Faith, Hope and Love: Pray for Regional Victoria
2019 Edition

bca
Going the distance
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Further copies of these Prayer Notes, in both electronic and paper form can be obtained from victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au Phone: +61-3-9457 7556

A PDF copy can also be found on the BCA website www.bushchurchaid.com.au/vic

Cover photo by A/Prof David Morgan: Mountain Ash forest (Eucalyptus regnans), Tarra-Bulga National Park (Shire of Wellington)
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Making the most of this resource

Thank you for your interest in praying for Regional Victoria. The Bush Church Aid Society supports Christians in Regional Australia as they follow Christ and reach out to their local communities with the good news of forgiveness, love and hope through Him. A primary means of support is prayer. Prayer is powerful. God grows his church and cares for his world through prayer. God loves to hear our prayers. The resurrected Christ himself continues to intercede for us and invites us, indeed commands us, to labour with Him through his Spirit in this powerful privilege of love and service.

These Prayer Notes are designed to nurture supportive prayer for Regional Victoria. After an overview of Regional Victoria, each page is dedicated to one of Victoria’s 48 regional municipalities, arranged alphabetically by their commonly used name. Following some brief information, prayer points are listed around common themes, with a summative prayer or collect at the end. The points for prayer cover a wide range of issues. Christians are most concerned for the eternal salvation of all, but they also share God’s deep love for his creation and its welfare in this present world. In a similar way to those in exile in Babylon, Christians are called to “seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper” (Jeremiah 29:7). Points of particular topicality are asterisked.

Please use this resource creatively. Individuals could take a municipality a week, and pray for a point each day, using the collect on Sunday. Small groups could adopt a municipality or pray for a different municipality each time they meet. Churches could cycle through the collects in their Sunday worship. Tourists could pray for each municipality during their travels. Some might pray for an area when it is mentioned in the news. Others will have a particular connection to an area, as their home, or through family history, friends, holidays, education, investment or work. Collects and individual pages may be copied, with acknowledgement.

Obviously the selection of pertinent issues is subjective, representing the product of the author’s personal prayers and research. Visits, conversations, newspapers, websites and the Annual Reports from each shire have been used. Please forgive me if you do not feel an area has been appropriately presented. This is an evolving project and your comments are much appreciated and incorporated into the mix. My great thanks go to David and Robin Morgan for their infectious love for regional Victoria, their encyclopaedic knowledge and their prayers, photos and encouragement.

1 Population statistics are from the 2016 Census, available at http://stat.abs.gov.au/itt/r.jsp?databyregion#/ and www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/quickstats?opendocument&navpos=220. Population forecasts are from Victoria in Future 2016 Population and Household Projections to 2051, available at https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/14036/Victoria-in-Future-2016-FINAL-web.pdf (all sites accessed 26 Sept 2017). These forecasts were made before the 2016 Census data was available and, in numerous instances, the 2016 Census data is much more positive for the longer term than these forecasts suggest, perhaps reflecting our prayers! Unfortunately, the 2016 census data is not internally consistent and has also changed over the course of editing. For town population figures, generally the SSC figure is used for consistency, though this usually reflects a postcode area i.e. an area larger than the town.
Bush Church Aid

The Bush Church Aid Society of Australia is an independent missionary society within the Anglican Church whose vision and goal is “Australia for Christ”.

The Society has a particular commitment to supporting those living in remote, rural and regional Australia, and since 1919 has been committed to both their spiritual and material welfare.

2019 is a wonderful year of celebration and thankfulness for God’s work through the Society over a century, and a year of recommitment to the future.

If you would like to support the work of the Society and receive the Society's quarterly newsletter *The Real Australian* and *Prayer Notes*, either in paper or electronic form, please complete the tear-off slip below and send it to P.O. Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, call the Victorian office on (03) 9457 7556 or email victoria@bushchurchaid.com.

Further information can also be found at our website [www.bushchurchaid.com.au](http://www.bushchurchaid.com.au), where a copy of these Regional Victoria Prayer Notes can be found at [www.bushchurchaid.com.au/vic](http://www.bushchurchaid.com.au/vic). If you would like to join an email list of those using these Prayer Notes, for occasional updates, please email victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au
Pray for Regional Victoria


Main Regions and Cities: Regional Victoria stretches in a fan shape from the fringes of Victoria’s capital, Melbourne, to the South Australian and New South Wales borders. It can be divided roughly into 5 regions along the major rail lines: Geelong and the South West Coast; Ballarat and west through the Wimmera; Bendigo and north and northwest through the Mallee to the Murray River; Northeast along the Goulburn Valley and north and west of the Dividing Range; and Gippsland to the east and southeast, south and east of the Range.

Economy

Subsequent to European settlement, Victoria’s regional economy and its underpinning of Melbourne has developed through increasing diversification. With a rich foundation in gold (1850s-1889), Regional Victoria then developed dry land and irrigated agricultural industries, fishing, forestry and defence facilities. After World War II Victoria’s manufacturing developed, competitive through cheaper energy from the Latrobe Valley and Bass Strait. More recently there has been development in financial services, education, health and tourism. Major issues for ongoing prosperity are water, energy, climate change, competitiveness, leadership and community cohesiveness, innovation, education and capital.

Industries: International education is Victoria’s greatest export earner. While primarily benefitting Melbourne, there are major benefits to the regions, including universities at Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Wodonga, and tourism. Grazing (Beef, Wool and Lamb), Dairying, Agriculture, Poultry and Pigs, Horticulture, Manufacturing (Food and Wine, Aluminium, Energy, Paper), Health, Tourism/Conferences/Events, Financial Services (Insurance, Banking), Mining (Oil, Gas, Gold), Defence and Forestry are all major regional industries. Regional Victoria is also home to a number of State Government agencies, many commuters to Melbourne, and the majority of Victoria’s prisoners.

Growth: Regional Victoria is growing substantially. Labor’s Regional Fast Rail projects have enabled many to commute to Melbourne, or to make a “sea” or “tree” change. New housing is springing up in many locations. In addition to those areas close to Melbourne, major cities such as Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Wodonga, together with the Surf Coast are seeing extensive development, with whole new suburbs. Pray that God’s church would “catch up”.

*Decline: However, drought and agricultural productivity gains have meant decline in the Wimmera-Mallee, Loddon, Western District and Upper Murray. Some of these areas were over-settled through government schemes. Pray for God’s comfort and guidance as to how best to live in “the new normal” and pray for the arrest of discouraging decline. The closure of the car industry has major implications for Geelong, as does the closure of the Hazelwood Power
Station for Morwell. The Portland smelter and Shepparton fruit industries also face uncertain futures. Pray that God would raise up entrepreneurial leaders who use resources wisely.

*Dairying*: Thank God that the recent troubles in dairying seem to be resolving. Saputo has taken over most of Murray-Goulburn’s plants, although Rochester remains closed. Bega has taken over the Koroit plant. Continue to pray for good transitions, stability and a fair and profitable future. Thank God for the entrepreneurialism and strength of the industry, including exporters. Pray too for fair resolution to water issues for those in the Murray basin.

**Tourism**: Regional Victoria has wonderful tourism assets, especially her flora and fauna, yet these opportunities continue to be underdeveloped. Helpful and engaging interpretation is often lacking. Much tourist accommodation is old and unattractive. There is great opportunity to leverage off the large international student community and their visiting families and friends, as well as provide jobs for local young adults.

**Defence**: Thank God for Christian witness at the Army bases at Puckapunyal and Wodonga and the RAAF base at Sale, and the news of long-term pilot training at Sale. Nonetheless, Victoria far from benefits from its fair share of defence spending.

**The Garden State**: Victoria has a long history of tree and garden planting, for economic, social, health, educational and aesthetic purposes. This has been one of her significant competitive advantages. Windbreaks, Botanic Gardens, Memorial Avenues and tree-lined streets have protected pasture, riverbanks, coastlines, animals and residents, as well as attracting tourists and newcomers. Many of Regional Victoria’s landscapes and streets are increasingly spoiled by signage and power line pruning, or need renewal. Pray for cost-effective undergrounding. Climate change adds urgency to this, with trees moderating temperatures, wind and water flow, extending pavement life and reducing power use.

**The Community**

**Leadership**: The Bible urges us to pray for all those in authority so that we may live godly, peaceful lives so that all would be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:1-4). Pray therefore for politicians representing regional constituencies, local councillors, as well as leaders in regional businesses and organisations.

**Council Amalgamations**: Regional Victoria went through costly major change with council amalgamations in 1993-1995. There was significant “identity” change and loss. Jobs were lost and many towns that had been municipal centres, such as Omeo, Ouyen and Orbost have not recovered. However, regional centres have gained a critical mass and integrity facilitating development and long-term survival. Smaller towns close to these centres have seen new life, as residents commute. Pray for wisdom and equity in the distribution of resources.

**Cheaper Housing**: With population movement to larger centres, lower house prices in smaller towns have attracted those on low incomes or benefits. This has led to tension and blame for “not contributing”. Unfortunately, too, the cost of transport to services and the higher cost of goods can mean that such moves prove to be “false economising” and can lead to social isolation. There is opportunity here for mature Christians to move to these areas in humble service.
**Multicultural:** Regional Victoria is increasingly multicultural, with areas such as Mildura, Robinvale and Shepparton moreso than parts of Melbourne. Pray that immigrants would be welcomed, quickly settle into productive lives and find healing and hope through the gospel.

**Aging:** Many regional communities have a disproportionate amount of older people, either through youth loss (such as the Wimmera-Mallee and Loddon Valley) or through retirement resettlement, such as Yarrawonga, Paynesville and Bass Coast. Pray that God would establish healthy, hopeful ministries among such communities.

**Indigenous:** Aboriginal people have suffered massacres and had their land taken, even after it was “re-given” to them as mission sites. They have also been re-settled right across the state, so that kinship and economic relationships have been lost. These sins continue to hinder the growth of the gospel. Pray for repentance, love, wisdom and reconciliation. Pray that God would raise up indigenous Christian leaders and pour out his Spirit on the Indigenous church.

**Sport:** Whether it be football, netball, bowls, golf or the horses, sport plays a major role in community cohesion in Regional Victoria. However, it often competes with worshipping God, fellowship and discipleship, as participants practice, travel and play during the week and on both Saturdays and Sundays. It can be very expensive, and gambling is often involved. Pray that sport would be put in God-perspective and that Christians would have opportunities to speak about God’s love.

*Jails:* Regional Victoria houses the majority of Victoria’s prisoners, with jails at Geelong, Sale, Ararat, Castlemaine, Beechworth, Maldon (women), Malmsbury (youth), Trawalla and Dhurringile, between Murchison and Tatura. Most of these jails are beyond capacity.

**The Church**

**Churches:** Thank God for the witness of Christians in Regional Victoria over many generations. Numerous groups have ministered to Aboriginals and immigrants since early settlement, evidenced by churches across the state. A high point was the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade. Local revivals occurred in towns such as Bendigo at the turn of the 20th century and there was renewal through the Upwey Extension Movement in the 1930’s and 1940’s. However, liberal theology has had a devastating effect on the churches in the latter half of the twentieth century, with a lack of confidence in the authority of the Scriptures, the judgment of God and the uniqueness of Christ and his physical resurrection and work of propitiation. This has led to little evangelism. The abominable legacy of sexual abuse also continues to weigh heavily on witness.

**Evangelism:** Regional Victoria was settled by those looking for economic gain. Unlike America, there were few settling for religious reasons, either as refugees or pioneers. The widespread revivals that have underpinned other societies, such as the United States, Scandinavia or East Africa, have not occurred with similar social transformation. Pray for a great movement of God’s Spirit, drawing people to Him. Pray that God would raise up many evangelists and give confidence and ability to Christians to share and defend their faith winningly.

**The End of Christendom:** Much of the church in Regional Victoria still operates on a Christendom paradigm and yearns nostalgically for its return. Although it longs for its own
children and “young people” to join, it has not been able to pass the faith on to the next generations, let alone newcomers. Pray for new eyes to see the world missiologically.

**Leadership:** Regional Victoria desperately needs apostolic leaders committed to holiness and mission. Abuse, the trappings of Christendom, political correctness and perceptions of poor management have meant that non-Christians and Christians alike are slow to trust church leaders and commit themselves to Christian communities.

**Training:** Pray that Victoria’s theological colleges would train ministers well for service in Regional Victoria. Thank God for the Reformed College in Geelong, Ridley College’s distance education program kick-started with grants from Bush Church Aid and for Bible Teaching Conferences in Red Cliffs, Warracknabeal, Bendigo, Mooroopna and Albury (Mens Convention).

**Men:** Churches in Regional Victoria have a notable absence of men. Pray that structures and cultures that marginalise men or put them off would change. Pray that preaching would be pertinent to men, and that men would feel welcome, exercise leadership and reach out.

**Young Adults:** A constant in Regional Victoria is the movement of school-leavers to Melbourne and the regional cities for education, work and stimulation. Pray that this would be an opportunity to find faith and mature. Pray too that God would establish healthy Christian communities of welcome in the cities that can well manage the comings and goings of young adults from the country. Pray for those “left behind”: sometimes they lose confidence.

**Children and Teenagers:** Thank God for Christian families. Pray that parents would delight in training their children in discipleship and be well supported with models and resources. Without young adults to model, lead and teach, children’s and youth work often suffers in a downward spiral. Praise God for those committed to children and youth, including school chaplains and those who teach the faith in school contexts. Pray too for Christian camping.

**Other Spiritualities:** Since Victoria’s settling other spiritualities have had a strong presence. Some, such as Freemasonry and Theosophy have been in the churches, often at leadership levels. Others, such as Buddhism, the Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christian Scientists and the occult have competed. More recently, Islam and traditional Aboriginal spirituality have been promoted. Pray that all would know that Jesus is “the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6).

*Heavenly Father, we praise you for the wonderful diversity in Regional Victoria: for the diversity in its people, its animals and plants, and in its land, from the Wimmera-Mallee plains to the snow-capped mountain ranges, from the Red Gums in the Murray to its sea-swept cliffs and beaches. Pour out your Spirit of mercy on Regional Victoria, so that all would find the forgiveness, love and hope won by your Son. May our many blessings be a blessing to many, and may all live to the praise and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, In whose name we pray, Amen.*

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084 7 Jan 2019 with information from ABS, DELWP and municipalities. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556.
Pray for the Alpine Shire


Main Towns: Myrtleford (3,193), Bright (2,406), Porepunkah (941), Tawonga South (862), Mt Beauty (824), Tawonga (574), Wandiligong (453), Harrietville (338), Dinner Plain (230), Ovens

Main Industries: Grazing and Agriculture, Horticulture, Timber, Tourism

Delightfully located in north-east Victoria amid valleys and mountains, Alpine Shire has built its livelihood on synergies between primary industries, seasonally-based tourism and attracting businesses and retirees to its lifestyle.

Economy: Foliage in autumn, snow in winter and cool riverside springs and summers attract many to this beautiful and productive shire. Traditionally the home of timber, hydro and tobacco, that industry’s closure has led to innovation in specialty agricultural products, often with links to tourism. Thank God for this enterprise and pray for wise stewardship of resources. Pray too for safety, especially for those in timber, farming and construction, on the ski fields, and from fire.

Tourism: Thank God for recent investment in tourism, including wineries, restaurants, bike trails and a $3.74m Alpine Events Centre in Bright. Pray that God would use the comings and goings of visitors to grow his kingdom. Pray too for godly witness by Christians in the skiing community.

*Churches: Churches are not strong, and weekend work makes Sunday meetings difficult. Pray that creative ways would be found to worship, fellowship and learn from God's Word weekly.

