



Faith, Hope and Love: Pray for Regional Victoria

2025 Revised Edition

Reaching Australia for Christ since 1919

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A PDF copy of these Prayer Notes and other Prayer Resources can be found on the Bush Church Aid website: **bushchurcaid.com.au/vic**

Paper copies of these Prayer Notes can be obtained from vic@bushchurcaid.com.au
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Cover: Bush Church Aid Mallee Missioner, The Revd Steve Weickhardt, bringing the Word of God and leading The Lord's Supper at the 2023 Easter Day service at Walpeup Lake in the Mallee, part of the Rural City of Mildura. (Photo: Vanessa Weickhardt)

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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 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 intercedes 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 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 standardised brief information, prayer points are listed around common themes, with a summative collect at the end. The points for prayer cover a wide range of issues. Christians are most concerned for the eternal salvation of all, yet they also share God's deep love for his creation and its welfare in this present world. In a similar way to God's people when 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. Many will pray for an area when it is mentioned in the news. Others will have a particular connection to an area and will focus on this, as their home, or through work, family history, friends, holidays, education or investment. Collects and individual pages may be copied with acknowledgement.

Obviously, the selection of issues is subjective, representing the outworking of the author's personal prayers and research. Visits, conversations, newspapers, websites and the Annual Reports from each shire have been used.¹ 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 Victoria, their encyclopaedic knowledge, and their prayers and encouragement.

¹ Population statistics for Victoria, Melbourne, municipalities and towns are from the 2021 Census, available at <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area>. Generally the Urban Centres and Localities figure for towns is used for consistency (the L figure), though with development into surrounding areas, figures can be smaller than the town itself. Border towns do not include figures from adjoining urban areas across the border. Population projections for municipalities are from <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources/data-and-insights/victoria-in-future> *Victoria in Future (VIF) Population and Household Projections September 2023* (Accessed 22 November 2023)

Bush Church Aid

The Bush Church Aid Society of Australia is an independent missionary society within the Anglican Church. It has a heart for people living in remote, rural and regional Australia, and since 1919 has been committed to both their spiritual and material welfare. It is committed to going the distance to reach Australia for Christ.

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 email vic@bushchurchaid.com.au, complete the tear-off slip below and send it to PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084 or call the Victorian office on (03) 9457 7556.

Further information can be found at our website, where a copy of these Regional Victoria Prayer Notes is located at **bushchurchaid.com.au/vic**

I would like to support the Bush Church Aid Society and receive *The Real Australian* magazine and *BCA Prayer Notes*:

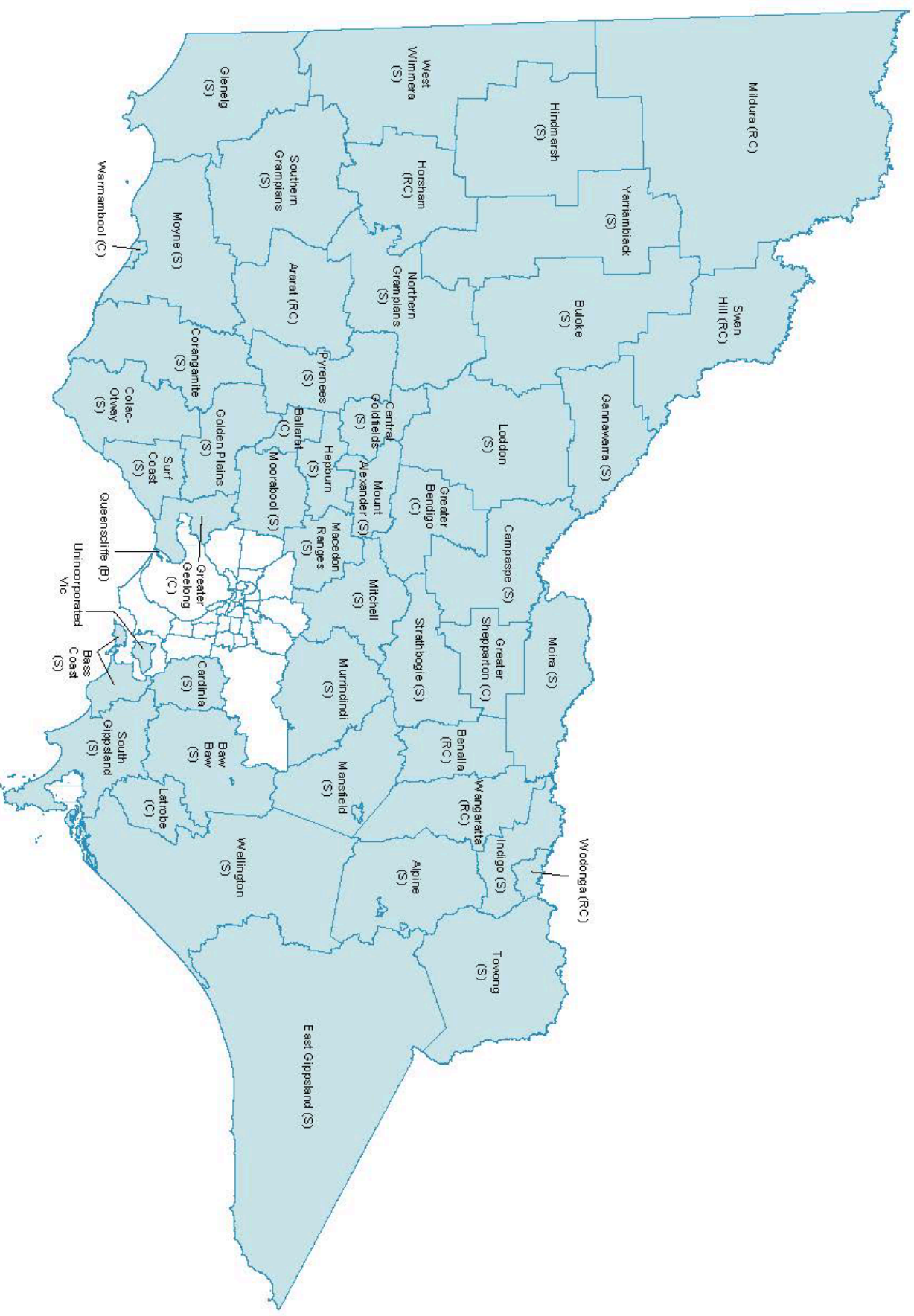
Name:

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Regional Victoria



Pray for Regional Victoria

Population: 1,585,741 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 1,838,600

Population Victoria: 6,503,491 (2021)

Population Melbourne: 4,917,750 (2021)

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 five regions along the major rail lines: Geelong and the Southwest 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 Hume Freeway (north and west of the Great 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–1888), Regional Victoria then developed dryland 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, community cohesion, innovation, education, capital and the congestion of Melbourne.

Industries: Of late, international education has been Victoria's greatest export earner. While primarily benefitting Melbourne, international education has brought some benefits to the regions, including tourism and universities. Dairying, Grazing (Beef, Wool and Lamb), Agriculture, Poultry and Pigs, Horticulture, Viticulture, Manufacturing (Food/Wine, Aluminium, Energy, Paper), Construction, Health, Tourism/Events, Financial Services, Mining (Gold, Oil, Gas), Defence and Forestry are all significant regional industries. Regional Victoria is also home to some State Government agencies, commuters to Melbourne and most of Victoria's prisoners.

Growth: Regional Victoria is growing substantially. Rail projects have encouraged commuters to Melbourne and others to make a sea or tree change. Areas close to Melbourne and major cities such as Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton and Wodonga, together with the Surf Coast, are seeing widespread development. Pray that God's church would catch up in its outreach.

*Decline: However, agricultural productivity gains, changes in water allocations and droughts have meant decline in the Wimmera-Mallee, Loddon and Western District. 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. Since the original publication of these Prayer Notes in 2014, the number of shires in decline has substantially decreased and the rate of decline has significantly slowed for those few remaining. Despite the major implications of the closure of the car industry for Geelong and Hazelwood Power Station for Morwell, both regions thankfully continue to grow. The Portland smelter, Maryvale Paper Mill and Shepparton fruit industries have also faced uncertain futures. However, the impact of the

pandemic and rising metropolitan house prices have seen many choose to live in the regions, even though, perversely, house blocks and rentals in many locations are in short supply. A major prayer point is for the provision of quality affordable housing to enable the reversal of decline.

Dairying: As regional Victoria's strongest industry, thank God for its entrepreneurialism and strength, which includes significant exports. Pray for stability in the midst of structural change. Many are retiring. Rationalisations of plants continue, and some, such as Leongatha, need major upgrading. The provision and cost of water is a particular issue in Northern Victoria.

Tourism: Regional Victoria has wonderful tourism assets, especially her vistas, flora and fauna. However, these opportunities are underdeveloped and have been impacted by the pandemic, increasing costs, and increasingly restrictive legislation. Engaging interpretation is often lacking and some Information Centres have closed or downgraded. Much accommodation is old. Pray that we will have affordable, attractive and easily accessible sites for visitors, in order to provide local jobs and promote assets which strengthen communities and of which they are justly proud.

Defence: Thank God for the witness at the Puckapunyal and Wodonga Army bases and the RAAF base at Sale. Bendigo, Benalla and Wangaratta have also benefitted from defence manufacturing. Nonetheless, Regional Victoria has far 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 competitive advantages. Windbreaks, Botanic Gardens, Memorial Avenues and tree-lined streets have protected pasture, riverbanks, coastlines, infrastructure, insects, animals and residents, as well as attracting tourists and newcomers. Many of Regional Victoria's landscapes and roads are increasingly spoiled by signage, power line pruning and new high-voltage transmission lines. Pray for cost-effective undergrounding. Climate change adds urgency, with trees and shrubs 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 and 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 and local councillors, as well as leaders in regional businesses and organisations, so that there would be peaceful circumstances, and the Gospel could go forward easily. Unfortunately, many have lost confidence in Victoria and its leaders due to pandemic restrictions and intolerance of faith perspectives.

Council Amalgamations: Regional Victoria went through costly major change with council amalgamations in 1993–1995. There was significant identity change and loss. However, larger regional centres have gained a critical mass and unity, which has facilitated renewal and long-term survival. Smaller towns close to these centres have subsequently also seen new life, as residents commute. Pray for wisdom and equity in the distribution of resources.

Cheaper Housing: With population movement to larger centres, relatively lower house prices in smaller towns have attracted those on low incomes/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 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, especially in areas such as Mildura, Robinvale and Shepparton. Pray that immigrants, refugees and overseas workers would be welcomed, quickly settle into productive lives, and find healing and hope in Christ.

Ageing: Many regional communities have a disproportionate amount of older people, through youth loss and retirement relocation. Pray that God would establish healthy, hopeful ministries among such older communities. Government requirements to have a nurse on duty at all times in nursing homes have been difficult to fulfil. Lack of childcare has also affected the provision of staff. Volunteering is also increasingly affected, with implications for emergency services.

Indigenous: Aboriginal people have suffered massacres and had their land taken, even after it was “given” to them as mission sites. Fences are now everywhere. There have also been relocations right across the state, so that kinship and economic relationships have been destroyed. These sins continue to hinder the growth of the Gospel. Pray for repentance, love, reconciliation, unity and mutual honour. Pray too that God would pour out his Spirit on the Indigenous church and raise up godly Indigenous leaders.

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

*Jails: Regional Victoria houses most of Victoria’s prisoners, with jails at Geelong, Ararat, Trawalla, Castlemaine, Maldon (women), Beechworth and Sale.

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. 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. A high point was the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade. However, liberal theology has had a devastating effect on the churches since, with a lack of confidence in the authority of the Scriptures, the judgment of God, and the incarnation of Christ. This has led to diminished evangelism and increased secularism. The insidious legacy of abuse also weighs heavily.

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, East Africa and the Pacific, have not occurred with similar social transformation. Pray for a great movement of God’s Spirit, drawing many people to Him. Pray that God would raise up many evangelists and give Christians confidence and ability to share and defend their faith winningly.

The End of Christendom: Much of the church in Victoria operates on a traditional paradigm. Although it longs for its own “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. Immigrants have substantially boosted church numbers, masking decline. Pray that their faith would transcend culture, draw in others and enthuse all in the task of making disciples.

Leadership: Regional Victoria needs church leaders committed to mission and holiness. Unfortunately, abuse, political correctness, irrelevance and perceptions of poor leadership and management of substantial assets 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 on-line education program and for Bible Teaching Conferences in Warracknabeal, Bendigo (CMS), Albury and Yackandandah. Pray for BCA’s ONTRACK program for new graduates working in the country and its theological bursaries for those planning to minister in the country.

Men: Churches in Regional Victoria have a notable absence of men. This is in marked contrast to other faiths, such as Islam or Sikhism. 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 social reasons. 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/goings of young adults from the country. Pray too for those remaining in the country, that they would grow spiritually.

Children and Teenagers: Thank God for Christian families. Pray that parents would delight in training their children to follow Jesus 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 independent schools. Pray too for the growth of Christian camping.

Other Spiritualities: Since Victoria’s settling, other spiritualities have had a significant 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 on the Murray to its sea-swept cliffs and beaches. Pour out your Spirit of mercy on Regional Victoria, so that many would find the forgiveness, love and hope won by your Son. May our many blessings be a blessing to many, and may we 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 3 Oct 2025 with information from ABS, DELWP and municipalities. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556.

Pray for the Alpine Shire

Population: 13,235 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 13,960

Main Towns: Myrtleford (2846), Bright (2481), Mt Beauty-Tawonga (2249), Porepunkah (1024), Tawonga South (1012), Wandiligong (522), Harrietville (488), Eurobin (239), Dederang (198), Ovens (197), Dinner Plain (127)

Main Industries: Grazing/Agriculture, Horticulture, Tourism, Timber, Food/Drink Manufacturing

Delightfully located in north-east Victoria amidst 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. Nonetheless, council has identified difficulty in attracting and retaining professional staff. Pray too for safety, especially for those in timber, farming and construction, on the ski fields, and from fire.

*Churches: Churches are not strong and weekend tourist work makes Sunday gatherings difficult. Pray for creativity, so that the rhythms of the churches work with the rhythms of the shire. There are very few full-time Christian ministers to lead in outreach and discipleship. May there be a hunger for God's word, a desire for holy living and a longing for the lost. May mature Christians move to the shire to strengthen the ministry of the churches. Pray especially for Christians in the skiing and hospitality industries – that they would put Christ's service first, grow and reach out.

*Evangelism and Outreach: Pray that there would be attractive witness in each locality. May God's Spirit draw many to Him and may it be easy for all to meet Christians and hear the good news. Pray for the removal of misconceptions about the faith. May Christians be eager and equipped to share their faith and may they be salt and light in workplaces, community groups and events.

The Missing Generation (18–35): On finishing school, most leave. Pray that they would find life-giving Christian communities. For those who remain, may they find God's purpose and fellowship.

*Children's and Youth Work: The loss 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 the 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, 12 Sep 2025, with info from Alpine Shire and ABS. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for Ararat Rural City

Population: 11,880 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 12,160

Main Towns: Ararat (7015), Moyston (403), Lake Bolac (368), Pomonal (356), Willaura (240), Elmhurst (185), Streatham (158), Buangor (112), Westmere (62)

Main Industries: Manufacturing (AME Systems - Electrical Wiring Harnesses (250), Gasons - Ag Equipment/Heaters (140)), Health, Agriculture, Food Processing (Abattoir - Export Halal Lamb/Mutton (300), Wine), Retail, Jail, Construction (Wind Farms), Tourism (Grampians)

Founded by Chinese gold miners in 1857, Ararat's agricultural base has been supplemented by state institutions, manufacturing, tourism and energy. It continues to work hard to diversify, leveraging off its central pastoral Grampians setting on the Melbourne-Adelaide highway/railway.

*Economy: Ararat is currently in drought, affecting agricultural-based industries and commerce more generally. Pray for good falls that will enable dams to refill, hay to be restocked and confidence restored. Unfortunately, duplication of the highway has also stopped, and a bypass would considerably improve amenity. Pray that people will look to God for their "daily bread".

Churches: Thank God for the faithful witness of Christians in Ararat over many generations. Pray for renewal, joy and growth in the churches. Pray for wise pastors, who teach God's word well and make good use of community events, funerals, Christmas and Easter to reach out. Pray that the obstacles to spiritual growth would be removed through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Evangelism: Pray that the Lord would begin a new work here, drawing many to Himself and equipping Christians to share the good news effectively. Pray that children, teenagers and young adults would hear the Christian message clearly, grow as disciples and serve.

Newcomers: 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 790 men on protection, more than half of whom are sex offenders. Corella Place 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: Fires have affected numerous smaller communities: Moyston, Willaura and Pomonal. Pray for wise renewal. Pray too for witness in each locality. Sport and farmers markets are key 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, we pray that you would begin a new work in the Rural City of Ararat. Pour out your Spirit, 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, 19 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP, Vic Dept of Justice & Ararat City. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the City of Ballarat

Population: 113,763 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 144,730

Main Towns: Ballarat (105,348, incl. Buninyong, Lucas, Winter Valley, Miners Rest), Cardigan Village (957), Learmonth (272)

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

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

Economy: Praise God that Ballarat seems to have turned a corner, with extensive housing developments, the new GovHub, conference development and new saleyards. Ballarat has many beautiful trees and gardens and four substantial lakes. Pray that God would help the city develop attractively. Pray too for safety and productivity on farms and in manufacturing and construction.

*Churches: Pray that renewal of the city would be accompanied by a complete spiritual renewal. Praise God that the city has a number of lively churches, but the city still needs much healing prayer after the Royal Commission into sexual abuse laid bare awful sin. Pray for the Anglican Bishop, Garry Weatherill, and for clergy with gifting for teaching God's word, care and outreach.

Newcomers: Ballarat is growing by over 2000 each year. Pray that mature Christians would move to the city and strengthen the churches in their witness. Pray that immigrants/newcomers would find welcome and new life in Christ. Pray especially for ministry in new housing areas.

*Evangelism: Pray that God's Spirit would be drawing people to Him. May He heal and bring new identity, community and purpose in Christ to many, especially those feeling hurt or isolated. May Christians be keen and equipped to reach out with the good news of the Gospel.

Education: Ballarat is an educational hub. In addition to its public schools, there are at least three boarding schools, two universities and a clinical school, all attracting internationals, who can be lonely. Pray for Christian staff and students. May there be winsome Christian witness at each.

Health: Ballarat has a large health sector, with a major redevelopment at the base hospital underway. Pray for refreshment, good care and Christian witness as many serve so tirelessly.

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. Unite and mature her for outreach and ministry. Pour out your Spirit of love, so that many from across the nations would find new life in you, worship you in holiness and truth, and eagerly await the return of your Son, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 12 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP, Vic Premier & City of Ballarat. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Bass Coast

Population: 40,789 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 50,960

Main Towns: Wonthaggi (8453), Cowes (6797), Inverloch (6046), Cape Woolamai (2301), San Remo (1664), Grantville-Pioneer Bay (1357), Coronet Bay (1108), Corinella (1056), Ventnor (826), Rhyll (729), Sunset Strip (533), Newhaven (455), Kilcunda (453), Bass (405)

Main Industries: Health, Construction, Retail, Tourism, Manufacturing, Education, Food and Accommodation, 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, together with tourism, retirement relocation and dairying, has meant substantial growth for Bass Coast. Pray for attractive development and good community integration of newcomers. Transport and safety are major issues, with very 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 leadership and that the Bible would be faithfully taught and obeyed. Pray for confidence in the power of the Gospel.

Evangelism: Pray that God would draw many to Himself and that the churches would reach out with the Gospel in winning ways. Thank God for Carol Services and for Christian witness and chaplains in the motor racing/motorcycle communities using the Grand Prix Circuit, for Christian Surfers and for the Beach Mission teams at Cowes and Inverloch. May all be wonderfully fruitful.

*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 fruitful Biblical ministry. Pray that Newhaven College's 900 students and staff would live by its motto: "Quietly trust in Me, then you will be strong and secure." (Isaiah 30:15)

Ageing: 38.6% of the shire is aged >60. Praise God for a new hospital at Wonthaggi. Pray that the church would grasp opportunities for ministry with this age group and for economic/societal changes supporting younger generations, notably in dairying, agriculture, fishing & tourism.

Children, Youth and Young Adults: Pray for fruitful ministry, so that Christian witness is passed on to future generations. Pray especially for godly leaders, who love Christ and his word.

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.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 5 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Bass Coast Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Baw Baw

Population: 57,626 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 79,130

Main Towns: Warragul (19,134), Drouin (14,764), Trafalgar (3839), Longwarry (1923), Yarragon (1387), Neerim South (1081), Jindivick (584), Thorpdale (475), Darnum (386)

Main Industries: Agriculture (especially Dairying), Construction, Manufacturing, Retail, Health, 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, with good transport links.

*Economy: Thank God for Baw Baw's economic growth, especially through dairying and commuting. Pray for safety and productivity on farms, in factories and on the roads. Pray too that development will not reduce arable land, nor dissipate its strong rural community heritage.

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 Christians 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 global harvest.

Community: Praise God for Christians serving in politics, emergency services and community groups. Pray for wisdom and skill. Pray too for their protection, confidence and witness as Christians. 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/health facilities, including the hospital at Warragul. Pray that the government would act well on its promise of developing a new hospital. May those who are frail or ill know daily God's peace, love, hope and purpose.

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, 12 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Baw Baw Shire. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Rural City of Benalla

Population: 14,528 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 15,110

Main Towns: Benalla (9742), Baddaginnie (347), Tatong (281), Goorambat (269), Swanpool (227), Lurg (220), Devenish (208), Chesney Vale (204), Molyullah (160), Warrenbayne (144)

Main Industries: Manufacturing (Australian Munitions, D&R Henderson Particleboard, Schneider Electric, LS Precast, Solar), 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: Traditionally a ‘working town’, Benalla has been renewing itself by developing its manufacturing, civic amenities and the Winton Wetlands. Large solar farms are being built, new housing is opening up and there is a positive air. New Velocity train services are also positive, though they lack catering. The federally controlled rail line remains in poor condition, with all pre-cast concrete products having to move by road.

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

Evangelism: Pray that God would enthuse the Christians about their faith, so that they would boldly share it. Pray for witness in each workplace, sporting club, school and community group. Pray too for outreach to children, youth and families, including those in new housing areas.

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

Health/Aged Care: Pray for good care and witness at Benalla's Hospital, with its Morrie Evans Nursing Home (30 beds), Royal Freemasons (120 beds), Cooina (82) and Estia (60).

Schools: Pray for Christian witness by students, staff and parents, including at the small Australian Christian College, which has recently moved into the relatively new former TAFE building.

Farming Communities: Pray for vibrant 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 wetlands and parks. Pour out your Spirit on all in the shire, 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, 12 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, VDELWP & Benalla City. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the City of Greater Bendigo

Population: 121,470 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 149,490

Main Towns: Bendigo incl. Eaglehawk, Epsom, Huntley, Strathfieldsaye (100,649), Heathcote (1844), Marong (1508), Lockwood South (1052), Lockwood (806), Elmore (753) Axedale (348)

Main Industries: Government/service centre for a large agricultural area, Health, Manufacturing, Education, Construction, Tourism/Conferences/Sports, Bendigo Bank, Retirees, 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. Thank God for the ongoing strength of a number of its churches. However, there is much “competition”, with secularism and sport taking away from the regular worship of God, and other religions “staking their claim”. Pray for a fresh outpouring of God’s Spirit, with families and young adults keen to worship God.

*Evangelism: Bendigo is a strategic city, including spiritually. Pray for ongoing vision to reach the region for Christ. Pray for Anglican Bishop Matt Brain and for outreach into the numerous new housing areas, including Strathfieldsaye Community Church, supported by BCA. Pray too for the Way of the Cross Easter drama and for witness on community radio.

Newcomers/Jobs: Bendigo continues to grow rapidly, particularly with school leavers, transfers from Melbourne and retirees from surrounding towns and farms. Housing is now a major need, especially with flood-affected residents from nearby towns. Pray that the churches would be welcoming and for the Gospel to reach every cultural group, including the Sudanese and Karen.

Health: Praise God for Bendigo’s hospitals and aged care facilities. Pray for safety, compassionate care and godly witness by patients and residents, staff and visitors.

Education: Bendigo is also an educational centre, with many schools, a large TAFE, La Trobe Uni and the largest School of Rural Health. Pray for the witness of staff and students, including at Creek St and Victory Christian Colleges and the Christian Union at Latrobe Bendigo.

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 Christian witness in each community, productive weather, and safety from flood and fire.

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 growth in the city would be accompanied by growth in your church, and that Bendigo would be a generous and fruitful centre for gospel outreach, locally, nationally and globally, In the name of Christ, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084 5 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Bendigo City. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Buloke

Population: 6,178 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 5,720

Main Towns: Donald (1375), Charlton (993), Birchip (674), Sea Lake (562), Wycheproof (562)

Main Industries: Farming (Wheat, Barley, Pulses, Oilseeds), Grazing (Sheep), Tourism

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

Churches: Praise God for the witness of Christians in Buloke over many generations, especially through drought/flood. Buloke is characterised by small towns and dispersed rural populations. Pray that God would unite his people in each community, refresh, mature and equip them. May they be salt and light. Pray for creative ways to worship together and learn from the Scriptures.

Evangelism: Pray that God's Spirit would be poured out anew on Buloke, drawing many to Himself. Many have traditional perceptions of church. May they see instead contemporary, joyful, loving, purposeful and hopeful 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 median age is 52. Thank God for those who work for/serve on the Council and pray for good leadership and wisdom. There is a shortage of child care and vacant blocks/houses to rent, yet lower rentals have attracted those with special needs. Pray that the churches would contribute to 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 seek God, find fellowship and mature. Those who are not "sporty" can feel isolated, as can immigrants (e.g. Indians/Chinese) in the health/retail sectors.

*Economy: Praise God for recent initiatives which address population decline, such as tourism initiatives (silo art, Lake Tyrell), the Donald rare earths project, and streetscape and wetlands projects. Thank God too for the strength of agriculture. However, floods and storms in recent years, and the trucking of grain have severely impacted roads. Pray for greater use of rail. Pray too that communities would look to God daily for their sustenance and growth.

Heavenly Father, giver of land, sun and rain, pour out your Spirit of renewal and refreshment on the people of Buloke. Sow your word among them, so that they would know your forgiveness, love and hope, your eternal bread and living water, bought by the life, death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 12 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Buloke Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Campaspe

Population: 38,735 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 40,820

Main Towns: Echuca (15,636) (not including Moama), Kyabram (6010), Rochester (2802), Tongala (1331), Rushworth (972), Girgarre (563), Stanhope (486), Lockington (395), Gunbower (303), Colbinabbin (285)

Main Industries: Manufacturing, Agriculture (especially Dairying), Health, Construction, Tourism

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

Churches: Praise God for his people who have sought to be salt and light in each community in Campaspe over many generations. Pray for their growth, numerically and in maturity and unity, through the careful teaching of God's word. Pray that the churches would train up ministers for country ministry more widely, such as Jacob & Sarah Kelly at Kyabram, supported by BCA.

Evangelism: Pray that Christians would be equipped to make the most of every opportunity to share their assurance of forgiveness, comfort and hope in Christ. Pray for wisdom as to how best to reach new housing areas and younger generations, and for good use of community events and special occasions, such as Christmas, Easter and funerals.

*Children and Youth: Pray for fresh approaches that reach children/youth, through camps and after school and holiday programs. Pray for staff, students and parents as they witness in schools, including River City Christian College in Echuca (P-10) and Moama Anglican School, in NSW.

Economy: Thank God for Campaspe's varied economy and its continuing growth. Pray for stability in dairying. Tourism is recovering after the pandemic and floods. Thank God too for improved rail and the new second Murray River crossing. May the integration of the Kyabram Fauna Park into Zoos Victoria also be a blessing, in terms of local pride, tourism, jobs and animal welfare.

*Floods: Continue to pray for repair after the traumatic floods of Oct 2022. 90 percent of homes in Rochester were flooded, already hit hard by the closure of the milk plant. Echuca was also severely impacted. Many are still living in caravans. May God somehow use this for His glory.

Community: 1169 identify as Indigenous. Pray for mutual respect and appreciation. Thank God too for all 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 of joy and renewal 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.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 5 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Campaspe Shire. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Central Goldfields Shire

Population: 13,483 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 14,400

Main Towns: Maryborough (7769), Carisbrook (920), Dunolly (680), Talbot (271), Bealiba (213)

Main Industries: Health, Retail, Manufacturing, Education, Tourism (Energy Breakthrough, Fossicking), Agriculture, Retirees, Transport

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, new supermarkets, businesses and retirement housing, and a renewal of the hospital have all been positive, giving the shire more generally the hope of a sustainable future.

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, 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 for witness at Highview Christian College. As young people leave, may they join good churches and mature. For those who remain, may they put God first, witnessing in their families, work and sport, and contributing to fruitful Christian ministry.

Community: Praise God for the expansion at the hospital. As the shire ages, and with household income substantially below the state's average, pray that the church would respond helpfully.

Economy: The shire has had to work hard to arrest decline. Pray that the recent renewal of the shire's governance will consolidate growth, with housing, jobs and transport key foci.

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

Smaller Towns: Pray that the shire's smaller heritage towns, such as Dunolly, would find their niche and prosper. The Talbot Farmers Market is a real community gathering.

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 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, 5 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Central Goldfields Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Colac Otway Shire

Population: 22,423 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 23,910

Main Towns: Colac, including Ellimynt (12,348), Apollo Bay (1,491), Birregurra (628), Cororooke (358), Forrest (257), Skenes Creek (249), Gellibrand (230), Beeac (217), Warrion (204), Cressy

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

Stretching from Cressy south across the volcanic Western District Lakes, then over the green hills and forests of the Otways to the rugged Southern Ocean, Colac Otway continues to grow 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 governed by the Scriptures, welcoming, relevant and winning. Pray that the churches would grow and be salt and light in each of their communities. Pray especially for ministry to kids, youth and young people, for good leadership and training.

Evangelism: Pray that God's convicting and comforting Spirit would be moving, drawing many to find new life in Him. May God's people reach out in love and mission, especially in Colac's new housing areas. Pray against spiritual forces that oppose the Gospel: "deliver us from evil".

*Economy: Colac Otway is growing, especially since the duplication of the highway. Extensive new housing is planned. However, the shire is currently facing drought. Pray for rain and the refilling of dams and haysheds. Thank God for work on the Great Ocean Rd (after landslides) and Apollo Bay Harbour, as tourism slowly re-establishes after the pandemic.

Community: Pray for those who work long hours in the dairying, 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/Melbourne. May they find and commit themselves to churches where they can mature in Christ.

*Newcomers: 9% of the shire was born overseas. As immigrants move to the shire, may they find welcome and friendship, safe jobs, hope and healing through Christ. Language is key for safety.

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

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the forests and fields, lakes and coastline in Colac Otway. Protect and have mercy on all who visit, work and live in the Shire. Pour out your Spirit of light and life, so that many would find the forgiveness, love and hope purchased by 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, 19 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Colac Otway Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Corangamite

Population: 16,115 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 15,380

Main Towns: Camperdown (2,884), Terang (2,020), Cobden (1,503), Timboon (830), Simpson (583), Skipton (469), Lismore (321), Princetown (236), Port Campbell (231), Noorat (207)

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

Corangamite is located in a beautiful and fertile part of Western Victoria, stretching south from Skipton and Lismore through volcanic lakes, plains and rolling hills to the rugged Southern Ocean. Heavily dependent on dairying, it is seeking to diversify, gaining leverage from its position on the Great Ocean Road.

*Economy: Corangamite is currently in drought. Pray for good falls, so that dams refill and barns can be restocked. Corangamite relies strongly on dairying and energy, both capital-heavy. Pray for creative ways to stem discouraging population decline. Thank God for upgraded rail services, the 12 Apostles Trail and for work at Princetown, with tourism growing in the shire's southern half. Much more could be done with Corangamite's Gardens. Transmission lines are contentious.

Churches: Praise God for the witness of Christians in Corangamite over generations. However, the churches are small and ageing. 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 events.

Safety: Fonterra's large Cobden plant (270 jobs) was sold to Lactalis in August 2025. Pray for a smooth handover. B-double tankers, long and windy roads, and tired international tourists used to driving on the right present road quality and safety 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/jobs, may they commit themselves to transformative Christian communities.

Smaller Towns: Corangamite has many small towns. Pray for a positive sense of identity/future, particularly in Simpson and the north (Lismore, Derrinallum and flood-affected Skipton).

Heavenly Father, giver of all that is good and beautiful in Corangamite: the sea and the lakes, the fields and the forest; pour out your Spirit on the people of the shire, that they would know and share 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, 19 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Corangamite Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of East Gippsland

Population: 48,715 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 56,330

Main Towns: Bairnsdale (13,734), Lakes Entrance (6527), Paynesville (3505), Orbost (2024), Metung (1605), Nicholson (1322), Mallacoota (1118), Swan Reach (861), Lake Tyers Beach (661), Bruthen (574), Lindenow (554), Marlo (491), Johnsonville (326), Omeo (242)

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/retire in such a beautiful environment.

*Recovery: Praise God for the extraordinary amount of rebuilding of roads, bridges and infrastructure since the fires of summer 2020. Keep praying for recovery. Housing especially is in short supply. Pray specifically that people would look to God for refreshment after so much stress.

Churches: Pray that God would strengthen the churches to be salt and light in each community. May Christians walk daily in the strength, love and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Remember Jude Benton, BCA-supported minister at Mallacoota, as she leads the only church there.

Evangelism: East Gippslanders love the outdoors: May they worship its creator! Pray that God would be drawing many to Himself, and that Christians would know how best to share God's love.

Economy: Thank God for East Gippsland's diverse economy, including a substantial horticultural industry. Thank God too for the region's beauty and the rail service which ensures attractiveness as a retirement and lifestyle business destination. Pray for unity regarding forestry. Pray too for international workers in the horticultural/seafood industries, notably Pacific Islanders separated from their families for nine months annually. May they be a mutual blessing to the churches.

*Indigenous Communities: 1683 identify as Indigenous. Pray for genuine repentance for the massacres and displacements of the past, together with mutual respect and reconciliation. Pray too that God would raise up Christian leaders, men and women, in each community.

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. May the ministry of the Scripture Union missions at Mallacoota and Lakes Entrance be fruitful.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the wonderful abundance and variety in East Gippsland. Pour out your Spirit on all who live in the shire. May they know your renewal and strengthening, your love and hope, achieved 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, 12 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & East Gippsland Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Gannawarra

Population: 10,683 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 10,180

Main Towns: Kerang (3696), Cohuna (1870), Koondrook (938), Leitchville (250), Murrabit (230), Quambatook (229), Lake Charm (147), Lalbert (138), Tragowel (83), Macorna (67)

Main Industries: Agriculture (Dairying, Cropping, Livestock), Manufacturing, Tourism, Energy

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, decreased water availability and improved productivity 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 protection, provision and guidance. Pray for good use of events, such as the football, Quambatook Tractor Pull and Murrabit Market, and for good use of Christmas, Easter, funeral and other occasional services.

*Economy: Thank God for recent good crops and stronger dairy prices. However, Gannawarra is ageing, with a median age of 51. Pray for wisdom re initiatives to diversify its economy through rare earths and solar farms. However, new transmission lines are highly controversial. Lack of child-care also affects jobs. Wider engagement with the forests, wetlands and the amazing migratory birdlife would boost both tourism and local pride.

*Water and Land: Water ownership, cost and allocation remains a controversial community issue. Pray for fair and sustainable resolutions, restoration of land productivity due to salinity, and environmental health. Continue to pray too for recovery after flooding covered 44% of the shire's landmass in 2022, with subsequent storms in 2023–24. Roads have been particularly affected. Pray too for wisdom in addressing mosquito-borne diseases, a brake on visitation.

Young People: Praise God for Kerang Christian College (P–12) and pray for witness in all the schools. Youth boredom is an issue. Most young people leave the shire for education, work and recreation. Pray for healthy youth groups and camps.

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, 12 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP, Gannawarra Times & Gannawarra Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the City of Greater Geelong

Population: 271,057 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 367,670

Main Towns: Geelong incl. Moolap/Waurn Ponds (180,239), Ocean Grove-Barwon Heads (22,035), Drysdale-Clifton Springs (16,199), Lara (15,772), Leopold (12,319), Portarlington-St Leonards (9,048)

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 health, retail, manufacturing, educational and insurance centre, with good rail and road access, good cultural facilities and its own port and airport, it serves a large agricultural area and is a growing commuter, lifestyle, retirement and tourist destination.

*Economy: Although Geelong's economy has taken a beating through drought and the closure of major manufacturing plants (car/smelter) and Target's head office, new housing and the move to Geelong of insurers TAC, NDIS and WorkSafe have been transformative. Keep praying for renewal. Upgrades to rail with services every 20 minutes, upgrades to Avalon airport, wineries on the Bellarine and the move of the Tasmanian ferry to Geelong are all positive.

Churches: Praise God for Geelong's churches and their history of co-operation, notably in evangelism. May they be led and taught well and grow in maturity and ministry. Pray for fresh initiatives to reach the city which will bring unity and blessing. With the city growing at over 6,400 each year, pray too for outreach to new housing areas.

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.

*Commuters: Many have long commutes to Melbourne. Pray for flexibility that enables good work and study arrangements, as well as healthy time with family, church and community.

*Community: Pray for those in Geelong's jails and their supervisors. Port Phillip is closing, being replaced by Western Plains, with a capacity of 1,200. Barwon's capacity is 478 and Marngoneet's 559. Pray too for Geelong's hospitals and its many retirees. It also has a significant immigrant population, including Afghan and Karen refugees. May they know God's forgiveness and love.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the growing city of Geelong and its churches. Look with mercy on the city as it changes and may all look to you for leading. May the city be stronger through transformation and may your church grow to be a great blessing to the region, state and nation. We pray this in the name of Christ, our certain and unchanging Lord and Saviour, Amen.

Notes by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 12 Sep 2025. Info from ABS, DELWP, Vic Justice, Geelong Port & City of Greater Geelong. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Glenelg

Population: 20,152 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 20,170

Main Towns: Portland (10,450), Casterton (1,336), Heywood (1,328), Narrawong (462), Merino (249), Dartmoor (244), Tyrendarra (198), Nelson (191), Cape Bridgewater (151), Digby (122)

Main Industries: Aluminium, Forestry, Grazing, Manufacturing, Health, Tourism, Marine

The first part of Victoria to be settled by Europeans, this beautiful south-west corner is often overlooked. In addition to its pastoral industries, Glenelg has built a diversified economy around the Port of Portland. Aluminium smelting began in 1988 (employing 760), massive areas have been converted to plantations, and marine-based industries, including tourism, have grown.

*Economy: Glenelg is currently in drought. Pray for good falls, refilled dams and restocked empty barns. Thank God that power contracts have been settled for the smelter, bringing stability. Pray too about offshore wind farm proposals, which are contentious. Pray that tourism would rebound, with Glenelg's excellent resources for marine events, natural areas such as Cape Bridgewater and Nelson and Casterton's Kelpie Centre and muster.

Churches: Praise God for the faithful witness of Christians in Glenelg over many generations, including the Missions to Seamen at Portland. Pray for revival 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 part of the shire to evidence real love for their neighbours and speak about their sure eternal hope. Pray that the people of Glenelg would know that God loves them deeply. May His Spirit draw many to Himself.

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

Safety: Roads keep taking a heavy toll from woodchip trucks. Even grain is mostly trucked. Pray for safety and greater use of rail. Pray too for safety at the smelter, on farms, in forests and the timber mill in Heywood, at the port and at sea.

Community: Glenelg is a large shire. Pray for unity, equity and mutuality. May each of the smaller towns in the shire find their niche, with a positive sense of community and the future. May there be growing Christian light in each. Merino in particular has struggled.

Heavenly Father, powerful creator of all in land and sea, we praise you for the beauty and variety in the Shire of Glenelg. Pour out your renewing and refreshing Spirit on the shire. May all look to you for their daily bread and may they find forgiveness, love 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, 19 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Glenelg Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Golden Plains

Population: 24,985 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 34,040

Main Towns: Bannockburn (6,178), Teesdale (2,244), Smythes Creek (1,762), Haddon (1,276), Ross Creek (1,221), Batesford (1,139), Scarsdale (855), Inverleigh (773), Smythesdale (731), Lethbridge (641), Napoleons (555), Enfield (483), Linton (423), Meredith (412), Shelford (263)

Main Industries: Agriculture (wool, sheep, grain, poultry, viticulture, goats, alpacas), Commuters, Construction (Housing/Wind Farms), Timber, Arts, Tourism, Mining/Quarrying

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

Economy: Golden Plains is growing fast, with its agricultural foundation (currently facing drought) supplemented by lifestyle-based small businesses and commuters to Geelong and Ballarat. The towns closest to these cities have many new residents, both in suburban/acreage developments, with 17,000 new residents planned for Bannockburn! Pray that growth will be attractive.

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 and forestry heritage. Pray for unity/wise use of resources. The shire is heavily car-dependant. The return of a rail shuttle from Bannockburn to Geelong would serve as a start.

*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. Pray for encouragement, vitality, growth, and fruitful use of minimal resources. Thank God for church plants at Haddon and Bannockburn and pray for many more labourers and resources.

*Evangelism: Pray for a massive outpouring of God's Spirit and freedom from bondage to ungodly spirits. 21% work from home. Pray for vibrant witness in each community, including Farmers Markets. Pray too for creative evangelists who can reach the arts communities and for witness (and safety) at the Meredith and Golden Plains Music Festivals, attended by 10–12,500!

*Wind Farms: Massive wind farms are under construction. Pray for safety after a fatality in 2024.

Farming/Forestry: Thank God for those "having a go" at new agricultural enterprises. Pray for their safety and for sustainable profitability. Pray against isolation and anxiety and ask that God would help farmers put their trust in Him. May God protect firefighters and SES volunteers.

Heavenly Father, we praise you for all you have made in Golden Plains: its beauty and its potential. Pour out your Spirit on all who live and work in the shire. May your church grow rapidly to care for the growing shire and may many find forgiveness and new life eternally 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, 12 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Golden Plains Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Hepburn

Population: 16,604 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 18,720

Main Towns: Daylesford-Hepburn Springs (3,732), Creswick (2,794), Clunes (886), Trentham (827), Glenlyon (431), Smeaton (245), Blampied (237), Kingston (190), Allendale (185), Musk

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 Range. 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.

*Unity: Hepburn is remarkably diverse. Pray for civic leaders, that they would be sensitive to all voices and find ways forward for the common good.

*Economy: Thank God that the shire continues to grow, especially with tree-changers and commuters. Thank God too for the strength of the agricultural sector, and the developing food and beverage industries. Pray for a return to tourism's strength. A particular threat are planned overhead transmission lines for renewables. Pray too for safety/ecological wisdom in forestry.

Weather: Storms and floods in recent years have damaged infrastructure and, with the pandemic, have added to stress. Fire is a particular threat, with heavy and controversial afforestation.

*Churches: Praise God for faithful Christian witness in Hepburn. However, the churches are few, small and ageing. 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: The shire is particularly secular (58% indicate secular beliefs or no religion), with alternative spiritualities and lifestyles. Pray for an outpouring of God's Spirit, drawing many into Christ's truth and love, and guiding Christians as to how to reach out, using the "full armour of God" (Eph 6:11). Pray for positive witness in each locality, that is nonetheless uncompromised.

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.

Ageing: The most common cohort are 60–69-year-olds. May they know Christ's eternal hope.

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

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 19 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Hepburn Shire. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Hindmarsh

Population: 5,698 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 5,090

Main Towns: Nhill (1,949), Dimboola (1,315), Rainbow (487), Jeparit (326), Yanac (69)

Main Industries: Agriculture, Health, Manufacturing (incl. Food Processing), Retail, 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 over many generations. Pray for compelling Christian witness in each community, so that the churches would grow in numbers, maturity, ministry and unity. Pray that men and families would attend.

*Young People: Pray that God would raise up leaders for kids outreach programs and youth groups. Young people usually leave for education: may they join Christian communities.

*Evangelism: Pray that Christians would be equipped to share their faith naturally, at home and work, at sport and shows, at events such as funerals, Christmas and Easter services, and in the schools, shops and hospitals. Pray that God would draw many to Him.

Immigrants: 231 Karen refugees from Burma (Christian and Buddhist), as well as other Asians have moved to Nhill, offsetting discouraging decline. They are integral to the duck industry (Luv-a-Duck) and have established a number of businesses. Thank God for Nhill's welcome and pray for all as they settle. May the Christians grow in their faith and witness to all in the town.

Economy: Hindmarsh needs rain for its crops! Pray for diversification that works with the climate and utilises Hindmarsh's location on the railway. Tourism has potential, given the Parks, the heritage in Rainbow/Jeparit, the fledgling aviation museum in Nhill and the Mallee Silo Art Trail. Child care is a major issue, leading to many jobs being unfilled.

Health/Aged Care: Thank God for the hospitals at Nhill, Dimboola, Rainbow and Jeparit, and their attached Nursing Homes: Nhill (30 beds), Dimboola (26), Rainbow (20) and Jeparit (25).

Community: Thank God for streetscape works and a new library in Dimboola, for attractive work along the Wimmera River, bringing campers and for the Hindmarsh Trail to Jeparit. May Dimboola's embryonic renewal be mirrored spiritually.

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, love 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, 19 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP, Hindmarsh Shire & Dimboola Courier. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Rural City of Horsham

Population: 20,429 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 21,080

Main Towns: Horsham (16,289), Natimuk (421), Dooen (250), Jung (241), Pimpinio (191)

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

Horsham serves as the strategic centre of the Wimmera, its council working collaboratively with other shires in the north-west. Well-located between Melbourne and Adelaide, it is strongly influenced by the vicissitudes of the broadacre dryland 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 mature and 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 for the Wimmera's renewal.

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

Young People: May young people be well-disciplined and may God raise up many "labourers for the harvest" from among them: leaders with missionary vision and gifting. Pray for godly witness through sport, at the Federation Uni campus and at Longerenong Agricultural College.

*Community: Thank God for the numerous Christian welfare agencies. Pray that all would testify to Christ's love. Thank God too for the immigrant integration program. May those who feel depressed or marginalised in the community find welcome and healing in the churches.

Small Towns: Unfortunately bans on rock climbing by Parks Victoria has alienated the climbing community focused on Natimuk, over Indigenous issues. Pray for good ways forward that honour and prosper all, and that recognise God's Lordship over his creation. Pray too for witness in each of Horsham's small communities, including Laharum and Wartook, affected by fire.

Economy: Horsham has worked hard at growth, with its Grains Innovation Park, rail freight and industry hub at Dooen, and Livestock Exchange. Pray for skill in working with the climate, as it currently faces drought. Pray for rain, enabling dams to fill and the restocking of haysheds. A bypass and greater use of rail, both for freight and passengers would greatly improve amenity.

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 to 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, 19 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Horsham City. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Indigo

Population: 17,368 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 19,540

Main Towns: Beechworth (3,291), Rutherglen (2,324), Chiltern (1,208), Yackandandah (1,113), Wahgunyah (1,004), Barnawartha (572), Tangambalanga (412), Stanley (371), Kiewa (310)

Main Industries: Agriculture, Horticulture, Food/Beverages, Tourism, Commuters, Arts, Jail

Indigo forms a delightful rural crescent from the shores of the Murray to the foothills of the Alps, west, south and south-east of Wodonga, divided by the Hume Highway. With interesting mining and agricultural heritage towns, the shire has diversified its food production and is re-inventing itself as a tree-change, commuter and tourist destination.

Economy: Thank God for the renewal in the shire due to enterprising business/community efforts. Indigo is home to the Beechworth Bakery chain, Beechworth Honey, Bridge Rd Brewers, Murray Breweries, iconic wineries, Uncle Toby's at Wahgunyah (employing 370), Saputo's Kiewa milk factory and the Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail. Tourism, tree-changing semi-retirees, commuters and artists have all enhanced the economy.

Churches: Thank God for the witness of Christians over many years. However, the churches are small and ageing. Pray for a new work of God's Spirit, drawing many, including families, children and younger people. May Christians mature through the ministry of God's word and commit themselves to holiness/the full armour of God. Pray for the annual Yackandandah Mens' Camp.

Evangelism: May God give Christians the opportunity, gifts and confidence to share their faith. May He transform the hearts of those who oppose the Gospel. Pray too for creative gospel presentation at special services, schools and community events.

Newcomers: As people move to the shire, may they engage with Christians and find faith. Pray specifically for Christian witness in the new housing estate at Tangambalanga.

Community: Thank God for the rail trail's extension to Yackandandah. May God use tourism to grow his church! Thank God too for the health/aged care services in each town. May Christ's love be known in each. Beechworth has for many years housed a jail (210 prisoners). Thank God for Christian interaction with prisoners and pray that Christ's light and power would renew many.

Hospital: The proposed Albury Hospital redevelopment has met with much opposition from those who would like to see a new hospital on a greenfield site. Pray for a good way forward.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the beautiful hills, plains and heritage of Indigo. We thank you for its economic renewal and commitment to community development. Just as Christ turned water into wine, renew your church by your Spirit, so that many in Indigo would know eternal life abundant 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, 19 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Indigo Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for Latrobe City

Population: 77,318 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 84,780

Main Towns: Traralgon (27,628), Moe-Newborough (15,758), Morwell (14,068), Churchill (4,679), Yallourn North (1,107), Toongabbie (1,085), Yinnar (826), Glengarry (703), Boolarra (534)

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

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

*Coal Power/Diversification: Pray for the whole shire as it transitions economically from coal. May the rehabilitation of power stations/mines create safe assets, so that the city is more attractive than ever. Timber supply issues have closed the only office paper line in Australia at Maryvale, significantly reducing the mill's output. However, educational and manufacturing initiatives, such as the Latrobe Aerospace Precinct, have helped garner positive morale.

*Health/Safety: Many in Latrobe work in dangerous industries. Pray for safety in the forests, mines, power stations, manufacturing plants, in construction and on farms and the roads.

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 cultures.

Evangelism: Pray that God would enthuse and equip Christians to share the good news of eternal forgiveness with every age and cultural group. Pray that churches would systematically reach out to their communities. Pray too for Christian witness to staff and students, including internationals, at Federation Uni at Churchill and Monash's School of Rural Health, at Churchill and Traralgon.

Transport: Latrobe relies heavily on good links to Melbourne for commuters and students. Thank God for work on the rail line, but pray for a long-term solution to congestion, both on the roads/rail. A bypass of Traralgon would greatly improve safety/amenity and benefit all east.

Community: Pray that each of Latrobe's centres would develop an attractive, positive identity and for a spirit of mutuality. New skate parks and a new aquatic centre, sports stadium and performing arts centre are all positive. Many are on government benefits, with particular needs. May the churches provide healthy transformative communities. Praise God for the ongoing development of Latrobe Regional Hospital. Pray for the provision of staff, excellent care and Christian witness.

Heavenly Father, God of all power and transformation, look with mercy on the people of Latrobe. May you lead them in the transformation of the Valley and may they personally know your transformative 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, 19 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP, Latrobe City & *Latrobe Valley Express*. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Loddon

Population: 7,759 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 7,890

Main Towns: Boort (808), Inglewood (779), Wedderburn (650), Pyramid Hill (475), Bridgewater (341), Serpentine (222), Dingee (195), Laanecoorie (179), Newbridge (171), Tarnagulla (153)

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

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

*Economy: Notwithstanding recent floods, Loddon is currently very dry. Pray for rain, so that dams will be filled and haysheds restocked. However, discouraging population decline is generally abating, with the emergence of new industries such as solar farms, hay, poultry and olives. With renewed interest in gold, tree-changers and more commuters to Bendigo, pray for a positive long-term future. Housing, child care, aged care and high voltage power lines are all issues.

Churches: Thank God for faithful Christian witness in Loddon over many generations. Pray that God would refresh, grow and unite the churches so that they would be salt and light in each community. May they find creative ways to worship, teach the Bible, care and reach out.

Demography: Loddon has a median age of 52 and loses its young adults. Those remaining are often young men, in farming and trades, or loners. Pray that they would find God and life-giving Christian fellowship. Pray too for children's and youth ministry, especially for leaders and camps.

*Evangelism: Pray for a fresh movement of God's Spirit. Life revolves around work, family, sport and leisure (e.g. water sports, camping, fishing, fossicking). May Christians be equipped to share their faith winningly in each context. Pray too that the good news would be heard at events such as markets, funerals and at Easter/Christmas, and for ministry to seniors.

*Community: Loddon is large and dispersed: pray for unity. It is also "Bendigo's backyard", so its focus is outside the shire. Pray that each town will find its niche, as people do business in Bendigo. Some towns would benefit from bypasses. Recreational water at Bridgewater, Boort and Laanecoorie are great assets. An aged care facility in Wedderburn has been sought for decades.

Newcomers: Jobs/cheaper housing have drawn immigrants, such as Filipinos in Pyramid Hill, and those on benefits. Pray that newcomers would find new hope in the churches.

Heavenly Father, creator of goldfields, lakes and plains, you love Loddon more than we could ever know. May the seed of your word produce a great harvest of righteousness, healing 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, 19 Sep 2025, with information from ABS, DELWP & Loddon Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Macedon Ranges Shire

Population: 51,458 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 64,950

Main Towns: Gisborne incl. New Gisborne (10,999), Kyneton (5,151), Romsey (4,934), Woodend (4,663), Riddles Creek (3,574), Macedon (2,926), Lancefield (1,691), Mount Macedon (1,450), Gisborne South (854), Malmsbury (736), Bullengarook (714), Darraweit Guim (402)

Main Industries: Health, Construction, Education, Retail, Agriculture, Equine, Tourism, Manufacturing (Abattoir), Retirees, Commuters

Macedon Ranges is the first regional shire north-west of Melbourne, with Kyneton halfway between Melbourne and Bendigo. Well-served by the railway, its towns are set among low-lying ranges and 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 amenity. Commuters, tree-changers, retirees, weekenders and tourists have all added substantially to the economy. Pray for wise development, especially in new housing areas, 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 ageing. Pray for growth, both numerically and spiritually. Pray for godly, mission-hearted pastors. May churches be founded on God's word and equipped with "the full armour of God, so that they can take their stand against the devil's schemes." (Eph 6:11)

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, cafes, book clubs and the arts. Pray that those with evangelistic gifts would move to the shire and that there would be vibrant witness in each community, including new estates.

*Children/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 reach out to youth and provide healthy mentors and discipleship.

Safety: Pray for safety on farms, construction sites, on the roads, at the hospitals and in manufacturing plants, notably the abattoir, employing >400. Pray too for safety from bushfire.

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 obey your word and follow your Son, through whose life, death and resurrection we gain new life and resurrection 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, 5 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, VDELWP & Macedon Ranges Shire. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Mansfield

Population: 10,178 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 12,590

Main Towns: Mansfield (3,999), Merrijig (721), Bonnie Doon (666), Tolmie (547), Jamieson (382), Mt Buller (Unincorporated) (333), Goughs Bay (328), Maindample (239)

Main Industries: Construction, Farming/Horticulture, Tourism, 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 Nillahcootie.

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 humbly praise the Lord Jesus for all He has made. 44% of the shire are non-resident.

Tourism: Thank God that tourism is recovering after the pandemic, and for the Mansfield Heritage Museum, opening in 2027. Lake Eildon is also relatively full. Many travel to Mansfield for snow sports, boating, horse, motor bike, mountain bike and high-country experiences: pray for safety/witness in each community. Roads have suffered with rain and poor State Govt care.

Churches: Thank God for the long-term witness of Christians in the shire. Pray that God would grow the churches in faith, unity and maturity, as well as numerically. May newcomers to the shire find welcome and new life spiritually through the churches. Pray for godly leaders who teach the Scriptures authoritatively and lead in mission to 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/schools. Thank God for the Chaplain at Mansfield Secondary. Pray too for ministry at Timbertop and Howqua (Geelong Grammar's and Lauriston's Year 9 Campuses). May there be winning witness by students, staff and parents.

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 and mature all who own your name. Pour out your missional Spirit of love on the Shire, that many 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, 3 Oct 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Mansfield Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Rural City of Mildura

Population: 56,972 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 62,990

Main Towns: Mildura, including Irymple and Merbein (47,137), Red Cliffs (3,070), Ouyen (1,022), Underbool (215), Murrayville (214), Walpeup (171)

Main Industries: Agriculture/Horticulture, Regional Service Centre, Tourism, Retirees

Mildura was established in 1887 by the Chaffey brothers, who brought Californian irrigation and town planning to the driest region in Victoria. Completely dependent on the Murray River for its prosperity, Mildura is the most isolated of Victoria's regional cities, while the large Mallee area surrounding Mildura is home to 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 relatively small. Pray for church growth. Pray too for unity and a common witness to Christ. May there be a hunger for God's word and a deep desire to be transformed and live by it.

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.

Multiculturalism: Mildura has a long history of multiculturalism. Pray for clear witness to each cultural group, including its Indigenous population (2621) and seasonal workers, who are often away from families for nine months each year and may not speak English. Pray that the churches would be welcoming to all, especially those who feel shunned due to ethnicity.

Economy/Community: Thank God for Mildura's prosperity. It has an oasis feel. However, many are on low incomes and have chronic needs. Drugs are a major issue. *Keep praying for restoration of passenger rail and for greater use of freight rail, as much grain is trucked, damaging roads. Greater promotion and interpretation of the Parks would grow jobs and local pride.

Mallee: Thank God for the recreational lake at Ouyen, where housing is an issue. Pray for those working in the Parks or living on properties away from closer settlement: for safety in their isolation, prosperity and spiritual encouragement, and for families as kids leave for education.

Bush Church Aid: BCA has a long history of supporting the church in the Mallee. Pray that God would raise up ministers for the bush and give wisdom to the Society as to how best to serve.

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. Pour out your Spirit on Mildura and the Mallee, so that many would worship you as Lord and tell out the good news of forgiveness, love and hope through Christ Jesus, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 5 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Mildura City. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Mitchell

Population: 49,460 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 119,830 (!)

Main Towns: Wallan (14,741), Kilmore (8,786), Seymour (6,016), Beveridge (4,160), Broadford (4,076), Wandong-Heathcote Junction (1,705), Puckapunyal (1,108), Pyalong (478), Tooborac

Main Industries: Commuters, Construction, Manufacturing (Broadford Mill, Nestle), Retail, Government Services, Agriculture, Equine, Defence (Puckapunyal), Transport/Logistics

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 centred on Seymour.

*Growth: Mitchell's projected 4.5 percent annual growth is more than double any other regional shire. Mitchell will be twice its size in 15 years. Pray for attractive long-term planning & the provision of quality schools, churches, community facilities, roads and a bypass of Wallan and Kilmore. Pray that the planned massive Beveridge Intermodal Precinct will take trucks off roads.

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 many new church plants. The area has been characterised by working-class Irish Catholicism. It needs fresh, relevant multi-cultural witness, with systematic Bible teaching. Pray that mature Christians with evangelistic gifts, from various cultural backgrounds, particularly the sub-continent, would move to Mitchell.

*Evangelism: Pray that churches would 'step up to the plate' in reaching new residents. Many commute or are tradies, drivers or truckies working in Melbourne's north. Most are very busy juggling jobs, paying mortgages, establishing homes, and caring for young and extended 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: Pray that God's healing Spirit would be drawing veterans as they visit and attend commemorations at the moving Vietnam Veterans Walk in Seymour. Pray too for the Chaplains and witness at Puckapunyal, and for a Biblical perspective on 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, Christ Jesus, the carpenter, shepherd and humble warrior who loves us deeply, 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, 5 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Mitchell Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Moira

Population: 30,522 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 32,840

Main Towns: Yarrawonga (8,580), Cobram (5,389), Numurkah (3,807), Nathalia (1,529), Strathmerton (572), Bundalong (405), Tungamah (348), Koonoomoo (305), Katamatite (240)

Main Industries: Manufacturing, Agriculture, Horticulture, Construction, Health, Retirement, Tourism

Moira is a large, dispersed and steadily growing shire, highly dependent on the Murray River, Broken Creek and sunny weather for its agricultural, horticultural 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. Pray for attractive development, especially in new housing areas.

Governance: Administrators were appointed in 2023. Pray for them as they prepare the Council for elections in 2028 and for good morale across the Council.

Roads: Trucks and roads are a major issue. The bridge from Yarrawonga to Mulwala urgently needs replacement, for example, given increases in truck sizes, and the Murray Valley and Goulburn Valley Highways through to Tocumwal need upgrading. Pray for resolution and safety.

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

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

The Missing Generation: Many in the 18–35ish bracket move away. Pray that God would provide godly fellowship 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 unashamedly Christian. Pray too for holiday outreach activities by churches.

Community: Praise God for hospital upgrades at both Yarrawonga and Cobram. Pray for the provision of staff, and for quality care and witness in all of Moira’s health facilities.

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 new life, forgiveness and hope, 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, 3 Oct 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Moira Shire. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Moorabool

Population: 37,632 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 56,750

Main Towns: Bacchus Marsh (21,692), Ballan (2,613), Gordon (607), Blackwood (381), Bungaree (302), Dunnstown (259), Balliang (254), Elaine (232), Wallace (227), Myrniong (220)

Main Industries: Commuters, Construction, Education, Health, Retail, Agriculture/Horticulture, Manufacturing, Transport, Forestry, Quarrying, Tourism

Moorabool is the first regional shire west of Melbourne, extending right up to Ballarat's eastern city edge. The shire is comprised of large productive agricultural/horticultural and forested areas, together with many new housing areas around Bacchus Marsh and Ballan for commuters.

Economy: Moorabool has benefitted from its central location between Melbourne, Ballarat and Geelong, on the Werribee and Lerderderg Rivers, traditionally supplying much horticultural and agricultural produce, as well as timber, quarry and turf products to these markets. The growth of Melbourne's west and upgrades to the rail line have led to an increasing number of commuters. Pray for wise planning and attractive development, especially with regard to maintaining farmland.

Churches: Thank God for Christian witness in the shire over many generations. Pray for the churches and their leaders as they adapt to the shire's growth and reach out systematically to newcomers. May the churches live by God's Word and model godly and attractive lives.

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

*Commuters: 68% of Moorabool's residents travel outside the shire to work. V/Line now has 15 services to Melbourne before 9.19am, making for tiring days. Pray for healthy family life.

Children/Youth: 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. May your church similarly grow. 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 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, 3 Oct 2025, with info ABS, DELWP & Moorabool Shire. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Mount Alexander Shire

Population: 20,253 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 22,780

Main Towns: Castlemaine incl. Campbell's Creek and Chewton (10,577), Maldon (1,381), Newstead (656), Elphinstone (633), Harcourt (570), Taradale (524), Guildford (240)

Main Industries: Manufacturing (KR Smallgoods, Vossloh Cogifer Railway Components, Flowserve Pumps, Food, Wine/Cider), Construction, Retail, Health, Agriculture (Harcourt Apples), Arts, Tourism, Commuters, Retirees, Jails

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, lifestyle businesses, retirees and weekenders. Castlemaine's position on the Melbourne-Bendigo railway also means that workers, students and retirees have good travel to both centres.

Economy: Much is happening in Mt Alexander! Pray for common cause and wisdom, as those keen to keep its charm can be at odds with those promoting development. Substantial new investment at the smallgoods factory, a new Woolworths and new housing in Castlemaine, Newstead and Harcourt have provided a stronger base. Malden, with its steam railway, relies on weekend tourism, though increased commuting to Bendigo will help. Housing is an issue.

*Churches: As Mt Alexander grows, may the churches similarly be renewed in numbers, maturity, outreach and service. Pray that God would encourage Christians and give them fresh confidence in the truth of the Gospel and its power to heal, save, and bring joy and hope.

*Evangelism: Mt Alexander very much needs a convicting and reviving movement of God's Spirit. Castlemaine has traditionally been a proud working-class manufacturing town. More recently the shire has attracted alternative spiritualities and lifestyles: 'Brunswick in the bush'. Pray that God would raise up Christians to reach its various communities, as salt and light.

Arts: Mt Alexander has a long record of celebrating creativity. Pray that God would raise up Christians who engage well with this community and can lead artists in discipleship.

*Jails: Loddon/Middleton (715 beds) focus on release preparation and drug rehabilitation. Tarrengower, at Maldon, houses 78 women. May prisoners/staff come to know God's renewal.

Youth: May children, teenagers and young adults hear of Christ's love and be discipled well. With 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 the shire, so that many would find new life and hope through the life, 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, 5 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP, Vic Dept of Justice and Mt Alexander Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Moyne Shire

Population: 17,374 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 19,120

Main Towns: Port Fairy (3,424), Koroit (1,705), Mortlake (1,147), Macarthur (469), Panmure (442), Kirkstall (406), Woolsthorpe (364), Hawkesdale (311), Purnim (292), Peterborough (214)

Main Industries: Farming, notably Dairying and related Food Manufacturing (Bega), Tourism, Energy (Wind/Gas), Health, Commuting, Opiates (Sun Pharma), Seafood, Forestry, Quarrying

Moyne is a large rural shire symbiotically surrounding Warrnambool. A central feature is the Moyne River, which flows through a beautifully fertile volcanic region and empties into the ocean at picturesque Port Fairy. The shire has been enjoying solid growth, driven by dairying, grazing, tourism, energy and relocation (notably Koroit).

*Economy: Moyne is currently experiencing drought, marked by record low rainfall. Pray for good falls, refilled dams and restocked barns. More generally, the shire has seen signs of economic renewal, particularly in Port Fairy and Koroit. \$7 billion (yes, billion!) worth of wind and gas energy projects are planned, though these are contentious.

Churches: Praise God for the witness of Christians in Moyne over generations. Pray for growth in the churches, in numbers and maturity, and that they would be salt and light in each locality. Pray especially for men and young people to identify with Christ, his people and his mission.

*Evangelism: Moyne has a strong Irish Catholic heritage. Pray that God would equip Christians and enliven their witness through sport, music, markets, work and community care. Praise God for the Port Fairy Beach Mission which has reached out for many years. Pray for long-term fruit.

*Mortlake: Thank God for Mortlake's new saleyards, streetscaping and library. However, powerlines for wind farms have significantly marred its pastoral amenity. Keep praying for renewal through its crossroads location and parks, and for God's Spirit to heal following notorious abuse.

Community: Thank God for hospital works in Port Fairy. Thank God too for the Budj Bim Cultural Centres and rejuvenated Tower Hill. May they greatly aid respect and reconciliation. Many in the Shire work long hours: may they have 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 good things, 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, 19 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Moyne Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Murrindindi

Population: 15,197 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 17,700

Main Towns: Alexandra (2,480), Yea (1,279), Kinglake (1,247), Kinglake West (901), Flowerdale (790), Eildon (725), Marysville (453), Glenburn (443), Kinglake Central (413), Toolangi (366), Buxton (243), Yarck (194)

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

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

*Floods/Fires: Despite flooding and ongoing damage to roads/fences when Lake Eildon peaked in 2022, tourism has rebounded and irrigators now have more certainty, with storage currently at 86%. However, the devastating fires in 2009 at Kinglake and Marysville continue to impact. Reconstruction is slow due to the expense of bushfire building standards. Pray that people would look to God for their "daily bread" and that Christians would be catalysts and messengers of faith, hope and healing.

*Industry: Murrindindi's population spread and 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 900 during the season, including many Muslim immigrants. Thank God for entrepreneurs and pray for safety and witness in each work context.

*Churches: With a few notable exceptions, the churches are small and ageing. May they grow through careful teaching of the Scriptures, with a fresh commitment to creative outreach. Pray for unified witness in each town and a transformative movement of God's Spirit in drawing many to Himself.

Children/Youth: Pray that God would raise up leaders for fruitful children's and youth ministry and that kids would clearly hear the good news. Pray for Christian witness in the schools, giving thanks for the Chaplain and Christian staff at Alexandra Secondary College.

Young Adults: As students leave the shire to study, may they connect with healthy Christian communities, find faith and grow. For those who remain, may there be loving and fruitful Christian outreach to young men and women, and enthusiastic godly discipleship.

Camping: Pray for witness in each of the many camping venues, as people have time to talk.

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 in Murrindindi as they rebuild and renew communities after fire and flood. May they find new life and hope 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, 3 Oct 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Murrindindi Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Northern Grampians Shire

Population: 11,948 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 11,570

Main Towns: Stawell (5,627), St Arnaud (2,126), Great Western (425), Halls Gap (363), Navarre

Main Industries: Manufacturing (Frew Abattoirs, Steel Fabrication, Krause Bricks, Wine), Agriculture (Wool, Grazing, Crops), Gold, Tourism, Viticulture, Poultry, Pigs

Northern Grampians stretches expansively from Halls Gap to Stawell and north-east past St Arnaud. With a goldmining, farming, wine and tourism heritage, recent struggles have led to the beginnings of a possible turnaround through the re-opening of the mine and new ventures.

*Economy: Praise God that in its 2024 Annual Report Northern Grampians asks for “God’s blessing on our deliberations”. Thank God too for the abattoir in Stawell (500 jobs), Krause Bricks, the gold mine and new ventures, such as Wind Farms and the Underground Physics Laboratory. However, drought is currently taking a heavy toll, work on the highway duplication has stopped, housing remains an issue and new High Voltage transmission lines are contentious.

*St Arnaud: St Arnaud is an attractive gold heritage town, which has worked hard on its streetscape/gardens. Pray that the town will gain better benefit from its rail/crossroads location.

*Halls Gap: The 2025 fires have had major impact. Pray for renewal which works well with climate. Visitation has already been affected by tensions between the Indigenous, Parks and tourism stakeholders, seen in controls on climbing. Pray for common cause that respects all under Christ’s Lordship. Thank God for the Zoo and the fledgling Wildlife Art Museum: may they bring God glory.

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, reach out with the hope of the Gospel and be catalytic in community 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) May new residents, including immigrants, find welcome, new life and eternal hope through the churches.

Children/Young People: Pray for the witness of Christian students, parents and teachers. May children 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, serve 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, fruitfulness and hope, running 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, 19 Sep 2025 with info from ABS, DELWP, Vic Premier & Northern Grampians Shire. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Pyrenees Shire

Population: 7,671 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 8,250

Main Towns: Beaufort (1,166), Avoca (1,129), Snake Valley (820), Langi Kal Kal (336), Waubra (308), Lexton (284), Amphitheatre (223), Raglan (223), Landsborough (200), Moonambel (185)

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

Named for the Pyrenees Ranges wine-producing region in its northern half and well-placed on the railways and Adelaide highway, close to Ballarat and <two 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 ageing. Pray for their renewal and growth, that Christians would better understand what Christ has done for them and be excited about their faith.

*Evangelism: Pray that God would equip Christians to share their faith and that He would draw many to Himself. May there be vibrant Christian witness in each town, in each of the dispersed agricultural communities and in the retirement hostels at Avoca and Beaufort.

Economy: Pyrenees is still repairing after the 2022 floods and bushfires in 2024, and its wine, tourism and retail businesses continue to struggle post pandemic. New overhead transmission lines also pose a significant threat to amenity. Pray that people would look to God for a positive long-term future. Roads and housing are key issues as the shire manages a large area with dispersed communities on a low-rate base.

Beaufort/Avoca: Thank God for the foreshore development project at Beaufort Lake and proposed streetscape works in Avoca. May it benefit from the freight rail. *A Beaufort bypass is long overdue. Pray that it would be built soon, resulting in an attractive, safe and integrated townscape.

Newcomers: Pyrenees is increasingly appealing for retirees. 35.5% are 60+. Pray that newcomers would find new life through the churches and that mature Christians would move to the area.

*Young People: Pray that children and youth would hear the Christian message clearly, become Christ's disciples and serve. As young people leave for education, may they find faith and grow.

Jail: Langi Kal Kal holds 450+ prisoners. Pray for Christian prisoners, staff and the chaplains, so that many would come to find forgiveness, healing and hope through the light and love 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 many would find new life through the risen sacrificial 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, 12 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Pyrenees Shire. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Borough of Queenscliffe

Population: 3,276 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 3,590

Main Towns: Point Lonsdale-Queenscliff (5,265) (Some residents in Greater Geelong)

Main Industries: Tourism, Marine, Retirement

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

Tourism: For generations, day-trippers, holiday makers and those seeking rest in "a safe harbour" have been attracted to Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale. Many community organisations and churches have accommodation for clients, members and staff. Pray that, in rest, people would praise God for his goodness, find healing and joy, and make wise decisions to serve Him afresh.

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

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

Evangelism: Pray for witness in each of the networks in the towns (golf, bowling, surf, retail, health, arts, museums, railway). Pray especially for witness in the new housing estates. Those >65 make up a third of the population and are often volunteers, keen for friendship. Pray that God would be drawing many to Himself, giving forgiveness and assurance of eternal life.

Beach Missions: Praise God for the long-running Scripture Union Family and Theos Missions at Queenscliff. Pray that children and young adults would find eternal hope and life through hearing and believing, and that team 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 issue of the borough's sustainability that will also benefit the growth of God's Kingdom.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the Borough of Queenscliffe 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, purchased 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, 3 Oct 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Borough of Queenscliffe. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the City of Greater Shepparton

Population: 68,409 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 78,730

Main Towns: Shepparton-Mooroopna (49,862), Tatura (4,259), Murchison (775), Congupna (620), Ardmona (497), Merrigum (454), Undera (450), Dhurrungile (369), Toolamba (355)

Main Industries: Farming and related Food Manufacturing, Construction, Retail, Health, Tourism

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

*Floods: Repair of damage to homes and infrastructure from the 2022 (and subsequent) floods continues. Pray for energy, wisdom and morale and that somehow God would be glorified. Pray especially for fair relationships with insurers and timely grants from government.

*Newcomers: Shepparton is characterised by immigration, originally from Europe, but more recently from West Asia, North-East Africa and the Pacific (14.9% born overseas). Pray that migrants would not only find welcome and a new life economically, but new life spiritually. Those on Pacific visas can spend up to nine months annually in Australia away from their families.

Churches: Thank God for the witness of Christians in Shepparton over many generations. Pray for their numerical and spiritual growth, across all ages. May they live exemplary lives. Pray for missionary gifted pastors who can teach God’s word well and build multicultural churches.

*Evangelism: Shepparton’s residents come from many religious backgrounds. It has at least four mosques, a Buddhist community and a large Sikh temple. Pray that God’s Spirit would draw many to Himself and that Christians would be characterised by prayer and equipped for loving outreach.

*Community: Many have work/visa issues. Pray that people would find good uses for their time. Pray against poverty, depression, family tension and worry about families “back home”. 2686 identify as Indigenous – thank God for numerous initiatives towards reconciliation. Pray too for a good use for Murchison’s former aged care/NDIS respite facility.

*Economy: Shepparton is growing! Pray for attractive development and the long-term strength of its agricultural base and water provision. Thank God for new Velocity rail services, the new art gallery, work on the Botanic Gardens, and the many river trails. The many long and large trucks make roads dangerous. The federal axing of a bypass has been a major blow.

Education: Pray for witness in tertiary contexts: the TAFE, a branch of La Trobe Uni, and Melbourne Uni’s Dookie Ag College and School of Rural Health, based at the growing hospital.

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

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 3 Oct 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Shepparton City. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Southern Grampians Shire

Population: 16,588 (2021)

*Estimated Population 2036: 16,020

Main Towns: Hamilton (9,577), Coleraine (867), Dunkeld (511), Penshurst (491), Cavendish (366), Tarrington (328), Branxholme (304), Balmoral (281), Glenthompson (256), Byaduk North

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

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

*Economy: Little rain in the last few years has put farmers under real pressure. Pray for good falls, renewing dams and enabling the restocking of empty barns. Thank God that the shire is working hard to arrest decline, with CBD revitalisation, industrial parks, plans for a new Art Gallery and Volcanic Trail, and work on the Dunkeld Visitor Hub and Grampians Peaks Trail.

Transport: Transport is increasingly an issue, with high car and truck dependency. The return of passenger rail would significantly improve local amenity, keeping and attracting residents, students and tourists. Greater use of the freight rail would significantly improve safety and roads.

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

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 relevant way and that God's Spirit would convict many 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 the Council and emergency services. May God protect them and give them wisdom, so that the Gospel would go forward.

Smaller Towns: As smaller towns discouragingly lose population and businesses, pray that each would find a positive long-term niche. Pray for Christian witness in each that is full of hope.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the richness of your country in the Southern Grampians. Look in love on all who live 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 life, death and resurrection 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, 19 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Southern Grampians Shire. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of South Gippsland

Population: 30,577 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 35,100

Main Towns: Leongatha (5,618), Korumburra (3,869), Mirboo North (1,752), Foster (1,308), Venus Bay (904), Nyora (789), Loch (707), Meeniyan (516), Tarwin Lower (462), