areas, as mentioned above, are experiencing growth. In using these projections as a guide for future demand and supply, the assumptions built into the projections and the interrelationship with planning controls needs to be understood. Population projections are necessarily based on a number of assumptions; including assumptions about where people will live based on desire and availability. These assumptions may include consideration of the likely availability of land, however are also informed by previous settlement patterns. This demand will also be influenced, among other things, by supply; both historically and in the future. Supply, in turn, is influenced by planning controls and other factors, including market forces and willingness of landowners to develop. As such, the projected location of dwellings should be taken as a guide and indication of demand, rather than an absolute number to be provided within each of the identified areas. Therefore, the Small Towns Strategy should provide a vision which considers this anticipated demand against other factors; including the need to protect valuable agricultural land and existing lot patterns, as explored throughout this report.

In relation to the demographic projections for an ageing population in the study area, the increase in demand for lone person households reflects a well-documented, broad social trend. It presents a particular challenge for planning in the context of the study area, where there is a propensity towards detached dwellings, often in isolated locations; these dwellings may not serve the future demographic profile. As such, planning controls should seek to provide greater opportunities for dwellings of a higher density within townships where residents can be supported through community and servicing infrastructure. In addition to providing residents with easier access to the services and community support that they need, there is also substantial cost saving benefits to providing residents with the services that they need at defined locations, rather than spread across the study area.

7   Settlements and Hierarchy

A hierarchy of the various settlements in the study area can be established via the servicing and social infrastructure available. As well as describing their character, it identifies the strengths and limitations of the settlements to be able to accommodate future development and long term sustainability.

A comparative matrix of the services available within the settlements in the study area is provided in the Strategy Report as Attachment 5 – Settlement Planning Audit. Using the settlement hierarchy system, settlements within the study area may be described as district towns, towns, villages or hamlets.

The criteria matrix used to describe each of these settlement types is shown in Table 8 – Settlement Hierarchy Criteria. Using these criteria, the current hierarchy of settlements for the study area and surrounds can be described as follows:

District Town:	Village:	Hamlet:
- Numurkah	- Bearii	- Burramine
- Cobram	- Bundalong	- Kaarimba
- Yarrawonga	- Invergordon	- Kotupna
- Nathalia	- Koonoomoo	- Lake Rowan
	- Picola	- Lower Moira
Town:	- St James	- Naring
- Strathmerton	- Waaia	- Muckatah
- Tungamah	- Yarroweyah	- Wilby
- Barmah		- Yalca North
- Wunghnu		
- Katamatite		
- Katunga		

In addition to describing the current settlement hierarchy, these criteria can be used to assist in describing a preferred future hierarchy for settlements.

Table 8 – Settlement Hierarchy Criteria

	Population (approx)	Utilities Connected			Services										
		Water	Sewer	Electricity	PO / General Store	Community Hall	Public Transport	Recreation reserve	Hotel	Accommodation	Other Local Business	Playground	Tourist Attraction	Education	Church
District Town	500+														
Town	200 - 500												At least one of these		
Village	100 - 200				≥ 4 of these services										
Hamlet	< 100				0 – 3 of these services										

8 Summary of Context Report

The first part of this report has provided the context for the Moira Small Towns Strategy in relation to the conditions and challenges experienced by small towns and settlements in relation to land use planning policy, servicing and infrastructure, and social, environmental and economic influences. Many of the conditions and issues covered in this report are common to small towns and settlements across Australia and overseas. In addition to setting the scene for small towns in general, specific details regarding population trends and land supply and demand for the small towns of the Moira Shire have been presented.

The Context Report is intended to provide the background information and establish principles for the Strategy Report. The Strategy Report details collective and individual objectives for the small towns, provides strategy plans for each settlement and makes recommendations for changes to the Moira Planning Scheme.

Attachment 1 – Consultation Process

The consultation program for the Moira Small Towns Strategy involved gathering information from a range of stakeholders, including:

– Council officers and Councillors

– Local residents

– Landowners

– Servicing authorities, and

– Relevant government agencies

The consultation process sought to identify the perceived issues facing the Small Towns and rural surrounds at present, prioritise important projects to be undertaken and ascertain the appropriate strategic direction for the next 15-20 years.

The comments received from the consultation sessions have played an important role in the formulation of this draft Small Towns Strategy. Details of the consultation process are outlined in the following sections.

Council Officers and Councillors Consultation

Throughout the development of the Small Towns Strategy, consultation with Moira Shire Council Officers and Councillors was undertaken. This was staged to coincide with milestones and progress of the Strategy.

Consultation with Council Officers and Councillors, in November 2009, was conducted separately and conveyed preliminary research findings to each group before proceeding with group brainstorming exercises which identified the current issues facing each of the small towns in the study area as well as those faced by small towns in general.

Agency Communication

The project team consulted with a variety of agency representatives including infrastructure and service providers (North East Water, Goulburn Valley Water, APA group) and other government agencies including Regional Development Victoria (RDV) and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA).

Contact was made with each organisation individually to ascertain specific information relevant to their discipline. This information has been incorporated throughout the Small Towns Strategy.

Community Consultation

In designing the consultation program for this project, the study team endeavoured to use the well established structures already in place through the Moira Shire Community Building Program by using members of the Community Action Groups as representatives of their small towns.

The community consultation program was designed to be accessible and inclusive and based on the needs of the community.

Community Forum

Initial consultation was in the form of a Small Towns Forum held in Yarroweyah in December 2009. A total of 27people attended the session, including community members and representatives, council officers and councillors. Attendance numbers were lower than anticipated however it is thought that the relatively low numbers may be due the timing of the forum as it was held during the day and in two weeks before Christmas. Despite having few participants than expected, those that did attend were very well informed of local issues and participated enthusiastically in the planning process. The format of the forum consisted of the steps outlined below:

Introduction of presenters and the concept of the *Small Towns Strategy.*

Session 1 - Collective Visioning Session
This session was a whole group brainstorming session looking at the issues which common to all small towns. This session looked at answering the questions:

− What does it mean to be a small town?

− What are the biggest issues facing small towns?

− Where do you want to be as a collective in 10 years?

− How will we get there?

(refer to Figure 7 for the responses to this brainstorming session)

Session 2 - Small Group SWOT Analysis
In this session, the participants were broken up into four groups by asking: Does you town have a:

− Community Hall

− Primary School

− Community Playground

− Pub

If a participant responded affirmatively to 0-1 of these facilities, then they went into group 1, if their town had two of these facilities, then they went into group 2 and so on. In this way, each group consisted of settlements with a similar level of facilities and it was thought that they would also have similar issues and opportunities. The four small groups then did a group SWOT analysis looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as they pertained to the settlements in their group. Representatives from each individual settlement were then asked to pick the two most relevant strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats for their settlement and write them down. These have been reproduced in Table 9. Those settlements not represented at the Community Forum have not been included in Table 9.

Figure 7 – Session 1 Brainstorming Responses

What does it mean to be a small town?	What are biggest issues facing small towns
- Isolation, distance to facilities and need to travel - Mixture of housing types and lot sizes (Invergordon) - Big change in influence and leadership - Eg change in focus from agriculture - Succession planning for leadership - Increasing diversity of population - Lack of facilities - High speed broadband - Gas - Public transport - Closely knit communities - Community spirit - Lots of space and quiet - Integration of new residents and people, especially to continue and build on existing base/structure - Eg sporting clubs, CFA etc - Hard to get young people interested in community activities, especially 35-45 year olds - One size/rule doesn't fit all - Eg red tape, rules/regs, limits progression - Maintaining some community groups - Eg Church groups - Very easy to get involved in community groups - Aging community - Monthly community dinners (Naring) - Need to make new comers and young people involved/included - Different approaches to get young people involved - Eg change meeting formats etc - Major assets managed by volunteers - Growing amount of paper work may cause fewer people becoming involved - Having a small town newspaper/letter especially useful for new residents	- Lack of skills in some areas - Smaller pool of workers to draw upon - Water/irrigation - Small towns built upon water/irrigation - Paper work and rules/regs becoming a burden - Infrastructure, drainage, septics - Distance and time from emergency services (all towns) - Rezoning to new rural zones - Look at possibilities for rezonings to accommodate growth - How much time is spent in community - Town identity - Access to pre schools, family day care etc - Ability to travel to services - Local traffic issues - Eg Intersection at Big Strawberry "Collection" of old car bodies (St James) detrimental to look and values of town township - Trouble getting funding for projects - Eg beautification - Increase in empty houses if RRLUS recommendations adopted as loss of ability to excise dwelling. Leads to loss of population - In some areas, lack of meeting place for community - Lack of communicating between community leaders and Council
Where do we want to be in 10 years time?	**How will we get there?**
- Improved transport - Picnic areas/toilets, somewhere to stop - Improved signage to facilities - Eg Koonoomoo Reserve - Promotion of small towns, especially history - Important for tourism eg St James and Coles - Pride in heritage/history - Don't want to disappear from maps - In some communities no space for industry as land occupied by farming - Bearii – township with nothing tourism opportunity!! - Decentralisation of industry but need infrastructure to cater for it "Local" employment - Train comes back - Government to listen to country people - Lines of communication - Significant restrictions of new industry - Australia wide, not just Moira	- Better utilisation of CAG's through increased communication with Council, better advertising of CAG within community - Proactive ways of getting younger people involved - One contact at Council with the CAG's - Maintain existing Council process - Advertising of this process - More support for local business - Rationalising / sharing of community facilities - Maintaining and growing communities - Larger farm sizes, fewer family farms - Population growth - Encouragement of cottage industries - Variety of subdivision sizes - That state of Moira!! - Look after environment and infrastructure for future

Table 9 – Individual Settlement SWOT Analysis

Settlement	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Barmah	•	•	•	•
Bearii	• River for fishing etc • Hall	• Transport • Gas & water	• Tourism • General store	• Long grass – fire & snakes • Unmade roads of dust
Bundalong	•	•	•	•
Burramine	• Hall & tennis courts • Tennis club	• May not be able to subdivide old farmhouses off to keep people in area	• Farm tourism	• Dry seasons
Katunga	• Good sporting facilities , community meeting place • Stable water supply • New primary school	• Katunga township not completely reticulated with natural gas • Pedestrian crossing over railway line not included in streetscape plan	• Future stopover place with the construction of the Memorial Park. Distinct history on site, roadworks, BBQ, public toilets	• Decreasing population as small farms bought by bigger farms • Irrigation water sell off • Difficulty attracting sportspeople
Kotupna	• On the Goulburn River and Murray Valley Hwy • Close community	• No commercial buildings • Loss of youth	• Availability of land	• Environment / water • Ageing community
Koonoomoo	• Natural Environment • Tourism	• Intersection Koonoomoo & Cobram Road • Lack of signage at Rec reserve	• Walking track to Cobram • Co-ordination of community groups	• Lack of volunteers • Red tape
Lake Rowan	• Natural environment • S&D water supply	• Dangerous intersections / roads • No mobile reception	• Development of reserve and Boosey Creek • Develop swamp as a wildlife reserve	• Lack of emergency services
Naring	• Community Spirit • Community Hall (combined with CFA & fire truck building)	• Lack of water • Lack of volunteers	• Restore tennis courts • Subdivisions and tree planting	• Keeping younger people involved • Water – keeping farms going
Picola	• Sporting facilities • Christmas lights	• Lack of transport • Ageing community	• Timber industry history • Historic walk / "rail-trail" to Nathalia	• Loss of public toilet (Public Hall) • Loss of timber industry
St James	• Sporting facilities • Bus service	• Untidy residences • Not attracting residents who contribute to community	• Attractive for retirees and first home buyers • Tourism opportunities	• Population deterioration • Water restrictions – less
Strathmerton	•	•	•	•
Tungamah	•	•	•	•
Waaia	• Tractor pull event • Sporting facilities	• Lack of commercial buildings • Lack of beautification of town	• Advertise tractor pull events • Land that could be used for expansion	• Water
Yarroweyah	• Community Hall • Sporting facility	• Transport • Lack of information	• Playgroup in hall • Involving young families and children	• Lack of water / irrigation • Drainage

Other comments to come out of the Session 2 SWOT analysis were:

- Liquor license requirements for small businesses are not appropriate (eg Big Strawberry).
- Naring residents have CB radios in their homes for local communication. Also have regular community get togethers at hall.
- Waaia want greater support from Council for the Tractor Pull
- Several residents expressed concern about the number of people living permanently in caravans or sheds in their settlement and how it detracts from the overall image of the town.
- Subdivision of ex-farm houses from larger farms needs consideration to encourage new residents with some pride and community input.

Session 3 - Regional Sub-groups

This session divided the small towns into the following regions:

North: Bearii, Strathmerton, Koonoomoo, Yarroweyah, Yalca North

East: Wilby, Bundalong, Lake Rowan, St James, Burramine, Tungamah

South / Central: Wunghnu, Katamatite, Katunga, Invergordon, Naring, Muckatah

West: Barmah, Picola, Kotupna, Lower Moira, Waaia, Kaarimba

Each regional sub group was then asked to:

- Discuss regional strengths and weaknesses, opportunities & threats

    How can we build upon the strengths and maximise opportunities?
    Can settlements in your region work together to deal with weaknesses and threats?

- Identify issues that cannot be dealt with internally

    What support do we need to achieve our goals?

- Develop strategies for your region and individual settlements

    What needs to happen for your goals to be realised?

The goals and strategies for each regional sub groups have been reproduced in Figure 8. The participants were asked to list their strategies in priority order.

Figure 8 – Regional Sub-group Goals and Strategies

NORTHERN REGION	EASTERN REGION
Goals Walking / bike path linking the towns. Tourism trail linking tourist attractions. Increase tourism opportunities. Increased communication / info sharing between the towns Rationalise some clubrooms. Managing tourism – shopping, access & rubbish collection. Managing development in towns especially caravans and sheds. Improved public transport. Ensure back-up water supply More information to new residences about the benefits of living in small towns / region. More local jobs. Population increase after bypass. **Strategies** Regular meetings between town co-ordinators. Signage strategy for Shire. Info kit to new residents, regular BBQs / get togethers. Look at planning for after bypass. Speak to Tourism Victoria re: funding for developing & promoting towns – council +/- local tourism office to help. Speak to CMA re: flooding areas Speak to Council re: signage, directions, info board. Tourism Strategy – talk to economic development dept. Communication with council especially re: building requirements and enforcement. Speak to council re: bus service like Tungamah. Speak to GVW re: back up water supply. Relax rules and regulations for industrial development.	**Goals** Maintain all existing infrastructure and further develop to increase usage ie: St James Hall, Tungamah footy sheds upgrade (function centre and meeting rooms. Secure water supply. Beautify townships. Have a successful Agricultural sector without the same reliance on water (rain or irrigation). Have container loading terminal at St James or Tungamah. Encourage home based businesses. Reliable mobile and internet reception. Encourage travellers to stop and tourism opportunities. Have well acknowledged histories and cultural links. **Strategies** Council to help small or alternative businesses ie: reduce costs of accreditations and assist with meeting regulations (eg cottage industries, farm tourism). For example: St James shop won't sell pies due to cost of getting food handlers accreditation. Council to look into improve mobile and internet reception. Try to encourage pride in towns & streetscapes. Have businesses develop a welcoming image to attract people to stop and spend. Linking history, small towns for outings for eg Probus. Need zoning and support for industry infrastructure ie: for container loading & heavy vehicles, parking – then sell idea to investors. Develop links and promote relationships with industry (eg: Coles & St James, Tungamah & Beachcombers).
SOUTHERN / CENTRAL REGION	WESTERN REGION

Goals	Goals
Development of Small Towns History Trail.	Promotion of local events leading to Community Noticeboard.
Shire wide walking / cycling trails (eg Wunghnu – Numurkah).	Community bus to bring outlying areas into Nathalia.
Wetlands / creek publicity (eg Kinnairds Wetland, Invergordon – Katamatite Walking Trail).	More events n each community.
Bigger towns to advertise in smaller towns / communities to open opportunities for smaller regions (community connections).	Streamline red tape. Improve communication with Nathalia. Look into developing a "rail-trail" from Nathalia to Picola.
Try to include floating populations to encourage community connectiveness, to become long-term residents.	**Strategies**
Stop the underage vandalism.	Community Action Groups to take control – joint meeting of CAG's in region.
Establish Welcome Group in each small town.	Nathalia CAG to support small towns.
Strategies	Community Noticeboards advertising not only events in your town but in the region – bring people back to region.
Collaborate together (representatives from each area to develop trail. Include development of booklet including all towns.	
Redevelop / extend existing Wunghnu – Numurkah walking track through Wunghnu Advancement Group with assistance from NCIN.	
Use existing walking groups to establish which tracks to develop. Send brochure to these groups advertising trails, with map / distances / times / weather conditions and what terrain is like (suitability / classification for different abilities). Mention in Moira Shire Tourist Strategy.	
For community groups that don't exist in smaller towns, ensure bigger towns invite these community members to their groups to ensure small / big town connectedness.	
Deliver welcome brochures to new residents – include doctor info, where hospital is, when bin is collected, advertise events / activities / past times on offer in the town / region. Get someone to visit a week later to give personal invitation.	
Get youth worker involved to help with vandalism, to create a sense of belonging.	

Bundalong Community Forum

The Bundalong Community Forum was conducted on the 25th January 2010. Due to the recent expansion of Bundalong and the complex nature of having non-resident land owners, it was felt that a separate forum was appropriate. The forum was held between a weekend and public holiday to maximise the number of landowners present at the meeting. The forum followed a similar format to the Community Forum held in Yarroweyah, using a four question brainstorming session to gather information (see Figure 9 – Bundalong Brainstorming responses).

Figure 9 – Bundalong Brainstorming Responses

What does it mean to be a small town?	What are biggest issues facing small towns
• Relax Living – Amenity • Open space areas • Larger block sizes • Larger roads • Balance between small town and services • Bundalong unique due to holiday appeal • Safety changed in Bundalong • Water is flat in Bundalong • Larger lots available, also increasing land prices	• Boat and car parking at boat ramps • Water supply – drinking and irrigation • Collection of rubbish over holiday period • Telecommunications (mobile reception)/broadband internet • Electricity charges increasing summer period • Light industry looking to set-up maybe positive • Under age drinking/anti-social behaviour • Natural gas priority – Origin indicated unlikely • No postal box • Speed limit on Hwy and blackspot at turn-off • Traffic management plan required • Status of caravan park with cabins being built – not traditional park, permanent residents • Holiday rentals • Public transport • Water supply to Junction Estate
Where do we want to be in 10 years time?	How will we get there?

• Still want to be a small town
• Rural community and small changes
• Manage, protected, enhanced optimise existing land supply and services
• Maintained Infrastructure
  ○ Sewer
  ○ Water
  ○ Walking tracks/reserves
  ○ Car Parking
  ○ Roads
  ○ Toilets
• Sporting oval for young ones
• Public transport to services
• Info session for aging population
• No additional shops/cafes
• Extend bike track
• Small town support larger towns
	• Resolve water supply issues
	• Improve car parking near water
	• Council purchase land adjacent to ramps

Community Survey

It was recognised that face to face meetings are not convenient for all members of the community. Therefore to ensure that as many people as possible were given an opportunity to have input into the formation of the Small Towns Strategy, a community survey was also developed. The survey was available online and in hard copy. The online link to the survey was displayed on the Moira Shire website and advertisements were placed in local newspapers to inform community members of its existence. The survey asked the following:

– **What unique characteristics of your town / community should be considered in future land use planning and design?**

(What are the most important things to maintain / emphasise in your town?)

– **What are the biggest issues currently facing the small towns in the Moira Shire?**

(What needs to be done to support small towns? By who?)

– **What is your long term vision for the small towns in the Moira Shire?**

(In 20 years time, ideally, how would you like a tourist travelling through the shire to describe the small towns and rural surrounds?)

– **Can you identify any ways that the small towns of the Moira Shire could work collaboratively or share resources to achieve better outcomes?**

No responses to the survey were received.

Follow up Consultation Program

After the draft Small Towns Strategy has been presented to Council and been exhibited for public review, a further round of community consultation will take place. This will involve another community forum and a workshop.

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Attachment 2 - Community Funding Opportunities

The following list of funding opportunities is not exhaustive but contains several opportunities that may be relevant to the settlement communities within the study area. A list of relevant websites is also provided.

Climate Change Adjustment Program
This program is aimed at assisting primary producers who are likely to be affected by climate change, including those experiencing hardship caused by drought. The program assists farmers in obtaining professional advice, training and re-establishment assistance, and provides support to farmers to adjust their businesses to manage the impacts of climate change. Targeted training activities focus on areas such as whole farm planning, business and risk management, and understanding the implications of climate change. An advice and training grant of up to $5500 is available to eligible farmers and their partners, and may be used to receive advice and training from recognised professional advisers, registered training organisations, TAFE and universities. Grants of up to $150,000, are available to eligible farmers who have considered their options and have made the decision to sell the farm and leave farming.

Community Building Initiative
The Community Building Initiative (CBI) brings residents, businesses, government and local organisations together to think about and set the priorities of their community and then together they work to make the projects a reality. Through CBI, over 100 towns across Victoria have opened up job and learning opportunities, revitalised facilities, improved services and enhanced community spirit.

Community Enterprises Program
Supports the ongoing economic and social development of rural and regional communities by assisting the establishment of economically sustainable community enterprises. Funding available up to $25,000.

Community Facility Funding Program
Contributes to the provision of high-quality and accessible community sport and recreation facilities across Victoria. Grants can be sought for minor facilities
(up to $60,000), major facilities (up to $500,000) and seasonal pool renewal (up to $200,000).

Community Partnerships Program (Arts Victoria)
Funding is available for a professional artist to create new works in collaboration with the community. Projects may involve a single art form or a combination of art forms.

Culture, Arts, Tourism & Community Heritage Grants Project
Provides grants of up to $20,000 for projects and activities that offer clear public benefits for the community including capital items, equipment,

extension programs to remote areas, events and activities with a demonstrable economic benefit to the community and intergenerational activities.

Dairy Industry Road Program – Local Dairy Road Program
Provides grants to councils in regional Victoria to upgrade key local dairy routes to a standard suitable for the safe and efficient movement of B-Double dairy tankers.

Drought Relief for Community Sport and Recreation Program
Provides grants to help local communities develop sustainable approaches to water management of sports grounds, swimming pools and other sports facilities. Funding up to $100,000 is available.

Farmers' Markets
Grants of up to $20,000 are available to assist Farmers' Markets in Victoria to grow and operate as economically sustainable community events that bring clean, green, local produce direct from the farmer to the consumer.

FReeZA Funding
FReeZA is a youth development program that provides the opportunity for young people to plan, manage and deliver music and cultural events in a drug and alcohol free environment. Funding up to $38,900 is available over two years.

Gardiner Foundation Working in Dairy Communities
The program is focused on strengthening and building capacity in small Victorian dairying communities. Funding up to $5000 is available for innovative and well targeted community-driven projects which strengthen the community, build capacity and enhance existing community infrastructure.

Koori Business Network
Provides support, advice and opportunities to Victorian Indigenous businesses to turn their skills and expertise into sustainable economic businesses.

McEwen Foundation Grants Program
Specifically for the Goulburn Valley District, this program offers funding of up to $15,000 for Projects and activities that offer clear benefit for rural communities in Victoria, that contribute to their development in social and community welfare, economic, environmental, health, education or cultural areas, and are for a charitable purpose.

Men's Shed Program
Program will help build Men's Sheds in area of high need across Victoria. Funding up to $50,000 is available.

Moira Shire Event Sponsorship Policy A sponsorship scheme that fosters the development of new and existing promotional activities and events that

deliver economic, social and cultural benefits to the Moira Shire Community. Community groups apply for funding of $2000 - $5000 to hold events. Four funding rounds annually.

National Youth Week Grants
Provides funding for local community events, projects and activities organised for young people by young people during National Youth Week. Examples of previous projects include art focus, exhibitions, festival and forums. Funding up to $5,000 available.

Planning for Change
To support industries and local communities in drought affected areas to collaborate to identify the longer term consequences of sustained drought and to better position them to develop and deliver solutions to local sustainability challenges and opportunities. Funding up to $100,000 available.

Provincial Leaders Development Program
Provides funding to support local initiatives that recognise and assist business and community leaders who will drive the strategies needed for economic sustainability and community development. The particular focus of the program will be on encouraging younger leaders. Funding up to $10,000 available.

Provincial Pathways Project
Funding is available for infrastructure works to develop rail trails, pathways and walking track projects that demonstrate the potential to deliver on the Government's stated objectives for provincial Victoria by stimulating tourism and other economic activity by attracting more people, jobs and investment to regional Victoria and delivering the right balance of skills and industry needed to drive future growth.

Provincial Victoria Sponsorship Program for Local Events
Provides funding on a dollar for dollar basis up to $10,000 to assist local organisations to develop events that contribute to local socio-economic development.

Regional Joint Action Groups
Encourages small to medium-sized wine, tourism and food enterprises to cooperate on a regional basis to exploit opportunities and mutual strengths in resources, equipment and markets, and improve their competitive position.

Restoring Community War Memorials
Supports communities to ensure local war memorials are maintained or restored to their original condition. Grants up to $10,000 available to repair, restore or enhance local war memorials and honour rolls.

RIDF Arts and Cultural Infrastructure

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The program will provide funding for major new facilities and the funding of smaller arts and cultural projects throughout provincial Victoria. Grants will be considered for major new works as well as for smaller projects to upgrade or improve existing facilities. Grants are only available for capital works. Funding levels will vary depending on the scope and significance of the projects and a substantial commitment will be expected from the applicant.

Seeds of Renewal Program (FRRR)
Provides funding to small, rural not-for-profit organisations for project and activities to aid the growth of their communities and work towards a more sustainable future. Funding available up to $10,000.

Small Grants for Small Rural Communities
Applications that support community development involving youth, resettlements of immigrants in rural Victoria and community infrastructure will be given preference.

Small Towns Development Fund
Supports infrastructure projects that assist communities in small towns create new opportunities for socio-economic growth and development.

Victorian Volunteer Small Grants
Funding up to $5000 is available for organisations to attract new volunteers, create new volunteering opportunities or strengthen existing volunteering programs.

Women's Leadership Grants
Provide funding up to $20,000 for projects and activities that develop capacity and increase opportunities for women to participate in leadership roles.

Related Websites
Commonwealth Grants Link
http://www.grantslink.gov.au/

Victorian Government Grants
http://www.business.gov.au/Business+Entry+Point/Business+Topics/Grants+assistance/State+and+territory+grants+and+funding/VIC+Government+grants.htm

Business Victoria – Find a Grant
http://www.business.vic.gov.au/BUSVIC/LANDING/PC_50727.html,svswcAction=Y,.CKB

Grants @ DPCD
http://www.grants.dvc.vic.gov.au/web18/dvcgrants.nsf/headingpagesdisplay/other+grants+organisations

Our Community
http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/

Appendix D Moira LGA, 2006 – data table

	Can get help from friends family or neighbours when needed	Could raise $2000 in two days in an emergency	Volunteers	Member of organised groups	Member of group that has taken local action	Parental participation in schools	Is on decision making board or committee	Attendance at community events	Feels safe on the street alone after dark	Feels multiculturalism makes life in the area better	Feels valued by society	Feels there are opportunities to have a real say on issues that are important	The area has easy access to recreational and leisure facilities	The area has good facilities and services like shops, childcare, schools, libraries	The area has opportunities to volunteer	The area has a wide range of community and support groups	It's an active community	Organised sport
Moira	95.8	71.6	63.5	59.2	65.5	72.9	25.2	49.7	68.4	74.5	71.6	64.5	77.9	71.0	83.8	78.1	76.3	49
Hume Region	93.6	71.5	55.5	50.8	55.1	66.2	23.9	54.1	64.8	74.3	70.4	57.9	78.5	76.5	82.8	74.3	72.9	-
Victorian Regional average	94.2	70.8	52.5	51.4	51.5	66.7	22.5	53.1	67.2	78.5	69.3	59.1	78.2	74.5	81.3	73.4	72.2	45.0

Source: Department for Victorian Communities (2007) *Indicators of Community Strength at the Local Government Area Level in Victoria 2006*. The report includes a description of the rationale and method for the creation of these data and can be found at www.dvc.vic.gov.au

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