*Evangelism: Many have Italian and Eastern European heritage. Pray that Christians would be eager and equipped to share the good news, that they would be salt and light in community groups and events, and that in each workplace God would place Christian witness and care.

*The Missing Generation (18-39): On finishing school, most leave. Pray that they would find life-giving Christian communities and that God would give godly fellowship to those who remain. Currently there is a skills shortage (hospitality, council), yet the shire faces population decline.

*Children’s and Youth Work: The lack of young adults with leadership skills makes it difficult to sustain children's, youth and young adult ministry. Pray that God would raise up faithful leaders who would be good gatherers, teachers and role models. Pray too for good use of camps.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the beauty you have created in Alpine Shire. Encourage all who own your name. We pray that those who live, work and visit the Shire would be quickened by your Spirit to recognise that Christ alone is Lord and that a wonderful new creation, without mar, awaits all who follow Him as Saviour, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 7 Jan 2019, with info from Alpine Shire and ABS. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for Ararat Rural City

Population: 11,600 (2016)  Estimated Population 2031: 10,600

Main Towns: Ararat (8,297), Willaura (530), Moyston (348), Lake Bolac (330), Pomonal (322), Ampitheatre (248), Elmhurst (183), Streatham (156), Buangor (103), Westmere (40)

Main Industries: Manufacturing (AME Systems, Gasons), Health, Agriculture and Food Processing (Abattoir, Wine), Retail, Jail, Construction (Wind Farms/Rail), Tourism

Founded by Chinese gold miners in 1857, Ararat has depended in the past on state institutions such as its jail, psychiatric hospital and railways. Currently it is seeking to diversify, leveraging off its central pastoral Grampians setting on the Melbourne-Adelaide highway and railway.

*Economy: As Ararat wrestles with population decline, thank God for the stimulus provided by new wind farms, highway duplication, rail upgrades and increased passenger rail. However, shorter-term construction workers haven’t yet translated into residents and long-term jobs. Water is an issue, especially for more intensive agriculture.

Churches: Thank God for the faithful witness of Christians in Ararat over many generations. Pray for renewal and growth in the churches. Pray for diligent pastors, who teach God’s word well and make good use of community events, funerals, Christmas and Easter to reach out.

Evangelism: Pray that the Lord would begin a new work here, drawing many to Himself. Pray that He would equip Christians to share the good news winningly. Pray that children, teenagers and young adults would hear the Christian message clearly, and not believe misconceptions.

Newcomers: Ararat is the terminus of the fast rail. Its housing is also relatively inexpensive, making it a retirement option. Pray that newcomers would find new life through the churches and that mature Christians would move to the town to strengthen the church’s witness.

Hopkins Correctional Centre: Thank God for the Chaplain and the fortnightly services at this prison for 782 men on protection, about half of whom are sex offenders. Corella Pace is an adjoining facility for 55 men who have completed their sentence. About 410 staff work at Hopkins: pray for repentance, healing, hope and safety, both in the jails and the community.

Smaller Towns: Ararat has a large and productive agricultural hinterland. Thank God for the entrepreneurial skill of those on the land. Pray for seasonable weather, good relationships and for witness in each community. Sport and farmers markets are great local gatherings. Beautiful Lake Bolac also attracts many to its campground and events.

Heavenly Father, just as you began a new work through Noah from Mt Ararat, begin a new work, we plead, in the Rural City of Ararat. Pour out your Spirit of renewal, so that many would find rescue, love and hope through your Son, our New Noah, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP, Vic Dept of Justice & Ararat City. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the City of Ballarat


Main Towns: Ballarat (Urban Area: 99,885, incl. Buninyong, Miners Rest, Cardigan), Learmonth

Main Industries: Health, Retail, Education, Tourism, Manufacturing, Government Services, Construction, Agribusiness, Commuters, Finance, Information Technology, Arts

Ballarat has built on its gold heritage, central location in a fertile area and good transport links to Melbourne, Adelaide and Geelong to become an attractive and substantial regional city, service centre and tourist hub.

Economy: Praise God that after much investment (bypass, rail, roads), hard work and prayer, Ballarat finally seems to have turned a corner, with extensive new housing, new saleyards and major development: a new State Government centre, at the hospital and railway station, and along Mair St. Ballarat has many beautiful trees and gardens and four substantial lakes. Pray that God would help the city develop its infrastructure attractively. It can be wet, cold and windy. Pray that these aspects would be used positively: e.g. in the horticulture and energy industries.

*Churches: Pray that renewal of the city would be accompanied by a complete spiritual renewal. Thank God that the Royal Commission gave Ballarat opportunity to address the devastating consequences of church sexual abuse. Ballarat has some lively churches, but the city needs much prayer. Pray for repentance and a commitment to holy living. Pray for the Anglican Bishop, Garry Weatherill, and for clergy with missionary vision and gifting.

Newcomers: Ballarat is growing by nearly 2,000 each year. Pray that mature Christians would move to the city and strengthen the churches in their outreach. Pray that immigrants/newcomers would find welcome and new life in Christ. Pray especially for ministry in new housing areas.

*Evangelism: The damage from abuse is widely underestimated. Pray that non-Christians would see past the church to Jesus and his saving work, and find healing and hope. Sadly, too, Ballarat has not focused on evangelism and discipleship. Pray for a fresh understanding of salvation by faith alone, not works or externals. Pray for God’s Spirit to be drawing many, and pray against long-standing spiritual forces that oppose evangelism and the Word of God.

Education: Ballarat is an educational hub, with three boarding schools, two universities and a clinical school, all attracting internationals. Pray for Christian staff, students and AFES ministry.

Heavenly Father, giver of gold and rain, look with great mercy on the City of Ballarat. May transformation in the city be accompanied by spiritual transformation. Forgive and repair the sins and slumber of your church. Revive, transform and mature her. Pour out your Spirit of conviction and love, so that all may find new life in you, worship you in holiness and truth, and eagerly await the return of your saving Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 7 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP, Vic Premier & City of Ballarat. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Bass Coast


Main Towns: Inverloch (5,437), Wonthaggi (4,965), Cowes (4,839), Cape Woolamai (1,676), San Remo (1,254), Grantville (831), Coronet Bay (791), Newhaven (449), Kilcunda (396), Bass

Main Industries: Construction, Retail, Tourism, Health, Education, Agriculture, Retirees

Bass Coast’s communities are interestingly varied, much influenced by the sea and the weather, as the shire includes the east coast of Westernport Bay, Phillip Island and the Bass Strait coast around to Inverloch, as well as agricultural areas and the former coal town of Wonthaggi.

*Growth: Construction of the desalination plant, wind farms and onshore gas infrastructure, together with the strength of dairying, tourism and retirement relocation, has meant substantial growth for Bass Coast. Pray for the ongoing provision of jobs, attractive development and good community integration of newcomers.

A Mixed Economy: Bass Coast combines agricultural, extractive and manufacturing industries with environmentally sensitive tourism and retirement living. Pray for harmony and that the varied contributions would benefit all. Transport is a major issue, with high car dependency.

Churches: Thank God for Christian witness in Bass Coast over many generations. Pray that the churches would be welcoming, united and grow. Pray especially for good pastoral leadership.

Evangelism: Pray that God would draw many people to Himself, and that the churches would reach out with the gospel in winning ways to each age and social group. Pray too for Christian witness and chaplains in the motor racing and motorcycle communities using the Grand Prix Circuit, for Christian Surfers, and for the Beach Mission teams at Cowes and Inverloch.

*Phillip Island: Phillip Island is home to a number of Christian ministries, including campsites. Pray earnestly for their protection, the encouragement of staff, and for a fruitful Biblical ministry.

Aging: The most populous age group is 60-64, with the most common household being a couple without children. This has implications for services and community renewal. Pray that the church would grasp opportunities and for economic/societal changes that support younger generations.

Dairy: Pray for farmers coping with recent industry instability and long, constant hours.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the ever-changing variety in Bass Coast: its rugged coastline and productive fields. Pour out your Spirit on all in the shire, that they may know your unchanging care and refreshment through Christ, carpenter and creator, Saviour and Lord, In whose name we pray, Amen.

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Pray for the Shire of Baw Baw


Main Towns: Warragul (15,757), Drouin (12,349), Trafalgar (3,912), Yarragon (1,650), Neerim South (1,305)

Main Industries: Dairying, Horticulture, Commuters, Regional Service Centre, Tourism, Forestry

Set in beautiful, fertile valleys, Baw Baw benefits from its proximity to Melbourne, being the first regional shire heading east into Gippsland.

*Economy: Thank God for Baw Baw’s economic growth, especially through dairying and commuting. Pray that development will not dissipate its strong community heritage. Overcrowding on the railway and freeway to Melbourne are major constraints to growth.

Churches: Baw Baw has been one of the strongest areas for the gospel in Victoria, with a long commitment to holiness, evangelism and mission across numerous churches. Pray for unity, maturity and a fresh commitment to Christ’s service, especially among younger generations.

Evangelism: Baw Baw is growing fast, with large areas of new housing, notably in Warragul and Drouin. Pray that the churches would be welcoming and systematically reach out.

Schools/Youth: Praise God for Christian witness in the schools, including Chairo Christian School in Drouin and St Paul’s Anglican Grammar in Warragul. Praise God too for the children’s and youth work in the churches, and the Youth for Christ work based at Warragul.

Mission: Praise God for Baw Baw’s long history of Christian enterprise supporting Bible Colleges, missions and ministries. Pray that God would raise up many labourers for his harvest.

Community: Praise God for Christians serving in politics, emergency services and community groups. Pray for wisdom and skill, and for their protection. Pray for strong church and family life and for marriages, especially for those with long commutes daily to Melbourne.

Health: Pray for quality service and Christian witness in the aged care and health facilities, including the hospital at Warragul. May those who are frail or ill know God’s peace and love.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for all you have made in Baw Baw: its rolling hills and mountain forests. By your Spirit, unite your people under your word, that they would reach out with the good news of forgiveness, love and hope to those near and far, to the glory of your saving Son, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 7 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Baw Baw Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Rural City of Benalla


Main Town: Benalla (10,330), Baddaginnie (338), Goorambat (297), Tatong (287), Swanpool (207), Devenish (197), Chesney Vale (157), Warrenbayne (145), Goomalibee, Lurg, Molyullah

Main Industries: Manufacturing (Australian Munitions (Thales), D&R Henderson (Particleboard), Schneider Electric), Retail, Health, Agriculture/Viticulture, Construction, Tourism

Benalla lies on the Melbourne-Sydney road and rail line and serves as the southern gateway to Victoria’s North-East. Although relatively close to larger cities, Benalla has “punched above its weight” to establish itself as a multi-layered, pleasant and well-serviced regional centre.

*Economy:* A massive $60m pre-cast concrete facility is currently under construction. Thank God that it will provide >400 jobs and have its own railway siding, providing concrete initially for Melbourne’s new West Gate Tunnel. Traditionally a “working town”, Benalla has been re-positioning itself by developing its civic amenities and airport. Thank God for these assets and pray that Benalla would harness its advantages for a positive and sustainable future.

Churches: Thank God too for the witness of Christians over many years. Pray for renewal in the churches, across all generations. Pray for mission-hearted leaders who can teach God’s Word clearly to working Australians, and for a focus on faith and discipleship, not externals.

Evangelism: Pray that God would enthuse the Christians about their faith so that they would boldly share it. Pray against misconceptions of church. Many have a Catholic background. Pray for witness in each workplace, sporting club, school and community group. Pray especially for outreach to children, youth and families, including those in new housing developments.

Workplaces: Many in Benalla face risks at work. Pray for safety and good relationships in factories and warehouses, on roads, farms and construction sites, and in emergency services.

Transport: Thank God for recently announced rail repairs: pray for major upgrades longer term.

Schools: Pray for healthy and helpful learning environments and for Christian witness by students, staff and parents, including at the small Australian Christian College (Prep-Year 6+).

Smaller Communities: Pray for Christian witness in each of the smaller agricultural communities.

Heavenly Father, we praise you for all you have made in the Rural City of Benalla: her landscapes and farms, her people and industry, her parks and community. Pour out your Spirit on all who live in the city, that they would know your love and forgiveness, and look with hope to that eternal city prepared for your people by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 7 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Benalla City. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the City of Greater Bendigo


Main Towns: Bendigo (incl. Eaglehawk, Epsom, Huntley, Strathfieldsaye) (94,378), Heathcote (2,793), Marong (1,416), Lockwood South (961), Axedale (802), Elmore (776), Lockwood (754)

Main Industries: Government and service centre for a large agricultural area, Health, Manufacturing, Education, Tourism/Conferences/Sports, Bendigo Bank, Commuters, Mining

An entrepreneurial, community-focused culture has transformed Bendigo into a diversified growing economy benefitting from its gold heritage, good transport links and central location.

Churches: Praise God for his work in Bendigo over many generations, enabling Bendigo to grow from a rough materialistic mining camp to a city with many churches. Sadly, congregations in most of the churches have dwindled: pray for revival and a fresh outpouring of God’s Spirit. Pray that families and young adults would be eager to worship God. Sport is a major competitor.

*Evangelism: Bendigo is a strategic city in many respects, including spiritually. Pray for fresh vision to reach the region for Christ. Pray for newly appointed Anglican Bishop Matt Brain, for BCA’s Steve Weickhardt as he plants a church at Strathfieldsaye, for outreach into other new housing areas and for systematic, co-ordinated outreach to the city.

Newcomers/Jobs: Bendigo continues to grow, particularly with school leavers and retirees from surrounding towns and farms. Pray that the churches would be welcoming and for the gospel to reach every cultural group. Thank God for the success of the Fosterville gold mine (>445 jobs) and for a new air service to Sydney. Keep praying for opportunities through airport development (e.g. pilot training) and defence contracts. Bendigo manufactures the well-regarded Hawkei and Bushmaster vehicles.

Health: Thank God for the new Bendigo Hospital, which opened in 2017. Pray for safety, compassionate care and godly witness, both there and at other health and aged care facilities.

Education: Bendigo is also an educational centre, with many schools, a large TAFE, La Trobe Uni and a School of Rural Health. Pray for the witness of staff, students and the AFES.

Greater Bendigo: Bendigo includes the towns of Heathcote, Axedale, Elmore and Goornong, as well as large rural areas and regional parks, such as Lake Eppalock. Pray for supportive communities, Christian ministry in each, productive weather, and bushfire and water safety.

Heavenly Father, we praise you for the many Christians who have been your witnesses in Bendigo over many generations. Have mercy on this city and its region, that new beginnings in the city would be accompanied by new beginnings spiritually, and that Bendigo would be a generous and fruitful centre for gospel outreach, In the name of Christ, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084 7 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Bendigo City. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Buloke


Main Towns: Donald (1,498), Charlton (1,050), Birchip (702), Sea Lake (640), Wycheproof (635)

Main Industries: Farming (predominantly wheat, oats and barley), Grazing (Sheep), Salt

Buloke is classic Wimmera farming country, with wonderful expanses. Increasing agricultural productivity and climate change means that the shire is wrestling with population decline.

Churches: Praise God for the faithful witness of Christians in Buloke over many generations. Buloke is characterised by small towns and dispersed rural populations. Pray that God would unite the Christians in each community and equip them in their local witness. Pray that men, families and young adults would attend, feel welcome, exercise leadership and participate fully.

Evangelism: Pray that God’s Spirit would be poured out anew on the people of Buloke, drawing many to Himself. Many in Buloke have traditional perceptions of church. May they see instead hopeful, joyful and loving communities of Christ’s disciples. Pray that God would give confidence to Christians to share their faith and hope, through sport, hospitality and service.

Long Hours: Men, women and kids often spend long isolated hours farming and travelling. Pray for safety and that these times would be opportunities for Christian teaching, prayer and praise.

*Shire: The shire is large, long and sparsely settled, with no natural focus. Its administrative centre is at Wycheproof, its fifth largest town. Pray for ways to strengthen community cohesion.

Community: Young people have limited activities and transport. Most leave the shire to take up educational, work and social opportunities. Those left are often younger men, in risky and complex agribusiness. Pray that they would find fellowship and mature, with a hopeful future. There are also immigrants (e.g. Indians) in the health/retail sectors, who can feel particularly isolated. As the population ages, pray for wisdom regarding care and succession planning.

*Economy: Buloke is seeking to diversify economically. After floods in 2016, storms in 2017 and low rainfall in 2018, pray for wisdom in managing crops and finances, and encouragement commercially. Thank God for recent Chinese tourist interest in Lake Tyrell near Sea Lake and for a $2.58m grant to develop infrastructure there. Thank God too for proposed streetscape plans. May they increase local amenity and pride. Pray for sustainable ventures (e.g. solar farms, tourism) that work well with climate change and arrest discouraging population decline. The shire is noted controversially for duck hunting: pray for a resolution.

*Heavenly Father, giver of land and rain, pour out your Spirit of growth and refreshment on the people of Buloke, that they would know the love and hope of the living water and eternal bread bought by the death and resurrection of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Buloke Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Campaspe


Main Towns: Echuca (14,043), Kyabram (7,331), Rochester (3,113), Tongala (1,926), Rushworth (1,335), Stanhope (828), Lockington (808), Colbinabbin (304)

Main Industries: Agriculture, especially Dairying/Grapes, Manufacturing, Tourism, Health

Irrigation in Campaspe has established the shire as a major agricultural producer. Echuca’s position as the closest point on the Murray River to the Port of Melbourne has led to its growth as a regional service centre and tourist mecca, utilising its port and riverboat heritage.

Economy: Thank God for the rich and interesting resources He has provided in the Shire. Pray for wise and sustainable stewardship. Pray for safety on farms, in factories and on the roads, with large milk/juice tankers and long hours. Dairying has been under great strain with a drop in prices and the closure of the Murray-Goulburn Rochester plant (150 jobs). However, Fonterra has just spent $140m rebuilding its fire-damaged Stanhope cheese factory. Praise God that a sorely-needed transformative second Murray River crossing at Echuca is well underway.

Churches: Thank God for the churches in Campaspe. Pray for good pastoral leadership, so that the churches would be well-taught, unified and mature, reaching out to their communities. Pray that the churches would train up ministers for country ministry more widely.

Evangelism: Pray that Christians would have confidence and skill as they share the good news. Pray for wisdom as to how to reach younger generations and for good use of community events and special occasions, such as Christmas, Easter and funerals.

*Children and Youth: With the loss of CRE opportunities, pray for fresh approaches that reach children and youth, through camps, after school and holiday programs. Pray for Christian staff, students and parents as they witness in each of the schools, including River City Christian College in Echuca (P-10) and Moama Anglican School, just over the Murray.

Tourism: The shire has numerous tourism assets, including the Fauna Park at Kyabram, gold heritage at Rushworth, the River Murray and the Port of Echuca. Pray that God would use visits to extend his kingdom. Increased rail would greatly improve local amenity and visitation.

Civic Engagement: Thank God for those in civic leadership. Pray for wisdom and protection.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the rich river heritage you have given the Shire of Campaspe. In your abundant mercy, pour out your Spirit on all who live and work in the Shire. May they recognise your Son Jesus as the giver of all life and put their trust in Him, so that streams of living water would flow from them, to His eternal praise and glory, Amen.

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Pray for the Central Goldfields Shire


Main Towns: Maryborough (7,921), Carisbrook (1,115), Dunolly (893), Talbot (442), Bealiba

Main Industries: Manufacturing, Retail, Health, Education, Agriculture, Tourism (Fossicking)

Central Goldfields is an historic gold-mining region centred on Maryborough. A transformation of the Town Common, next to the magnificent Railway Station, the return of passenger rail, a new education precinct, and new supermarkets, businesses and retirement housing have all been positive, providing the shire more generally with the hope of a sustainable future.

Economy: Thank God for recent investment in Maryborough (Edlyn Foods, Capilano), work on the freight rail network, upgrades to sports facilities and an active Art Gallery. Pray that all this would lead to job-creating enterprises, improve road safety and boost morale.

*Administration: However, following mismanagement, the government appointed administrators until 2020. Pray for the council as it undertakes comprehensive reform, with new leadership.

Churches: Thank God for the witness of Christians in Central Goldfields over many generations. Pray for renewal in the churches, for growth in numbers and maturity. Pray for missionary-gifted leaders, able to reach out and gather, teach and pastor well.

*Evangelism: Pray for a fresh movement of God’s merciful Spirit, that He would convict and draw many to Himself, right across the shire. Pray for Christian witness at Maryborough’s new “Schoolhouse” retirement communities, the Havilah Hostels and new housing estates.

*Children, Youth and Young Adults: Pray that children, youth and young adults would hear the gospel clearly and grow in their faith. Pray too for Highview Christian College. As young people leave the shire, may they join good churches and mature. For those who remain, may they put God first, witness in their families, work and sport, and contribute to fruitful Christian ministry.

Primary Producers: Central Goldfields has a substantial agricultural sector (cropping, sheep, poultry, pigs). Pray for witness, wisdom and prosperity, as the region is relatively dry.

Smaller Towns: Central Goldfields has a number of smaller heritage towns. Pray that each would find its niche. Pray too for attractive witness in each. The Talbot Farmers Market is a real community gathering. Sensitive resumption of gold mining could also be very positive.

Heavenly Father, maker of all that is good, we praise you for the many new initiatives in the Central Goldfields Shire. Pour out your Spirit on the people of the shire, that they too would be remade and renewed spiritually, finding eternal forgiveness, love and hope through the death and resurrection of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Central Goldfields Shire. victoria@bushchurchedaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Colac Otway Shire


Main Towns: Colac (12,250), Apollo Bay (1,598), Birregurra (828), Beeac (370), Cororooke (310), Forrest (230), Gellibrand (210), Warrion (198), Cressy (175), Coragulac (161)

Main Industries: Food Manufacturing (Bulla, Australian Lamb), Health, Agriculture (especially Dairying), Timber (AKD), Retail, Tourism (Great Ocean Road/Otways)

Set amid wonderful lakes, fields, forests and coastline, Colac Otway continues to benefit from improved transport links with Geelong and Melbourne for its produce, residents and tourism.

Churches: Praise God for the faithful witness of Christians in Colac Otway over many generations. Pray for their ongoing witness, that it would be Biblical, welcoming, relevant and winning. Pray that the churches would grow and be salt and light in each of their communities.

Evangelism: Pray that God’s convicting and comforting Spirit would be moving, drawing many to find new life in Him. Pray against spiritual forces that oppose the gospel.

Economy: Praise God for continuing initiatives to strengthen the economy: duplication of the Princes Highway, upgrades to the Great Ocean Road, a new Coles and CBD revitalisation, increased rail services and a major upgrade to the abattoir, which employs 400. Timber employs 330. Tourism initiatives, such as the Rail Trail and Otway Fly have also proved popular.

Community: Pray for those who work long hours in the dairing, farming, tourism, timber and fishing industries, with few breaks. Often their work is dangerous. Pray for healthy marriages and families. Pray too for witness in schools and for tertiary students as they travel to Geelong and Melbourne. May they find and commit themselves to life-giving Christian communities.

*Refugees: As immigrants, such as Sudanese, Iranians and Afghans move to the shire, often to work in dairying and at the abattoir, may they find welcome, safe jobs, hope and healing.

Tourism: The Great Ocean Road, Apollo Bay and the Otways are experiencing substantial international tourism growth. Pray for sensitive development, safety and gospel opportunities.

Small Towns: Pray for Christian witness, supportive community and a sense of identity and purpose in each of the many small communities. The Red Rock Gallery and Theatre at Cororooke and the Birregurra Festival are examples of such community builders.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the forests and fields, lakes and coastline in Colac Otway. Protect and have mercy on all who live, work and visit the Shire. Pour out your Spirit of light and life that all may find the forgiveness, love and hope purchased by the death of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Colac-Otway Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Corangamite


Main Towns: Camperdown (3,369), Terang (2,288), Cobden (1,839), Timboon (1,202), Skipton (586), Simpson (569), Port Campbell (478), Lismore (420), Derrinallum (415), Noorat (333)

Main Industries: Agriculture, Health, Retail, Manufacturing (Dairy), Education, Tourism, Gas

Amid rolling hills, volcanic lakes and plains, Corangamite is located in a beautifully fertile part of Victoria. Heavily dependent on dairying, it is seeking to diversify its economy, gaining greater leverage from its position on the Great Ocean Road and on the railway.

Churches: Praise God for the witness of Christians in Corangamite over generations. However, the churches are small and aging. Pray for renewal and growth. Pray for ministers who teach the Scriptures clearly and comprehensively, so that congregations mature and are equipped for ministry, engaging with their communities. Pray for whole families to attend church.

Evangelism: Pray that God’s Spirit would draw many to Him, convicting them of their need for forgiveness and giving them great joy in being adopted into his family. Pray against those forces that keep people’s minds “captive” and ask God to equip Christians to speak about their faith winsomely. May good use be made of Easter and Christmas services, funerals and weddings.

Economy: Increasing agricultural productivity has meant that Corangamite faces discouraging population decline. However, it hosts wonderful volcanic lakes, the rugged Great Ocean Road and accesses substantial gasfields. Pray for attractive development and a positive future. Milk plant developments at Cobden have made it Fonterra’s largest Australian site, supporting 300 jobs. Thank God too for the growing gourmet food industry, contributing to renewal in Timboon.

Roads/Safety: Milk tankers, long and windy roads, and tired international tourists used to driving on the right present safety and road quality issues. Pray too for farm and factory safety.

Young People: Pray that children and teenagers would hear about God’s love. As young adults leave for education and jobs, may they commit themselves to helpful Christian communities. For those remaining, may they know God’s friendship and purpose, grow and serve.

Smaller Towns: Corangamite has many small towns and localities, spread over a large area. Pray for Christian community and witness in each, wise use of resources, and a healthy, positive sense of identity and future, particularly in the north (Lismore, Derrinallum, Skipton).

Heavenly Father, giver of all that is good and beautiful in Corangamite: the lakes and the sea, the fields and the forest, pour out your Spirit on the people of the shire, that they would know day by day your love, your forgiving blood, and your eternal hope, through Jesus Christ our Lord, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Corangamite Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of East Gippsland


Main Towns: Bairnsdale (7,580; Region: 14,728), Lakes Entrance (4,810), Paynesville (3,480), Orbost (2,227), Metung (1,449), Nicholson (1,095), Mallacoota (1,063), Bruthen (814), Swan Reach (751), Marlo (564), Lindenow (449) Omeo (406), Johnsonville (327) Swifts Creek (278)

Main Industries: Agriculture, Horticulture, Tourism, Manufacturing, Retirement, Fishing, Timber

East Gippsland is Victoria’s largest shire (10% of Vic), with extensive National Parks (70%) and a diverse economy based on its natural resources. Fishing, forestry and agriculture have been supplemented by tourism and those relocating to work and retire in such a varied environment.

Economy: With the return of the railway, the shire continues to grow, especially in Bairnsdale and around the Lakes. However, some towns, such as Omeo and Orbost, face discouraging decline. Pray for sustainable use of resources and for safety on farms, at sea, in plants/mills, on the shire’s many winding roads and from fire. Thank God for the current $530m Rail Upgrade.

Churches: Thank God for the churches in East Gippsland. Pray for their growth, both spiritually and numerically. Pray for the provision of good pastors with teaching and evangelistic gifts.

Evangelism: Pray that God’s Spirit would move greatly, drawing people to Him and equipping Christians to speak about their faith in Christ winnily. Pray for engaging and relevant ministry among those who love being outdoors, retirees, young tradie families and artists.

*Indigenous Communities: 1,288 people identify as Indigenous. Pray for genuine repentance for the massacres and displacement in the past, together with mutual respect and reconciliation. Pray too that God would raise up Christian leaders, men and women, in each community.

Tourism: East Gippsland attracts many tourists to the Lakes, the Great Alpine Road, the Buchan Caves, the Rail Trail and Mallacoota. Pray that God would use these visits to grow his kingdom.

Young People: East Gippsland loses its young adults. Pray that God would meet them in their move, provide fellowship for those remaining and raise up leaders for kids and youth ministry. Pray too for the Scripture Union missions at Mallacoota and Lakes Entrance.

Isolated Communities: Pray that each of the smaller isolated communities such as Omeo, Buchan, Cann River and Mallacoota would have Christians bearing witness to Christ’s care.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the wonderful abundance and variety in East Gippsland: for the sea and the lakes, for the mountains and forests, for the rivers and fields. Pour out your Spirit on all who live in East Gippsland, that they would honour you as the creator of all and find forgiveness, joy and new life through the death of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & East Gippsland Shire. victoria@bushchurcharaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Gannawarra


Main Towns: Kerang (3,893), Cohuna (2,428), Koondrook (991), Leitchville (558), Quambatook (249), Murrabit (201), Lake Charm (168), Lalbert (151), Tragowel (104), Macorna (87)

Main Industries: Agriculture, especially dairying (50%) and cropping, Manufacturing

Gannawarra is located in the central Murray among red gum wetlands, with significant waterbirds. Irrigated agriculture has been the backbone of Gannawarra’s economy. However, drought, salinity and decreased water availability has led to economic and population decline. Thankfully, new initiatives are bringing hope for a more sustainable and positive future.

Churches: Praise God for the faithful witness of Christians in Gannawarra over many generations. Pray that God would refresh the churches and that they would be beacons of hope in difficult times. Thank God for mature Christians who have moved to the shire, strengthening children’s, youth and young adults ministry in particular. Pray for more.

Evangelism: Pray that God’s Spirit would be working in Gannawarra, drawing people to Himself. May there be repentance. May people turn to Christ for provision and guidance. Pray for good use of events, such as the football, Quambatook Tractor Pull and Murrabit Market.

*Water and Land: In difficult years, water rights have been traded out of the shire. Water ownership and allocation remains a controversial community issue. Pray for a fair and sustainable resolution, restoration of land productivity and seasonable weather.

*Economy: Gannawarra competes with Bendigo, Swan Hill and Echuca. Thank God that it is working to identify its advantages and stem population loss, through solar farms, waterfront development (e.g. Koondrook Wharf) and improved rail. New streetscape works in Kerang and the completion of the Gannawarra Solar Farm are positive. A $500m Solar Farm at Tragowel is planned. Wider engagement with the forests, wetlands and the amazing migratory birdlife through an initiative such as a Great River Road would boost both tourism and local pride.

Young People/Community: Praise God for Kerang Christian College (P-12) and pray for witness in all the schools. Youth boredom is a key issue. Most young people leave the shire for education, work and recreation. Pray for healthy youth groups and camps. Gannawarra’s population is aging (27.6% >65) and not wealthy. It also has the lowest ethnic diversity in the state (5%). These factors have major implications for economic diversity, creativity and energy.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for Gannawarra’s wonderful red gum forests and rivers, its wetlands, lakes and plains, its wildlife and flora. Pour out your Spirit on the people of Gannawarra, that they would find new life and hope, both spiritually and economically, through the living water offered by your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP, Gannawarra Times & Gannawarra Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the City of Greater Geelong


Main Towns: Geelong (incl. Lara, Waurn Ponds 188,180), Ocean Grove/Barwon Heads (23,421), Clifton Springs (7,519), Drysdale (4,275), Portarlington (3,619), St Leonards (2,480)

Main Industries: Health, Retail, Manufacturing, Construction, Education, Govt Services, Tourism

Geelong is Victoria’s largest regional city, with many natural assets, including Corio Bay and the Bellarine Peninsula. A manufacturing, educational and insurance centre, with its own airport, it serves a large agricultural area and is a growing commuter, retirement and tourist destination.

*Economy:* Geelong’s economy has taken a beating through the closure of major manufacturing plants (Alcoa, Ford). Thank God for the move to Geelong of the TAC, the NDIS and WorkSafe. Pray for those losing jobs and for new enterprises. New rail services every 20 minutes, upgrades to Avalon airport, a new ferry to Portarlington and the growth of wineries on the Bellarine are all positive. However, there are high levels of youth disengagement.

Churches: Praise God for Geelong’s churches and their history of co-operation, notably in evangelism. Pray for fresh initiatives to reach the city which will bring unity and blessing. Pray for outreach to new housing areas, including at Armstrong Creek, Ocean Grove and Lara.

Education: Thank God for Gordon TAFE and Deakin Uni. Pray for Deakin’s AFES group and ministry to internationals. Thank God too for Geelong’s many schools, including a number with strong Christian commitments. Pray for witness by students, staff and chaplains. Praise God too for the Reformed Theological College and its desire to bring God’s Word to the city.

Sport and Outdoors: Pray that God would use Geelong’s love of sport and the outdoors to grow a love for Him, His people and His purposes. Pray for Christians in sport professionally.

*Commuters:* Many workers and students have long commutes to Melbourne. With the growth of Melbourne’s west, train services cannot keep up with demand and are often overcrowded. Pray for resolution and for healthy time with family, church and community.

*Community:* Thank God for a wonderful new city Library. Pray too for those in Geelong’s jails (Barwon (448), Marmoneet (577) and the new Karreenga (216)), hospitals and its many retirees. May they know God’s forgiveness, love and hope.

*Heavenly Father, we praise you for the growing city of Geelong and its churches. Look with mercy on the city as it faces change. Please use this to help people trust in you. May the city be stronger through transformation and may your church grow to be a great blessing to the region, state and nation, In the name of Christ, our certain Saviour, Amen.*

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Pray for the Shire of Glenelg


Main Towns: Portland (9,712), Heywood (1,726), Casterton (1,668), Dartmoor (1,332), Merino (253), Nelson (190)

Main Industries: Aluminium, Grazing, Forestry, Port, Manufacturing, Tourism, Health, Fishing

The first part of Victoria to be settled by Europeans, this beautiful south-west corner is often forgotten. In addition to pastoral industries, Glenelg has built a diversified economy around the Port of Portland. Aluminium smelting began in 1988, now employing 580, massive areas have been converted to plantations, and marine-based industries, including tourism, have grown.

Churches: Praise God for the faithful witness of Christians in Glenelg over many generations, including the Missions to Seamen at Portland. Pray for renewal and growth of the churches. Pray for fruitful teaching of God's Word, so that Christians would be mature, exercising ministry.

Evangelism: Pray that God would equip Christians in each locality to evidence real love for their neighbours and speak about their sure eternal hope in a climate of economic uncertainty. Pray that the people of Glenelg would know they are not forgotten by God, who loves them deeply.

Schools: Thank God for witness in the schools, including Bayview College, a Christian college in Portland. Pray that young people would hear and find identity, purpose and friendship in Christ.

Unity: Glenelg is a large shire, with beautiful grazing country up north (Casterton), river country to the west (Nelson), forests (Dartmoor, Heywood) and coastal vistas. However, some feel the shire is too focused on Portland and the port. Pray for mutual appreciation and equity.

Roads/Trucks: Very little now traverses the port by rail. Massive and fast B-doubles carrying woodchips, logs, grain, mineral sands, fuel, fertiliser and stock now travel the whole shire, with serious damage to roads. Pray for safety, repair and a resolution to this hot-button issue. Reopening the Heywood to Mount Gambier rail link would bring substantial benefits.

Economy: Praise God for the new Kelpie Museum in Casterton, recent cruise ship visits to Portland, and government commitments to the smelter’s future. However, certainty of power provision and its cost remain issues. Pray for the arrest of discouraging population decline and an open, positive economic future, exercising good stewardship of land and sea. Aquaculture, wind/gas energy, agriculture, forestry and tourism continue to hold promise. The live-animal export trade is also contentious, especially given nearby abattoirs.

Heavenly Father, powerful creator of all in land and sea, pour out your Spirit on the Shire of Glenelg. Remake men and women, children and youth, so that all would find forgiveness, love and hope through the life and death of your Son. In whose name we pray, Amen.

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Pray for the Shire of Golden Plains


Main Towns: Bannockburn (5,283), Teesdale (1,721), Inverleigh (1,474), Smythes Creek (1,467), Haddon (1,194), Smythesdale (1,032), Lethbridge (1,014), Meredith, Scarsdale, Linton

Main Industries: Agriculture, Commuters, Construction, Timber, Arts

Golden Plains is a large rural-based shire between the regional centres of Ballarat, Geelong and Colac, stretching extensively north-westward from its administrative centre at Bannockburn.

Economy: Golden Plains is growing fast, with its agricultural base supplemented by lifestyle-based small businesses and commuters to Geelong and Ballarat. Pray for wise development.

Spread: The size of the shire presents many challenges, with its numerous communities. While the southern half looks to Geelong, the northern half looks to Ballarat and has a substantially different mining heritage and culture. The shire is totally car-dependent, leading to pressure on the roads and an exodus of young adults and those needing medical care. Restarting a train shuttle to Geelong from Bannockburn could develop into a Ballarat service.

*Churches: Golden Plains must be one of the state’s least “churched” areas, with the churches small and scattered, and few full-time workers. Praise God for these faithful communities and for church plants at Haddon (Church of Christ) and Bannockburn (Reformed). Pray for encouragement and fruitful use of minimal resources. Pray for more labourers for God’s harvest.

*Evangelism: 21% work from home. Pray for vibrant Christian witness in each community, including the Bannockburn, Teesdale and Smythesdale Farmers Markets. Pray for creative evangelists who can reach the arts community and for witness at the three-day Meredith Music Festival, attended by 12,500 each Dec. Pray against those forces opposed to the gospel.

*New Residents: The towns closest to Ballarat and Geelong have seen an influx of new residents. Pray that mature Christians would move to the shire and serve as yeast in new communities. 24.7% of the shire is aged 0-15. Pray for life-giving family ministry in busy lives.

Farming: Thank God for those “having a go” at new agricultural enterprises, such as poultry, pigs, dairy goats, alpacas, rabbits and vineyards. Pray for sustainable and profitable creativity. Pray against isolation and anxiety and ask that God would help farmers put their trust in Him.

Heavenly Father, we praise you for all you have made in Golden Plains: its beauty and its heritage. Pour out your Spirit on all who live and work in the shire. As the shire grows, so may your church. May all look to you and find forgiveness and new life through the death and resurrection of your eternal Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Golden Plains Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Hepburn


Main Towns: Creswick (3,170), Daylesford (2,548), Clunes (1,728), Trentham (1,180), Hepburn/Hepburn Springs (928), Glenlyon (389), Smeaton (231), Newlyn (128), Dean (120)

Main Industries: Agriculture, Horticulture (Potatoes), Tourism, Commuters, Food, Forestry, Arts

Hepburn is a delightfully interesting collection of towns and communities at the end of the Dividing Ranges. It has benefitted from the growth of Melbourne and Ballarat, as tree-changers, retirees, commuters and weekenders help renew its agricultural, tourism and forestry base.

Economy: Thank God for steady growth in the shire, especially at Trentham, Daylesford and Creswick, with a new supermarket underway. Thank God too for infrastructure improvements, such as streetscaping, trails and the Creswick skate park, and for some growing food-based businesses. Pray for safety and sustainable profitability in the agricultural and forestry sectors.

*Churches: Praise God for faithful Christian witness in Hepburn. However, the churches are few, small and aging. Pray that God would revive, encourage and grow his people, giving them fresh confidence in the authority of Scripture and the truth and power of the gospel. Pray for godly, mission-hearted leaders, who relate well to their communities, and for families in the churches.

*Evangelism: Daylesford has promoted itself as a home for alternative spiritualities and lifestyles. Pray that God’s Spirit would be drawing many into Christ’s truth and love and guiding Christians as to how best to reach out, using the “full armour of God” (Ephesians 6:11). Pray for a strong positive witness in each community.

Children, Youth and Young Adults: Pray that young people would have godly models, hear the Christian message clearly, and become Christ’s disciples. Pray for Wesley’s Year 9 campus at Clunes and students at Creswick’s Timber Training Centre and School of Forestry.

Transport: Transport is an issue. Those unable to drive can feel isolated, with jobs and health services difficult to access. Thank God for restored limited train service to Clunes and Creswick.

Tourism: Daylesford and Trentham rely heavily on weekend tourism. Pray that God would use the many “comings and goings” to grow his kingdom. Clunes and Daylesford are making books a focus. Pray for Christian contributions, so that “those who seek will find” (Matthew 7:7).

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for all you provide in the Shire of Hepburn: its forests and fields, its springs and lakes. Protect and encourage all in Hepburn who own your name. Pour out your Spirit of truth, conviction and joy, so that many would come to drink living water from your resurrected Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Hepburn Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Hindmarsh


Main Towns: Nhill (2,184), Dimboola (1,730), Rainbow (683), Jeparit (477), Yanac (63)

Main Industries: Agriculture, Food Processing, Tourism

Hindmarsh is located halfway between Melbourne and Adelaide. Classic Wimmera-Mallee country, it is characterised by beautiful wide-sweeping undulating plains producing a range of crops. The shire also hosts some of Victoria’s best National Parks (Wyperfeld, Little Desert).

Churches: Praise God for the faithful witness of Christians in Hindmarsh, especially through drought and flood. Pray for compelling Christian witness in each community, so that the churches would grow in numbers and maturity. Pray that whole families would attend.

Evangelism: Work, family and sport are the focus for most. Pray that Christians would know how best to share their faith naturally, both at events such as funerals and Christmas and Easter services, and in conversation at sport, shows, around kitchen tables and in the schools, shops and hospitals. Pray that God would be drawing people to Himself, opening their hearts.

*Immigrants: 180 Karen refugees from Burma (Christian and Buddhist) have moved to Nhill, offsetting discouraging decline. They are integral to the duck industry (Luv-a-Duck). Praise God for Nhill’s welcome and pray for all as they settle. Pray that the Christians would grow in their faith and witness, especially the next generation.

*Economy: Thank God for entrepreneurial agriculture. Pray for diversification that works well with the weather, such as the duck, olive and native plant industries, and for greater use of rail, as roads have suffered. Much more could be made of the Parks, especially with international visitors, from the heritage in Rainbow and Jeparit, and the fledgling aviation museum in Nhill.

Community: Thank God for attractive streetscape works in Dimboola, and for work along the Wimmera River, attracting campers. Thank God too for new work at the hospital at Nhill and its new $2.6m Early Years Centre, and for the upgraded hospitals in Rainbow and Jeparit.

Young People: Thank God for new skate parks in Rainbow and Dimboola, with one on the way in Nhill. Pray that God would raise up leaders for kids outreach programs and youth groups. Young people usually leave for education. Pray that those who remain would build Christian friendships and find deep joy through following Christ and being part of his people.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for all you have made in the Shire of Hindmarsh: the land and the river, the birds, animals, flowers and trees. May the Shire prosper and grow. Pour out your Spirit through the seed of the gospel, that many would find new life through the death and resurrection of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP, Hindmarsh Shire & Dimboola Courier. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Rural City of Horsham


Main Towns: Horsham (16,250), Natimuk (514), Jung (241), Dooen (240), Laharum (196)

Main Industries: Agriculture and Agricultural-related Manufacturing, Regional Service Centre

Horsham serves as the centre of the Wimmera and is well-located between Melbourne and Adelaide. It is strongly influenced by the vicissitudes of the agricultural sector.

Churches: Praise God for the witness of faithful Christians in the Wimmera, especially during periods of drought. Thank God for a number of strong churches and pray for renewal in those churches experiencing decline. Pray that whole families would attend church and that the churches would be well taught, sharing their faith clearly, relevantly and winningly.

Evangelism: Pray that God’s re-creating Spirit would sweep over the Wimmera, bringing repentance and faith. May Horsham be a strategic centre. Pray against a spirit of independence.

Schools: Thank God for Christian staff and students in Horsham’s schools, including Holy Trinity Lutheran School. May they testify to Christ’s care and may kids hear the gospel clearly.

Young People: Pray that God would raise up leaders for kids outreach programs and for youth groups. May young people be well-discipled and may God raise up “labourers for the harvest” from among them: leaders with missionary gifts. Pray for godly witness through sport, at the Federation Uni campus and at Longerenong Agricultural College.

*Community: The Wimmera faces a major shortage of doctors. Thank God for Wimmera Uniting Care, a large service provider. Pray that it would testify to the love of Christ. Thank God too for the immigrant integration program. Pray for those who feel left out, depressed or marginalised in the community, that they would find welcome and healing in the churches.

Small Towns: Pray for witness among the rock climbing community focused on Mt Arapiles, near Natimuk, and the Grampians communities of Laharum and Wartook, affected by bushfire.

Economy: Horsham has worked hard at economic growth, such as the new Freight Hub at Dooen, new crops and a new Arts Centre. Pray for skill in working with the weather. Given climate change, greater diversification and use of rail for both freight and passengers would improve sustainability and reduce road damage, made worse by porous soils.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for all you provide in the Rural City of Horsham. Pour out your Spirit through the seed of your word. May it produce a great harvest, as many turn and trust in you, finding the forgiveness, fellowship and eternal life abundantly offered by our Lord Jesus Christ, our living bread, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Horsham City. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Indigo


Main Towns: Beechworth (3,859), Rutherglen (2,378), Yackandandah (1,811), Chiltern (1,605), Wahgunyah (1,098), Barnawartha (904), Tangambalanga (542), Kiewa (474), Stanley (364)

Main Industries: Agriculture, Horticulture, Food/Wine Manufacturing, Tourism, Jail, Arts

Indigo forms a rural crescent west, south and south-east of Wodonga, divided by the Hume Highway. A collection of interesting mining and agricultural heritage towns, the shire has developed its food production and is re-inventing itself as a tree-change and tourist destination.

Economy: Thank God for the economic and cultural turnaround in parts of the shire due to enterprising business and community efforts. Indigo is home to Gundowring Ice Cream, the Beechworth Bakery chain, Beechworth Honey, Bridge Rd Brewers, iconic wineries, the Uncle Toby’s factory at Wahgunyah and the Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail. Tourism, tree-changing semi-retirees, artists and commuters have all enhanced the economy.

*Kiewa: Praise God that new owners Saputo have said they will keep the Kiewa milk factory open for creamed cheese production after Murray-Goulburn had planned its closure.

Churches: Thank God for the witness of local Christians over many years. Sadly, Indigo’s churches are small, with aging congregations. Pray for a fresh movement of God’s Spirit, drawing many to Himself. Pray for clear and creative gospel presentation at churches, schools and community events, such as markets, festivals and Easter and Christmas services.

Children/Youth: Pray that God would raise up leaders for kids programs and youth groups. May children and young adults know they are loved by God, who has a wonderful purpose for them.

Alternative Spiritualities: Indigo is home to a range of spiritualities, notably in Yackandandah. Pray that seekers would find the answers to life’s questions in Christ’s exclusive claims.

Community: Many in Indigo live on little. Income, especially in the agricultural, arts and tourism industries, is variable. Thank God for re-vitalisation plans for Chiltern and Rutherglen, and pray for fruitful implementation. A current controversy is water mining at Stanley.

Jail: Beechworth has for many years hosted a jail (210 prisoners), and until 1995 a psychiatric facility. Pray that Christ’s light and power would renew all associated with these institutions.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the beautiful hills, plains and heritage of Indigo. We thank you for economic renewal and the commitment of many to community development. Just as Christ turned water into wine, renew your church by your Spirit, so that all in Indigo would know life abundant through the death and resurrection of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Indigo Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for Latrobe City


Main Towns: Traralgon (26,785), Moe-Newborough (16,551), Morwell (13,808), Churchill (11,401)

Main Industries: Electricity, Paper (Maryvale), Milk Processing, Engineering, Education, Health

The Latrobe Valley has developed through electricity generation, timber, paper, dairy and engineering to become the largest regional service centre in Gippsland.

*Coal Power and Diversification:* The closure of Hazelwood Power Station in 2017 brought to the fore the issues surrounding coal and the privatisation of the electricity industry. Pray that the site’s rehabilitation would create an asset and for the whole shire as it transitions economically through its engineering strengths and enterprises such as food processing and Federation Uni.

*Safety and Morale:* Many in Latrobe work in dangerous industries. Pray for safety in the forests, mines, power stations and manufacturing plants, and on the roads. Pray too for healing in Morwell after the mine fires, and for positive morale, after so much national criticism of coal.

Churches: Thank God for Christian witness in the Valley over many generations. Pray that the churches would testify to God’s love and leading. Pray too for godly leadership in church and society, which relates well to people from a wide range of backgrounds and nations.

Evangelism: Pray that God would enthuse and equip Christians to share the good news of eternal forgiveness with every age and cultural group, including kids, youth, young adults, families and seniors. Pray that churches would systematically reach out to their communities.

Transport: Latrobe relies heavily on good links to Melbourne for commuters, students and the paper trains. Pray for a long-term solution to the congestion on the Dandenong line and Monash Freeway. A bypass of Traralgon would substantially improve amenity and benefit all east.

Community: Pray that each of the main centres would develop an attractive, positive identity and for a spirit of mutuality. Many are on government benefits, with particular needs. May the churches provide healthy transformative communities. Thank God for the ongoing development of Latrobe Regional Hospital. Pray for excellent care and Christian witness.

Federation Uni: Pray for Christian witness by and to staff and students, including internationals.

Heavenly Father, God of all power, look with mercy on the people of Latrobe. May they know your love, renewal and hope, through the life, death and resurrection of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP, Latrobe City & Latrobe Valley Express, victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Loddon


Main Towns: Wedderburn (941), Boort (873), Inglewood (855), Pyramid Hill (558), Bridgewater/Bridgewater on Loddon (468), Dingee (206), Tarnagulla (133), Mitiamo (117)

Main Industries: Farming (Dairy, Crops, Grazing, Chickens, Horticulture, Pigs, Grapes), Tourism

Loddon stretches north along the Loddon River from old gold-mining towns to more open plains around Boort and Pyramid Hill. Characterised by small towns which have seen “better days”, drought, salinity and increasing agricultural productivity have meant that Loddon has had to work hard to overturn decline. Wonderfully, fresh signs are emerging, right across the shire.

Churches: Thank God for faithful Christian witness in Loddon over many generations. Pray that God would refresh the churches and re-establish vibrant congregations in each community. Distance and travel costs can mean people feel isolated, especially seniors. Pray that churches would find creative ways to worship together, teach the Bible, care and reach out. Pray for leaders for children’s and youth ministry and for intentional gospel ministry to seniors.

Evangelism: Pray for a movement of God’s Spirit, convicting and drawing people. Life in Loddon revolves around work, family and sport. It is hard to share the intimacies of faith. Pray that the good news would be heard through events such as funerals, Easter and Christmas services.

Young Men: Many young adults leave the shire. Those who are left are usually young men, in farming and trades, or loners. Pray that they would find God and healthy Christian fellowship.

Economy: Loddon is seeking to diversify and new industries such as solar farms, hay, poultry, olives, grapes and tomatoes have emerged, together with more commuters to Bendigo. Thank God for those who lead such initiatives and invest. Thank God too for recent upgrades to recreational water and tourist facilities, and for renewed interest in gold, both by fossickers and companies. Pray for the arrest of population decline and a positive future. Pray too for sensitive development of a planned 240MW solar farm at Mitiamo.

Community: Loddon is “Bendigo’s backyard”, so its major focus is outside the shire. Pray that the struggling commercial centres in each town will find their niche, as more people shop and do business in Bendigo. Streetscape works are planned. Cheap housing has drawn those on benefits. Pray that newcomers would find new hope in the churches and that community leaders would find innovative ways to build cohesion in each community and across the shire.

Heavenly Father, creator of goldfields and plains, you love the people of Loddon more than we could ever know. Pour out your Spirit of healing and hope, that many would find new life in all its fullness, through the death and resurrection of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with information from ABS, DELWP & Loddon Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Macedon Ranges Shire


Main Towns: Gisborne (8,999), New Gisborne (2,387), Kyneton (6,951), Woodend (5,806), Romsey (4,746), Lancefield (2,455), Macedon (2,040), Mt Macedon (1,335), Malmsbury (831)

Main Industries: Commuters, Retirees, Tourism, Equine, Agriculture, Manufacturing (Abattoirs)

Macedon Ranges is the first regional shire north-west of Melbourne, with Kyneton, its administrative centre, halfway between Melbourne and Bendigo. Well-served by the railway, its towns are set among low-lying ranges and are characterised by attractive seasonal changes.

Economy: Macedon Ranges has benefitted greatly from the expansion of Melbourne, its proximity to Melbourne Airport, and the redevelopment of the Bendigo railway and freeway. Town bypasses have considerably improved accessibility and local amenity. Commuters, tree-changers, retirees, weekenders and tourists have all added substantially to the economy. Pray for wise, sustainable development and good integration of newcomers into communities.

Churches: Thank God for Christian witness in the Macedon Ranges over many years. Most of the churches, however, are small and aging. Pray for growth, both numerically and spiritually. Pray for godly, mission-hearted pastors, who teach the Scriptures comprehensively and clearly.

Evangelism: The shire needs a fresh wave of God’s Spirit, drawing people to Christ. Pray that God would enthuse and equip Christians to reach out, using local means such as sport, markets, concerts, cafes and book clubs. Pray that those with evangelistic gifts would move to the shire. Pray against those spiritual powers that oppose the gospel.

Commuters: Many commute to Melbourne for study or work, or travel extensively as tradies. Pray for safety, refreshment and that God would reveal Himself in these goings and comings.

*Children and Youth: The shire is expecting a new wave of children and young people. Pray for the witness of parents and students at playgroups, child-care centres and schools. Pray that young people would hear the gospel in relevant ways and decide to follow Jesus. May churches welcome youth and provide healthy mentors and discipleship. Pray especially for those in the troubled Juvenile Justice Centre at Malmsbury, currently being rebuilt, and their carers.

Heavenly Father, we praise you for the varied beauty in the Macedon Ranges and give thanks for each community with its own unique character. Pour out your Spirit on all who live in the shire, that they would honour you as the creator of all and humbly turn to follow your Son, by whose life, death and resurrection we gain life in all its fullness, and in whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 7Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Macedon Ranges Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Mansfield

Population: 8,584 (2016)  Estimated Population 2031: 9,600

Main Towns: Mansfield (4,787), Bonnie Doon (570), Merrijig (549), Tolmie (447), Jamieson (301), Goughs Bay (261). Mt Buller and Mt Stirling are within, but not included in the shire.

Main Industries: Farming/Horticulture, Tourism, Lifestyle Living, Retail, Manufacturing, Timber

Mansfield sits on the undulating western slopes of the Great Divide, stretching from the Alpine National Parks through the high country to the shores of Lake Eildon and Lake Nillacootie.

Economy: Proud of its iconic high country heritage, Mansfield has supplemented traditional timber and agricultural industries with tourism and lifestyle-related businesses, and is growing steadily, with numerous new housing estates and horticultural industries. Pray for wise stewardship of its beautifully varied environment. Pray that residents and visitors alike would praise the Lord Jesus for all He has made.

Tourism: Many travel to Mansfield for snow/water-skiing, boating, horse, motor bike, mountain bike and high country experiences: pray for safety and witness in each of these communities.

Churches: Thank God for the long-term witness of Christians in the shire. Pray that God would grow the churches in confidence, unity, maturity and numerically. May newcomers to the shire find welcome and new life spiritually through the churches. Pray for godly leaders who teach the Scriptures authoritatively, pastor well, and lead in mission to people of all ages.

Evangelism: Pray for a fresh movement of God’s Spirit: enthusing and equipping Christians to share their faith persuasively, and drawing many to Christ’s forgiveness, love and purpose. Pray for creative use of special services, markets, shows and media in evangelism.

Youth: Pray for youth ministry in the churches and schools. Thank God for the Chaplain at Mansfield Secondary. Pray that Timbertop, Geelong Grammar’s Year 9 Campus, would rekindle its Christian heritage. Pray too for Howqua, Lauriston’s Year 9 campus. Pray that students would understand that faith is about following Jesus, and not be put off by institutions.

Leadership: Mansfield has a strong group of younger entrepreneurial families. Pray that God would raise up Christians among them who take initiative in reaching rural Australia for Christ.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the beauty you have created in the Shire of Mansfield, from the high country to the lakes. We thank you for its people: their community and creativity. Encourage all who own your name. Pour out your Spirit of love on the Shire, that all would find the forgiveness, community and hope offered through the life, death and resurrection of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Mansfield Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Rural City of Mildura


Main Towns: Mildura (32,738), Irymple (5,325), Red Cliffs (5,060), Merbein (2,713), Ouyen (1,191), Underbool (215), Walpeup (158)

Main Industries: Agriculture, Regional Service Centre, Tourism, Retirement Living

Mildura was established in 1887 by the Chaffey brothers, who brought Californian irrigation and town planning to the driest region in Victoria. Heavily dependent on the Murray River for its prosperity, Mildura is the most isolated of Victoria’s regional cities. The large Mallee area surrounding Mildura hosts some of Victoria’s most wonderful flora and fauna.

Churches: Praise God for the witness of Christians in Mildura and the Mallee over generations, during good times and bad. However, the number of churchgoers and clergy is small. Pray for church growth. Mildura’s isolation has led to an independence reflected in the spiritual life of the town, which has suffered church splits. Pray for unity and a common witness to Christ.

Evangelism: Pray that God would be working in those who do not know Him, drawing them. May they find forgiveness, love, purpose and hope in Christ. Pray that Christians would share their faith in creative and caring ways, at work, sport, markets, concerts and special services.

Community: Mildura has a long history of multiculturalism. Pray for clear witness to each cultural group. Pray that the churches would be welcoming to all, especially those who feel shunned due to ethnicity, such as some Africans. Mildura has a significant indigenous population (2,073). Pray for reconciliation and mutual respect, and for indigenous evangelists and pastors.

Economy: Thank God for Mildura’s prosperity. It has an oasis feel. However, many are on low incomes and have particular needs. Drugs are a major issue. *Restoring passenger rail remains an urgent imperative, while the freight rail upgrade has been slow and problematic. Proposals for a riverfront convention centre are under consideration, though this could include a casino. Greater interpretation and promotion of the National Parks would grow jobs and local pride.

Mallee: Pray for those working at the parks or living on dryland properties, away from closer settlement: for safety in their isolation, for prosperity and for spiritual encouragement.

*Bush Church Aid: Pray for Dale Barclay, pastoring the parish of Sunraysia South with BCA support and for the annual “Bible in the Bush” conference, held on the Melbourne Cup weekend.

Heavenly Father, you have created the wonderful mallee lands with their birds, animals, trees and flowers. You provide water from the bores, lakes and river. Refresh all in Mildura and the Mallee by your Spirit. May your Spirit flow from all, so that they would worship you as Lord and tell out the good news of forgiveness and love in Christ Jesus, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Mildura City. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Mitchell


Main Towns: Wallan (11,074), Kilmore (7,958), Seymour (6,327), Broadford (4,319), Beveridge (2,330), Wandong (1,340), Heathcote Junction (839), Pyalong (660), Tooborac (310)

Main Industries: Commuters, Construction, Manufacturing (Ralphs Meats, Seymour; Nestle, Broadford), Retail, Government Services, Agriculture, Equine, Defence (Puckapunyal)

Mitchell is the first regional shire north of Melbourne along the Hume, its towns joined by the rail to Seymour. Its southern half is growing fast with new housing for commuters, while its northern half is based on the agricultural, army and railway communities around Seymour.

*Growth: Mitchell’s projected 5.6% annual growth is more than double any other regional shire. Mitchell will be twice its size in 15 years. Pray for wise, attractive long-term planning and the provision of quality schools, churches, community facilities and a bypass of Wallan and Kilmore. Praise God for new playgrounds and family centres in Wallan, Kilmore and Broadford.

Seymour: Seymour is centrally located in beautiful country on the Goulburn, with good railway service. Pray that it would find its niche. The “Alternative Farming Expo” is a major asset: pray for witness there, and in the agricultural and equine communities in the shire more generally.

*Churches: Pray for renewal in the Mitchell churches and new church plants. The area has been characterised by working-class Irish Catholicism. It needs fresh, relevant witness, together with systematic Bible teaching. Pray that Christians with evangelistic gifts would move to Mitchell.

*Evangelism: Pray that churches would “step up to the plate” in reaching new residents, from various cultural backgrounds. Many commute or are tradies or truckies working in Melbourne’s north. Most are busy paying mortgages, establishing homes and caring for young families.

Schools: With many new homes, child-care and schools will play an even greater role in community cohesion. Pray for the provision of caring teachers and gospel opportunities.

Army: A moving Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk opened at Seymour in 2013. Pray that God’s healing Spirit would be drawing veterans as they visit and attend commemorations. Pray too for witness at Puckapunyal and Biblical integration of the gospel and defence service.

We commit to you, Heavenly Father, the Shire of Mitchell as it undergoes growth and transformation. Please lead and guide through your creating Spirit. Build and grow your church. May all in Mitchell recognise in your Son, Jesus Christ, both the carpenter and shepherd who knows our needs and calls us to follow, through his life, death and resurrection, and in whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 8 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Mitchell Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Moira


Main Towns: Yarrawonga (7,913), Cobram (6,014), Numurkah (4,477), Nathalia, Strathmerton

Main Industries: Agriculture and related Manufacturing, Retirement Living, Tourism

Moira is a large, relatively well-populated and growing shire highly dependent on the Murray River, Broken Creek and sunny weather for its agricultural and lifestyle-related industries.

Economy: Irrigation and Lake Mulwala have transformed Moira. In addition to agriculture, Moira has gone for the “grey dollar”, providing retirement and tourism services which take advantage of its water and sunny climate. However, as the population ages, wise stewardship is needed.

Murray-Goulburn: For many, the demise of the Murray-Goulburn dairy co-operative feels like “a death in the family”, with understandable anger and grief. Pray for a healthy resolution to “unfinished business” and for a good handover to Saputo of the Cobram plant.

Safety: The milk plants at Cobram and Strathmerton (Bega) are served by massive tankers. Similarly, Graincorp Oilseeds at Numurkah and Ryans Meat at Nathalia have many trucks. Pray for factory, farm and road safety, especially on the Goulburn and Murray Valley Highways.

Churches: Thank God for the churches in Moira. Pray that they would grow both numerically and spiritually, and be refreshed by newcomers to the area. Pray for godly pastors who teach God’s word authoritatively and lead congregations in contemporary outreach.

*Evangelism: Pray that the churches would engage well with their communities and that Christians would share their faith winningly. Many in Moira have retired. This occasions both questions about our eternal future and opportunity for friendship, testimony and ministry in the community and at clubs, hospitals and funerals.

The Missing Generation: Many in the 18-35ish bracket move away. Pray that God would provide godly friendship for those remaining and raise up leaders for children’s and youth work.

Schools: Pray for Christian witness by students and staff at schools, including Cobram Anglican Grammar. May it be maturely Christian. Pray too for holiday outreach activities by churches.

Community: Moira has 500 indigenous residents. May they know Christ’s love and service.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for all you have made in Moira: its water and earth, its warmth and light, its trees, fish, birds and animals. Pour out your Spirit on all who live in Moira so that they would find forgiveness and new life through faith in the life, death and resurrection of your eternal Son, and live to his honour and glory, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 7 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Moira Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Moorabool


Main Towns: Bacchus Marsh (20,345), Ballan (2,985), Gordon, Blackwood, Myrniong, Bungaree

Main Industries: Commuters, Retail, Agriculture, Health, Manufacturing, Education, Construction, Transport, Forestry, Mining

Moorabool is the first regional shire west of Melbourne, extending right up to Ballarat’s eastern fringe. The shire is comprised of large productive agricultural and forested areas, together with many new housing areas settled by commuters, particularly around Bacchus Marsh.

Economy: Moorabool has benefitted from its central location between Melbourne, Ballarat and Geelong, on the Werribee and Lerderberg Rivers, and has traditionally supplied much horticultural and agricultural produce, as well as timber and quarry products to these markets. The growth of Melbourne’s west and upgrades to both the Western freeway and rail line has led to an increasing number of commuters. Pray for wise planning, especially with regard to maintaining farmland, and for the provision of good community facilities.

Churches: Thank God for Christian witness in the shire over many generations. The shire straddles the Anglican Dioceses of Melbourne and Ballarat. Pray for the churches and their leaders as they adapt to growth in the shire and reach out to newcomers.

Fluoro Shirts: The shire is home to many in the construction, manufacturing, transport and agricultural industries. There are trucks everywhere! Pray for safety. The church has often been poor in reaching these industries. Pray for many with just the right skills to share God’s love.

*Commuters: 68% of Moorabool’s residents travel outside the shire to work. V/Line has 13 services to Melbourne before 9.00am. This makes for tiring days. Pray for healthy family life.

Children: Moorabool has a surge of children and youth. Pray that they would hear the gospel, grow in Christian maturity and have hope, both in this world and for the next.

Farmers/Forests: The shire sustains substantial farming, much of it intensive. Pray for witness in each community, seasonable weather and fair prices. Pray too for bushfire safety, especially in Moorabool’s extensive state parks and forests, and for witness among emergency services.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for all you have made in Moorabool: for the gorges and the rivers, the fields and the forests. Look with favour on the shire as it grows. Pour out your life-giving Spirit on all who live and work in Moorabool, that they would find forgiveness, joy and hope, and be fruitful, through the death and resurrection of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 7 Jan 2019, with info ABS, DELWP & Moorabool Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Mount Alexander Shire


Main Towns: Castlemaine (10,583), Maldon (1,513), Newstead, Harcourt, Taradale, Chewton

Main Industries: Manufacturing (Don/KR Smallgoods, Flowserve Pumps), Commuters (Melbourne/Bendigo), Construction, Agriculture (Harcourt Apples), Arts, Tourism, Jails, Retirees

These former gold mining towns in central Victoria celebrate their interesting natural and built heritage. Manufacturing and agriculture have been complemented by tourism, the arts, weekenders and lifestyle businesses. Castlemaine’s position on the Melbourne-Bendigo railway also means that workers, students and retirees have good travel to both centres.

Economy: As Mt Alexander grows, pray for common cause and wisdom, as those keen to preserve Mt Alexander’s charm have often been at odds with those promoting development. Thank God for substantial new investment at Don in Castlemaine and for new housing in Castlemaine, Newstead and Harcourt. Malden, with its historic steam railway, struggles, relying heavily on weekend tourism, though increasing commuting to Bendigo will help.

*Churches: The churches in Mt Alexander are small and aging. Pray that God would encourage the Christians and give them fresh confidence in the truth of the gospel and its power to save.

*Evangelism: Mt Alexander very much needs a fresh, convicting and reviving movement of God’s Spirit. The shire has traditionally been a working class manufacturing town. Subsequently it has attracted alternative spiritualities and lifestyles: “Brunswick in the bush”. Pray against those forces opposed to the gospel, and that God would mature and equip Christians to reach various communities, as salt and light. Pray for evangelists!

Arts: Mt Alexander has a long record of celebrating creativity. Its Art Gallery, however, needs funds to continue. The Castlemaine Arts Festival is a major event. Pray that God would raise up Christians who engage well with this community and can lead artists into discipleship.

*Jails: Loddon (482 beds) focuses on release preparation and drug rehabilitation, with Middleton a new minimum security annex of 282 beds. Tarrengower, at Maldon, houses 72 women.

Youth: Mt Alexander loses its youth to Melbourne and Bendigo. Pray that they would meet Christ in their move. May those who stay find Christian fellowship and mature. Praise God for new Mountain Bike tracks at Harcourt North: pray for witness in the cycling community.

Heavenly Father, we praise you for Mt Alexander’s rich heritage and creativity. Encourage all who own your name. Pour out your re-creating Spirit on all in the shire, so that they would find new life through the death and resurrection of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 7 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP, Vic Dept of Justice and Mt Alexander Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Moyne Shire


**Main Towns:** Port Fairy (3,340), Koroit (2,055), Mortlake (1,372), Macarthur (522), Panmure (424), Woolsthorpe (422), Kirkstall (366), Hawkesdale (322), Purnim (270), Peterborough (247)

**Main Industries:** Farming, notably Dairying and related Food Manufacturing (Koroit), Tourism, Energy (Wind/Gas), Opiates (Sun Pharma), Health, Fishing, Quarrying (Bamstone)

The Moyne River flows through a large fertile volcanic region surrounding the City of Warrnambool, emptying into the ocean at picturesque Port Fairy. Having seen tough times, the shire is currently enjoying growth, driven by dairying, tourism and energy.

**Churches:** Praise God for the witness of Christians in Moyne. However, the churches are few and small. Pray for growth in the churches, in numbers and maturity, and for positive witness in each locality. Pray especially for men and young people to identify with Christ and his church.

*Evangelism:* Moyne has a strong Irish Catholic heritage. Pray that God would enliven witness through sport, music, markets, work and community care. Sadly, Christian witness has been devastated by abuse. Pray that those affected would be healed and see past it to Christ.

**Economy:** Thank God for ongoing signs of economic renewal, such as new shops in Koroit, continued development at Port Fairy and the ongoing success of the Port Fairy Music Festivals. Praise God too for new hospital works in Port Fairy. However, road quality remains an issue. Pray too for profitable stability in dairying, as Bega takes over the milk plant in Koroit.

*Mortlake:* After years of struggle, Mortlake seems to have turned a corner, with new saleyards, streetscaping and a new library. However, new powerlines for windfarms have severely impacted amenity, already diminished by powerline pruning. Keep praying for economic renewal from its crossroads location, accompanied by spiritual healing and renewal.

**Long Hours:** Many in the Shire work long hours with few breaks, especially those in dairying, fishing, farming, tourism and transport. Many have multiple jobs and responsibilities. Pray that people would have time and opportunity to hear the gospel and grow as Christians.

**Children and Young Adults:** Thank God and pray for Christian students, teachers and parents. Pray that kids and teenagers would hear the good news of Christ's love. As young adults travel for study/work, pray that they would meet Christians and join healthy Christian communities.

*We praise you, Heavenly Father, for creating all that we enjoy: the land and sea, birds, fish and animals, family and friends, music and laughter, books and sport, food and drink. Pour out your Spirit on the people of Moyne, that they would come to know the giver of all things good, by turning, trusting and following your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.*

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 9 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Moyne Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Murrindindi


Main Towns: Alexandra (2,695), Yea (1,587), Kinglake (1,536), Kinglake West (1,166), Eildon (974), Flowerdale (689), Buxton (492), Glenburn (415), Marysville (394), Toolangi (344)

Main Industries: Agriculture, Horticulture, Timber, Tourism, Retirement, Manufacturing

Murrindindi is a large, beautiful shire adjacent to Melbourne’s north-east. Timber and pastoral industries have been supplemented with horticulture and tourism, based on Lake Eildon and the roads, forests and high country surrounding Yea, Kinglake and Marysville.

*Fires:* The millennial drought and devastating fires in 2009 at Kinglake and Marysville have had a massive population, social and economic impact. Six memorials have recently been constructed. Reconstruction has been slow due to the expense of bushfire building standards and the availability of materials. Thank God for new church buildings at Kinglake and Marysville. Pray that they would be centres for healing and community, through Christ. Pray too for those who have had to leave.

*Industry:* Murrindindi’s population and business loss on a low rate base remains challenging and it is working hard to attract fresh investment. It has numerous specialty industries, such as trout, turf and houseboats. Koala Cherries at Yarck employs over 400 during the season, including many Muslim immigrants. Thank God for entrepreneurs and pray for witness in each work context.

Tourism: Murrindindi has wonderful tourism assets, all close to Melbourne, including Lake Eildon, Yea, the Great Victorian Rail Trail, the Mountain Ash forests around Marysville, and Lake Mountain. Day-trippers, bikers, cyclists, anglers and boaters, school groups, grey nomads, conferees and vacationers all delight in the shire. Pray for witness in each context.

*Churches:* With a few notable exceptions, the churches are small and aging. Pray for a unified witness in each town and a deep movement of God’s Spirit in evangelism and Bible teaching. Pray that Christians would testify to God’s care and be yeast. Thank God for the ministry of the El Kanah and ESA Country Ministry Conference Centres at Marysville: may they richly bless the town.

Youth: Praise God for ESA Country Ministry’s adventure camping, based at Alexandra. Praise God too for the Chaplain at Alexandra Secondary College. Pray for Christian witness in the schools and for students leaving the shire to study. May they find faith and grow.

Heavenly Father, we praise you for the natural beauty in Murrindindi: the mountains and the lakes, the fields and the forests. Comfort and strengthen all as they rebuild and renew communities. May they find hope and new life in you, so that you would be glorified through the saving work of your Spirit and Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 9 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Murrindindi Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Northern Grampians Shire


Main Towns: Stawell (6,032), St Arnaud (2,193), Halls Gap (430), Great Western (400), Navarre

Main Industries: Manufacturing (Frewstal Abattoirs, Steel Fabrication, Krause Bricks, Ridley Agriproducts), Agriculture, Tourism, Mining, Viticulture, Poultry, Pigs

Northern Grampians stretches expansively from Halls Gap to Stawell and north-east to St Arnaud. With a gold-mining, farming, wine and tourism heritage, it is currently struggling due to aging, rising agricultural productivity, lower rainfall and Grampians fires.

*Economy: Northern Grampians is seeking to arrest discouraging economic decline through diversification, leveraging off its Grampians location on the Melbourne to Adelaide highway. Thank God for the abattoir in Stawell (450 jobs) and the re-opening of the gold mine. Work on the Murray Basin Rail Upgrade has been slow, and duplication of the Highway has stalled. Pray that people will look to God for their “daily bread”, for wise development, positive morale and for safety at the abattoir, mine, on farms and roads, and in the Grampians.

*St Arnaud: St Arnaud is an attractive gold heritage town. Sadly, the Bible Museum has moved, as has Goldacres manufacturing, with the loss of 35 jobs. Pray that the town will gain greater benefit from its rail and crossroads location. Thank God for recent streetscape improvements.

*Halls Gap: Recent bushfires and floods continue to impact visitation. Pray for recovery. Pray too for witness and good relationships among the Indigenous, Parks Victoria and tourism communities. Bring to God with thanks well-advanced plans for a $22m Wildlife Art Museum.

Churches: Thank God for the faithful witness of Christians in Northern Grampians over many years. Pray that they would know afresh God’s forgiveness and care, reaching out with the hope of the gospel, and being catalytic in economic recovery. Pray for missionary-minded leaders, who make good use of community events, funerals, Christmas and Easter to share God’s Word.

Evangelism: Pray for a fresh movement of God’s convicting Spirit, drawing people to the Saviour. May Christians earnestly pray for their families and friends, “make the most of every opportunity…and know how to answer everyone” (Colossians 4:5-6).

Children/Young People: Pray for the witness of Christian students, parents and teachers. May children somehow hear the gospel. As young people leave for education and jobs, may they find faith and grow. For those remaining, may they identify with Christ and his people, and mature.

Heavenly Father, creator of rugged mountain ranges, gold and fertile plains, pour out your Spirit of mercy and love on the people of Northern Grampians, that they would find forgiveness and hope, and run the race, looking only unto Jesus, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 9 Jan 2019 with info from ABS, DELWP, Vic Premier & Northern Grampians Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Pyrenees Shire


Main Towns: Beaufort (1,539), Avoca (1,193), Snake Valley (743), Langi Kal Kal (400), Waubra (275), Lexton (231), Raglan (231), Landsborough (180), Moonambel (167), Trawalla (141)

Main Industries: Agriculture/Viticulture, Forestry, Health, Retirement, Tourism, Energy (Wind)

Named for the Pyrenees Ranges wine-producing region in its northern half and well-placed on the Adelaide highway and railway, close to Ballarat and <2 hours from Melbourne, Pyrenees is seeking to diversify its agricultural economy, appealing particularly to retirees and tourists.

Churches: Thank God for the faithful witness of Christians in the Pyrenees over generations. However, the churches are small and aging. Pray for renewal and growth, that Christians would better understand what Christ has done for them and be excited about their faith.

*Evangelism: Many have misconceptions about what it is to be a Christian. Pray for exemplary witness in each of the towns, including the retirement hostels in Avoca and Beaufort, and in each of the dispersed agricultural communities. Pray that God’s Spirit would draw many.

Transport: Thank God for good Velocity train service to Ballarat and Melbourne from Beaufort. The highway has also been duplicated. However, this has increased the need for a bypass.

Newcomers: Pyrenees is increasingly attractive for retirement. Pray that newcomers would find new life through the churches and that mature Christians would move into the area.

Economy: Pyrenees has a low rate base, with much spent on roads. Pray for entrepreneurial fruitfulness that puts God first and for seasonable weather. New wind farms have been built at Crowlands and Stockyard Hill. Pray too that Avoca would benefit from the freight rail upgrade.

*Rainbow Serpent Festival: 16,500 attended this controversial electronic music/"open air trance" festival near Lexton last Australia Day Weekend. Pray for witness at the festival and for safety.

Young People: Pray that children and youth would hear the Christian message clearly, become Christ’s disciples and enjoy healthy fellowship. As young people leave for education, may they find faith and grow, with some returning to be salt and light. Pray too for those remaining.

Jail: Langi Kal Kal holds 487 prisoners. Pray for Christian prisoners, staff and the chaplain, so that many would come to find forgiveness, healing and hope through the light of Christ.

Heavenly Father, bounteous giver of all that is good, pour out your Spirit of mercy and love on all in the Pyrenees, that they would find new life through the risen Lamb, your Son, our eternal bread and wine, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 9 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Pyrenees Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Borough of Queenscliffe

Population: 2,904 (2016) Estimated Population 2031: 3,100

Main Towns: Queenscliff (1,315), Point Lonsdale (2,684) (Some residents in Geelong)

Main Industries: Tourism, Marine, Retirement

This delightful marine heritage borough sits at the end of the Bellarine Peninsula. The smallest of Victoria’s regional shires, its economy is based on the surrounding ocean and bay.

Tourism: For generations, day-trippers, holiday makers and those looking for rest have been attracted to Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale. Numerous community organisations and churches have accommodation for clients and staff. Pray that, in rest, people would not only thank God for his goodness in the past, but also make wise decisions to serve Him afresh in the future.

Marine Industries: Queenscliff is home to the vehicular ferries to Sorrento, the Port Phillip Pilots, and fishing and recreational boating fleets. Pray for safety at sea and in the marinas.

Churches: Thank God for the faithful witness of Christians over many generations, both at Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale. Pray that they would be encouraged and excited by their faith, and that the churches would grow, both numerically and spiritually. Pray that they would be hungry for God’s Word, that it would be well taught and that Christians would put it into practice.

Evangelism: Pray that there would be Christians witnessing in each of the small communities in the towns, such as the primary schools, shops, Golf Clubs, Bowling Clubs, Marina, Maritime Museum, the heritage Bellarine Railway, the Fort Queenscliff Museum and the Marine Discovery Centre. Those over 65 make up a third of the population and are often volunteers. Pray that God would be drawing many to Himself, giving them hope and eternal assurance.

Beach Mission: Praise God for the long-running Scripture Union Queenscliff Beach Mission. Pray that children and young adults would be saved by hearing and believing, and that members themselves would grow and be trained in ministry.

Swan Bay Training Area: This ASIS facility is a training base for intelligence officers, special forces and police. Pray for safety, humble service and witness in these ethical minefields.

Sustainability: Queenscliffe’s economy is seasonal and tidal (weekends). Pray for a resolution to the question of the borough’s sustainability that will also benefit the growth of God’s kingdom.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the Borough of Queenscliff and her abundant maritime heritage. Keep safe, we pray, all at sea. Pour out your Spirit on all who visit and live in the Borough, that they would know you as the giver of rich eternal rest, through the death and resurrection of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 9 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Borough of Queenscliffe. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the City of Greater Shepparton


Main Towns: Shepparton (31,197), Mooroopna (7,942), Tatura (4,669), Murchison, Dookie

Main Industries: Farming and related Food Manufacturing, Retail, Health, Education

Situated on the flood plain at the intersection of the Goulburn and Broken Rivers, Shepparton has benefitted from irrigation to grow “household name” agricultural products.

*Newcomers: Shepparton is characterised by immigration, originally from Europe, but more recently from West Asia, North-East Africa and the Pacific. Pray that newcomers would not only find relief, welcome and a new life economically, but new life spiritually. Pray against racism. Those on Pacific visas spend half the year in Shepp and half the year on their home islands.

Churches: Thank God for the witness of Christians in Shepparton over generations. Pray for their protection and fruitfulness. In the face of economic uncertainty, pray that Christians would continue to trust God for their “daily bread” and be godly examples to their neighbours. Pray for missionary gifted pastors who can build multicultural communities of faith.

*Evangelism: Shepparton is a city characterised by spiritual battles. It has at least two mosques and a large Sikh temple. Pray that God’s Spirit would be drawing many to Himself and that God’s people would be characterised by prayer and equipped for outreach.

*Community: 2,186 identify as Indigenous. Pray for godly resolution to long-standing issues of respect and welfare. The city also has higher levels of unemployment than most of Victoria. Many have visa issues. Pray that people would find productive uses for their time, such as studying the Bible. Pray that purpose and hope would be found through being Christ’s disciples. Pray against poverty, depression, family tension and worry about families “‘back home’.

*Economy: Shepparton’s economy is under pressure. Dairying has been variable and fruit suppliers face tough international competition. Pray for attractive development. A Fast Rail service would significantly boost morale, opportunity and amenity, as would a bypass. Thank God for the new Art Gallery and riverside trails under construction. Developing the warcamps museum and cemeteries at Tatura and Murchison would also boost tourism.

Education: Shepparton is keen to grow its tertiary sector, with a TAFE, a branch of LaTrobe, and Melbourne Uni’s Dookie Ag College and School of Rural Health. Pray for witness in each of these contexts and that education would bring a healthy future, in every respect.

Father of all nations, giver of land and rain, pour out your Spirit on the people of Greater Shepparton. May they find new life and hope through the death and resurrection of your Son, and bear much fruit to his glory, for it is in his name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 7 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Shepparton City. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Southern Grampians Shire


Main Towns: Hamilton (9,974), Coleraine (1,029), Penshurst (622), Dunkeld (508), Branxholme (351), Cavendish (334), Tarrington (301), Balmoral (294), Glenthompson (232), Byaduk (123)

Main Industries: Agriculture, Retail, Education, Health, Tourism, Forestry, Manufacturing

Southern Grampians is set in a bucolic, productive landscape in Victoria’s volcanic south-west. With a wealthy wool and educational heritage, it now faces discouraging population decline, especially in its smaller towns. More recently it has diversified into forestry and kitchens.

*Economy: Thank God for good prices for wool and meat, new supermarkets, upgrades to the Livestock Exchange and the revitalisation of Dunkeld. However, the mineral sands facility has been mothballed, and recent crops have not had the needed rain. Pray for wisdom as the shire seeks to arrest decline. The shire has tourism assets with great potential, such as its lakes, Botanic Gardens, arts culture and Art Gallery (with new building proposals under consideration). It could also make more of its crossroads location and develop branded products at an abattoir.

Transport: Transport is an issue, with high car dependency. The return of passenger rail would significantly improve local amenity, keeping and attracting residents, as well as tourists.

Churches: Thank God for the witness of Christians in Southern Grampians over generations. However, many of the churches reflect an aging Christendom culture. Pray for renewal, contemporary expressions of worship and that the Bible would be taught fruitfully.

Evangelism: Pray for Christian witness in each community, both geographically and culturally, such as in the sporting, tradie, farming, business, health and arts networks. Pray that the gospel would be heard in a positive way and that God’s Spirit would convict that Christ is Lord.

Schools: Hamilton is an educational centre, with two boarding schools and a TAFE. Thank God for the witness of Christian students, parents and staff and pray that the shire would produce many “labourers for the harvest”, especially in regional Australia.

Leadership: Thank God for Christians in public roles, such as on the Council. May God protect them and give them wisdom, so that the gospel would go forward and the shire be well served.

Smaller Towns: Pray for witness and wisdom in each: may each find a positive long-term future.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the richness of your country in the Southern Grampians. Look in love on all who live, work and study in the Shire. May they know that you are God of all, that you care deeply for them, and that you offer forgiveness, community and hope through the death of your Son, our Shepherd and Sacrificial Lamb, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 9 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Southern Grampians Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of South Gippsland


Main Towns: Leongatha (5,654), Korumburra (4,469), Mirboo North (2,197), Foster (1,842), Nyora (1,527), Venus Bay (944), Fish Creek (827), Meeniyan (771), Toora (681), Poowong

Main Industries: Agriculture, Food Manufacturing (Dairy), Tourism, Retail, Retirees, Forestry

South Gippsland stretches from the Strzelecki Ranges through beautiful rolling green hills to the blustery Bass Strait coast at Venus Bay and Wilson’s Promontory.

*Dairy: South Gippsland is characterised by dairying communities. Pray for safety, good relationships, profitability and rest in an unceasing work environment. Thank God for expansion at Burra Foods’ Korumburra plant (150 employees) and the re-opening of the Viplus Toora plant and pray for the long-term future of the Leongatha plant, under Saputo’s new ownership.

Churches: Thank God for the faithfulness of Christians in South Gippsland over many generations and the significant contribution they have made to their communities. Pray that God would grow the churches, and that the faith would be passed on to younger generations. Pray for Chairo Christian School in Leongatha, as it brings together Christians from all the churches.

Evangelism: Pray that God’s Spirit would be convicting those who do not know Him and giving Christians the love and words to share their faith. Pray especially that children, young people and the isolated would know God’s forgiveness, love, purpose and hope.

Young Adults: As young adults move away for further study or work, pray that they would find Christian communities that develop their faith through fellowship, teaching and service.

Aging: South Gippsland’s population is aging. Pray for good care and Christian witness by health providers. Pray that farming would become more attractive structurally to younger generations, through improvements to conditions, hours and pricing. The loss of rail service continues to be an issue, constraining growth.

Tourism: Wilson’s Promontory, Grand Ridge Road (Mirboo North) and the Great Southern Rail Trail are some of Victoria’s iconic tourism destinations, with abundant wildlife and expansive ocean views. Many internationals visit. Pray for witness among the ranger, tourism and cycling communities. Port Welshpool’s jetty is currently being rehabilitated at a cost of $10.85m.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for all you have made in South Gippsland: its rolling hills, forests and rugged coast. Pour out your Spirit on the people of South Gippsland, that they would know your ever-present love and care, and serve you in godliness and truth, to the glory of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 9 Jan 2019 with info from ABS, DELWP, South Gippsland Shire & Railtrails. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Strathbogie


Main Towns: Euroa (3,275), Nagambie (1,886), Avenel (1,048), Violet Town (874), Strathbogie (304), Longwood (240), Ruffy (112), Graytown (58)

Main Industries: Agriculture, Viticulture, Equine, Tourism, Commuters (28%), Air Training

Strathbogie stretches delightfully across central Victoria from the ranges to the Goulburn River.

Churches: Thank God for the faithful witness of Christians in Strathbogie over many years. However, the churches are small and aging. Pray that God would grow them spiritually and numerically, and that they would be salt and light in each of their communities.

*Evangelism: Pray that the Holy Spirit would be at work in Strathbogie, convicting all of their need for salvation. Pray that Christians would engage winningly with all, including the agricultural, horse racing and township communities, retirees and young families.

Economy: Strathbogie is a large rural shire with a low population and rate base. On the Goulburn, in pleasant country close to Melbourne, and traversed by major highways and rail lines, Strathbogie needs to take greater advantage of these to prosper long-term. Thank God for the recent Nagambie bypass and work on Lake Nagambie, occasioning increased use of the Regatta Centre and new housing. The Tahbilk, Mitchelton and Fowles Wineries are also good examples, with each in expansion mode. Pray too for reliable rail.

Short-termers: Strathbogie has a steady stream of visiting younger workers and students in the equine, viticultural, aviation and hospitality industries. Many are from overseas, including China, Europe and the Middle East. Pray that they would come into contact with Christians, and that their visit would not just be educative, productive and enjoyable, but life-changing spiritually.

Carers: Strathbogie has many providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, long term illness or old age. Pray against isolation and for good relationships, energy and wisdom. Thank God for the new 75 bed aged-care facility at Euroa: pray for Christian witness there.

Volunteers: Strathbogie depends heavily on volunteers, notably in the Fire Authority and SES. Pray for safety and that Christians would “make the most of every opportunity” (Colossians 4:5).

Heavenly Father, we praise you for the beautiful country you have made in Strathbogie, from the ranges to the river. We thank you for her people, their creativity and their industry. Pour out your Spirit on all in Strathbogie. Encourage and strengthen them. Keep them safe, and give them prosperity. Most of all, may they find the forgiveness, love and hope won by your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

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Pray for the Surf Coast Shire


Main Towns: Torquay (13,258), Jan Juc (3,683), Anglesea (2,545), Winchelsea (1,954), Lorne (1,114), Aireys Inlet (802), Moriac (782)

Main Industries: Surfing (27% of all jobs!), Tourism, Construction, Agriculture, Services, Commuters, Retirees

Home to iconic surfing brands, the Surf Coast has boomed with lifestyle businesses, retirees, commuters, weekenders, tourists and farmers all united by a love for the sea and outdoors.

Environment: Thank God for Surf Coast’s rugged seascapes, forests and agricultural hinterland. Pray for sensitive, sustainable development, and a first love for its creator.

*Growth: As many move to the area, pray for welcome and community cohesion. Pray that Christians would make good use of community events, and that parents, staff and students would engagingly share their faith in the burgeoning schools and child-care centres. Many commute on the overcrowded Geelong line. Pray that the Torquay spur line would be built soon.

Churches: With notable exceptions, the churches are not large. Thank God for fruitful ministry through playgroups and Mainly Music. Pray that this will transform into discipleship, both by parents and kids. Pray for a fresh movement of God’s Spirit, convicting and calling.

Surfing: The surfing culture has a long history of Christian surfers. May their witness be exemplary and winsome. Praise God for Christian Surfers and pray for fruitful ministry.

Agricultural Communities: Thank God for the duplication of the highway through Winchelsea, significantly improving safety and amenity. Pray too for seasonal weather and godly, attractive witness in each community, such as at the Winchelsea and Moriac Markets.

Rest: Many travel to the coast for weekends and holidays. Pray that God will use these times to draw people to Himself as they re-evaluate priorities. Praise God for the ministry of Camp Wilkin at Anglesea and for Beach Missions at Torquay, Anglesea and Lorne. Pray for fruitfulness.

Tourism: Thank God for extensive safety works on the Great Ocean Road. Pray that somehow God would use the visits by many international and domestic tourists to grow his kingdom.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for all you have wonderfully made in Surf Coast: the rugged seas and forests, the beaches and rolling fields. Pour out your Spirit on all who live in and visit the Shire, that they would know daily the wonder of your creation, and look with joy to your eternal salvation and new world, through the death and resurrection of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 9 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP, Surf Coast Shire and Christian Surfers. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Rural City of Swan Hill


Main Towns: Swan Hill (10,905), Robinvale (3,088), Lake Boga (985), Nyah West (663), Nyah (530), Woorinen South (356), Manangatang (309), Tyntynder South (268), Woorinen (260)

Main Industries: Agriculture and Grazing, Horticulture, Tourism, Retail, Government Services

Bordered by the Murray for 300km, Swan Hill is highly dependent on the river for irrigation, water and recreation. Diversification into horticultural products such as olives, almonds and grapes has helped, though climate change and water prices remain major challenges.

Churches: Thank God for the faithful witness of Christians throughout the shire, including those from among the 40 immigrant communities, such as the Tongans and Karen refugees from Burma. Pray that God would equip pastors to lead multicultural congregations in outreach. Pray that those who are Christians “by culture” would make a personal commitment to follow Christ. Pray especially for children and young people in the churches.

Evangelism: Pray for a fresh movement of God’s Spirit, drawing people to Himself. Pray that Christians would share their faith and that people would learn from Christians in other cultures.

*Multiculturalism: Swan Hill has a large transient workforce who are simultaneously relating to at least two cultures, such as Pacific Islanders on seasonal visas, or refugees from Iran, Africa or Burma. Pray that God would use the constant cross-ocean interactions to build his church. Pray for an understanding of Christian identity/culture. Theological training and discipleship is key.

Indigenous: 830 identify as Indigenous. Thank God for increasing respect. Pray for godly responses to the sins of the past, together with wisdom regarding traditional spirituality.

*Economy: Thank God for agribusiness investment, riverfront development at Swan Hill and a new light show at the Pioneer Settlement, and a new community centre at Robinvale. However, the seasonal base of Swan Hill’s agricultural economy means that its population is not wealthy. The council has also been concerned about substandard accommodation for seasonal workers.

*Smaller Towns: Thank God for his people in the smaller towns, such as Nyah West, Manangatang and Lake Boga, as they seek to preserve community capital and cohesion. Pray for wisdom and encouragement during difficult times. May they see his hand leading.

Father of all nations, pour out your Spirit of love and hope on the people of Swan Hill Rural City. May they respect each other, knowing that all are made in your image. May they find productive work, enjoying the fruits of your creation. Strengthen their families, churches and communities, so that in turn they may be a blessing to many nations, through the death and resurrection of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 10 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & City of Swan Hill. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Towong


Main Towns: Corryong (1,348), Tallangatta (1,082), Bellbridge (370), Cudgewa (261), Eskdale (242), Walwa (177), Mitta Mitta (171), Dartmouth (104), Granya (99)

Main Industries: Grazing and Agriculture, Tourism, Forestry

Nestled east of Wodonga between the upper reaches of the Murray and the Alps, this bucolic rural shire is a delightful but often forgotten gem. The Snowy Mountains Scheme, Hume Weir and Dartmouth Dam, the largest in Victoria, have all had major impact.

Economy: Generally well-watered, Towong is home to some of the most beautiful farmland in Victoria, the Murray Grey breed of cattle and Elyne Mitchell, author of the Silver Brumby novels. Nonetheless, the shire faces discouraging population decline. Thank God for a new community centre and new streetscape and foreshore works in Tallangatta. Pray for a sustainable future.

Churches: The churches in Towong are small. Pray for their encouragement and renewal. Pray for confidence and a deep desire to reach out with the saving hope of the gospel. Pray that they would be well-taught, engaging and attractive, with godly, mature leadership.

Evangelism: Pray that God would convict those who do not know Christ of the need for forgiveness, and equip Christians to reach out in each community. Pray that children, youth and young adults would understand that following Christ is for all, not just for older generations.

Isolation: It can seem that Towong is “a long way away”. Some are attracted to this, while others retreat into themselves. Pray that all in Towong would know that God loves them, longs to be in intimate friendship with them and is creating a welcoming new community in his church.

Men: Pray that God would raise up men to reach out to the many men in the fishing, hunting and 4WD communities. Pray for God’s Spirit to draw many to Him through his word.

Tourism: Towong has stunning pristine landscapes and excellent tourism resources, such as the High Country Rail Trail, the Murray River and Dartmouth Dam. It is developing a Great River Road touring route into NSW. Pray that God would use these not just for economic benefit and enjoyment, but also to grow his kingdom.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the rich resources you have provided in the Shire of Towong. We praise you too that you know and love all in the shire, wherever they are scattered. Pour out your Spirit on all in Towong, that they would come to Christ and drink. May streams of living water flow from them, so that they would be a blessing to others and bring great honour to Christ Jesus, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 10 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Towong Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Rural City of Wangaratta


Main Towns: Wangaratta (18,710), Glenrowan (963), Oxley (631), Milawa, Whitfield, Peechelba

Main Industries: Health, Manufacturing, Retail, Government, Education, Agriculture, Tourism, Transport/Logistics

Well-placed on the Melbourne-Sydney/Canberra highway and rail line, Wangaratta is a prosperous rural city set in the beautiful north-eastern ranges on the Ovens and King Rivers. With a diverse economy, competition from other centres nonetheless calls for astute renewal.

Economy: Thank God that Wangaratta has a rich and diverse economic history with numerous entrepreneurs. In addition to pastoral, viticultural and food industries, manufacturing has been a feature, notably textiles. Thank God for ongoing creativity, evidenced in the Oxley/Milawa, King Valley and Glenrowan wine, food and tourism businesses. Pray for continuing job creation.

Government Centre: Wangaratta also serves as a major regional base for the North-East, with government, health and educational centres. Pray for good service and wise stewardship.

*Transport: Wangaratta would benefit greatly from better quality fast rail. Standardisation of the passenger rail line was completed poorly, resulting in regular disruption to services.

*Churches: Prayer is especially sought for the churches. Pray they would be unified, live holy lives in accord with the Scriptures and reach out with Christ’s love in “everyday language”. A real movement of the Spirit of God in renewal and growth is needed.

*Anglican Diocese of Wangaratta: This Diocese, which extends from North Albury to Kilmore and Marysville, and across to Shepparton, Cobram and Corryong is based here. Pray for the Bishop, that he would appoint godly clergy with evangelistic, teaching and pastoral gifts.

Evangelism: Pray that God would establish a strong Christian presence in each community who can share their faith winningly. Pray too that there would be attractive witness right across the sporting, farming, business, health, arts and tourism networks.

Schools: Pray too for witness in schools, including Cathedral College and its Chaplain, David Jones. Pray that kids would hear the good news and find forgiveness, love, identity and hope.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the City of Wangaratta: her rivers and valleys, her industry and heritage. We pray for all who live and work in the city and its surrounding regions. May they prosper and come to know your Son as the giver of life, the living water, who washes away our sin and offers us eternal hope, if we humbly trust in Him, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 10 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & City of Wangaratta. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the City of Warrnambool


Main Towns: Warrnambool (29,661), Dennington (1,907), Allansford (1,521), Bushfield (571)

Main Industries: Regional Service Centre, Dairying/Meat-related Food Manufacturing (Fonterra, Warrnambool Cheese and Butter, Midfield), Tourism, Education, Health, Retail, Construction

Warrnambool has benefitted from its maritime heritage, pleasant coastal location at the train terminus and fertile surroundings to become the centre for the south-west. Its hospitals, public service, milk factories, abattoir, campuses and accommodation provide consistent employment.

Churches: Praise God for Christian witness in Warrnambool since early settlement. Pray that the churches would grow in numbers and maturity. Pray that they would reach out as a blessing to their community and strategically support witness throughout the south-west of the state.

Evangelism: Life is good for many. Pray that God would be working in people’s hearts, drawing them to the author of life. Thank God for annual AFES mission teams in the city and pray for evangelistic endeavors that reach the whole town. Pray against opposing spiritual forces.

Schools: Thank God for the witness of Christian students, teachers, chaplains and parents. Pray for Christian schools, such as King’s College (Presbyterian). Pray that children and youth would hear the gospel clearly and make it their own, following Christ obediently and enthusiastically.

Community: Warrnambool has many living in government housing. Much of this needs upgrading. The city also has a significant indigenous population (555). Retirees, migrants, families and young people are moving to the city. Pray that all would be welcomed and find friendship and new life through the churches.

Tertiary Students: Pray for Christian witness at Warrnambool TAFE and at Deakin Warrnambool, attended by a number of international students, from different faiths.

Economy: Thank God for what seems to be increasing stability in dairy after Murray-Goulburn’s demise. Pray for a positive future with good returns. Thank God too for recent streetscaping. As the city grows, pray for attractive development without loss of farmland.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the many blessings you have poured out on the City of Warrnambool: the sea and the coast, the rivers and the fields. Pour out your Spirit on all in the city, that they would come to know you as provider and shepherd, and follow your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 9 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Warrnambool City. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Wellington


Main Towns: Sale (13,673), Maffra (5,280), Stratford (2,617), Yarram (2,135), Heyfield (1,993), Rosedale (1,654), Longford (1,497), Wurruk (1,112), Briagolong (1,081), Loch Sport (814)

Main Industries: Agriculture, Health, Retail, Govt Services, Education, Manufacturing, Construction, RAAF, Offshore Oil and Gas, Jail, Timber

Wellington is the third largest municipality in Victoria, stretching from the Dargo High Plains across Central Gippsland to the coast at 90 Mile Beach. Over a varied area, it sustains a number of attractive towns through a diverse range of industries.

*Churches*: Praise God for faithful Christians over many generations who have built his church in the various communities across the shire. Pray for renewal and growth in each. Pray for the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland, based in Sale, especially for the Bishop, Richard Treloar: may he appoint godly, mission-minded pastors who teach God’s word faithfully and submissively.

Evangelism: Pray that Christians would reach out with the gospel to people of all ages and cultures, including the sporting, construction, business, farming and health communities.

Leadership: As younger generations move away for study and work, pray that God would provide Christian leaders to serve and witness in the community and church.

Economy: Thank God that each town and area has its own appealing identity and economy. Pray for wise stewardship of resources, especially water. Sale is a pleasant regional centre, with a new Art Gallery and Library. Maffra is an interesting historical town dependent on dairy, as is Yarram, also home to timber. Heyfield has the largest hardwood mill in Australia, which the State government bought in 2017 due to conflict over supply, occasioning complaint from competitors. Pray for safety on rigs, farms, roads, and in the plants and mills.

Institutions: Sale has numerous large institutions, including schools (e.g. Gippsland Grammar), the RAAF training base (home to the Roulettes and a new $1.2b defence pilot training system over 7 years), the Hospital and Fulham Jail (893 prisoners). Pray for the chaplains in each and that Christians would courageously testify to their faith.

Indigenous: Pray for Christian witness amongst the indigenous community (638), godly indigenous leadership, and for wisdom as to how to respond to the sins of the past.

*We praise you, Heavenly Father, for all you have made in the Shire of Wellington: the land and the lakes, the mountains and the sea, the forests and the rivers. Look with mercy on all in the shire and pour out your Spirit, that all may honour you as Lord, know your forgiveness and love, and live to the praise of your glory; In the name of Christ our Saviour, Amen.*

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 10 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Wellington Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of West Wimmera


Main Towns: Edenhope (946), Kaniva (803), Goroke (299), Apsley (277), Harrow, Serviceton

Main Industries: Farming and Grazing, Tourism

West Wimmera stretches along the South Australian border from Wyperfeld National Park, north of the Western Highway, south to the Shire of Glenelg. Primarily an agricultural district, with large holdings in beautiful settings, it is home to 25% of Victoria's wetlands, sustaining some of its best birdlife and oldest trees.

*Economy:* Praise God that water is back in West Wimmera. Thank God especially for water in Lake Wallace at Edenhope, which has now hosted two annual fishing competitions! West Wimmera has been working on its tourism assets, and there is much potential, given its highway location. Nonetheless, such ventures require capital, cross-cultural skills and persevering entrepreneurialism. Pray for this or other means of diversification, such as renewable energy, to help manage fluctuations in the weather and to stem discouraging population decline.

Churches: Praise God for the witness of Christians in West Wimmera, especially through tough times. Pray for revival and fresh energy for witness in each community, and for godly leadership and training. Sadly, Edenhope has seen terrible clerical sexual abuse. Pray for repentance and healing, and that people would see past the church to Christ. May mature Christians with gifts in outreach move to the shire.

Evangelism: West Wimmera’s small population and relative isolation means that it can feel forgotten. 24.7% of the shire are over 65 and 26.8% indicate they have no religion. Some wrestle with depression, after too many years of drought. Pray that all will know they are not forgotten by God, who loves them and is deeply concerned for their welfare.

Children and Young Adults: Pray that children and young adults would clearly hear the good news and find the fellowship, identity and purpose only Christ can give. Pray for confidence.

Aboriginal Heritage: Thank God for the enlightening Johnny Mullagh Cricket Centre at Harrow. This honours the first international team to play for Australia: a team of local Aboriginals who went to England in 1868, winning 14 games! Pray for further ongoing means of reconciliation.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for all who live in West Wimmera, for the wetlands, the birds and the animals, for the crops you give, and the stock that’s cared for. Pour out your Spirit on West Wimmera, that all would know your love and mercy, in dry times and good, and that all would look to the future with their trust and hope in your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 10 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP, Wimmera Mail & West Wimmera Shire. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the City of Wodonga


Main Town: Wodonga, with outlying centres at Bandiana, Bonegilla and Baranduda

Main Industries: Manufacturing (Mars, Visy, Vitasoy), Health, Govt Services, Retail, Education (La Trobe University), Defence (Army), Warehousing/Logistics, Construction

Wodonga is the fastest growing centre in Victoria’s north-east. It is very much defined by its location on the Victorian side of the Murray River, on the main road and rail line between Melbourne and Sydney/Canberra, and as the smaller of the Albury-Wodonga conurbation. As well as being a manufacturing and logistics centre, it services a large rural area and has benefitted from favourable government policy and investment.

Churches: Thank God for the witness of Christians in Wodonga. Christian values are plainly seen in the council’s values, for instance. Many of the churches have worked hard over generations to serve the community, including migrants and defence personnel. Pray for their continued leavening witness. Pray for clear and creative presentation of the gospel through hospitality, special services, children’s and youth programs and community events.

La Trobe University: Thank God for the Christian staff and students at La Trobe, including the AFES group. Pray that staff and students would be converted and well-discipled, so that they would be effective witnesses for Christ, especially across regional Australia.

Army: Wodonga is home to a large Army logistics and training centre. Pray for those who identify as Christian. May God give them wisdom and skill at being his ambassadors and help them find fellowship. Pray for the Focus evangelistic and discipling ministry, led by Pete Ritchie.

Newcomers/Immigrants: Bonegilla hosted Australia’s largest migrant hostel in the 1950’s–1970’s. Many young families and migrants, such as Bhutanese, continue to adopt the town. Pray for fruitful family and youth ministry, for witness in the new housing estates, and that amid the stress of establishing new lives, newcomers would find new life in Christ.

Economy: Wodonga has benefitted from its strategic location, with ample water and next day transport to 75% of Australia’s population. Pray that the city would continue to make best use of its advantages. *Pray too that re-construction of the city centre would provide an attractive focus and identity. Regular Velocity rail services would massively improve amenity.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for all you have given the City of Wodonga: her people, industry and natural environment. As the city grows and transforms, pour out your Spirit so that your church would similarly grow, that rivers of living water may flow from her, and all come to know your saving love in Christ Jesus, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 10 Jan 2019, with info from ABS, DELWP & Wodonga City. victoria@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556
Pray for the Shire of Yarriambiack

Population: 6,674 (2016)      Estimated Population 2031: 5,600

Main Towns: Warracknabeal (2,438), Murtoa (865), Hopetoun (739), Rupanyup (536), Minyip

Main Industries: Agriculture (Wheat, Lambs, Wool, Legumes, Oilseeds), Retail, Health, Tourism

The hottest part of Victoria, the Shire of Yarriambiack stretches from south to north, following the Yarriambiack Creek. Classic Wimmera-Mallee country, beautiful in its vistas and big sky expanses, it is totally dependent on the weather for its agricultural base.

Churches: Thank God for faithful Christian witness in Yarriambiack over many generations, especially through drought. Thank God too for the Wimmera Easter Convention held annually at Warracknabeal. Pray for the churches, that they would be refreshed, well taught and mature.

Evangelism: Pray for revival and the clear proclamation of the gospel, especially through sport and community events such as funerals, concerts and Carol Services. Pray that no community would be without attractive, godly, caring witness. Pray too for newcomers, such as health workers, that they would find new life; and for the Warracknabeal Christian Bookshop.

*Economy: Thank God for good results from new crops such as legumes, new phone towers in blackspots and the morale boosting Silo Art Trail, which has brought tourists and national exposure. Keep praying for a more diversified economy that addresses discouraging population decline and takes advantage of the climate (e.g. wind/solar farms). Roads are currently in very poor condition, with much heavy truck traffic. Pray for safety and greater use of rail.

Tourism: Many tourists traverse the shire. Thank God for volunteers at Info Centres and the Wheatlands Museum. Pray that God would use these "comings and goings" to grow his church.

Young People: Young people usually leave. Pray about the dispiriting effect this can have on families and for the protection of those who leave. Pray too for those "left behind", who may feel isolated and lose confidence, especially in relationships. May they know God’s love and purpose, and find healthy Christian fellowship.

Men: Pray for men who can bring God’s good news to other men who spend long hours farming and driving, often alone and in risky and stressful ventures. Pray for hearts that are hungry to read the Word of God and build a life’s foundation on it.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for all you have given Yarriambiack and for the faithful witness by many over generations, especially through drought. Pour out your Spirit on the Shire, through the seed of your Word. May all come to know your forgiveness and love in healthy Christian communities, living to the praise of your glory, and looking forward to your eternal hope, through the saving work of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

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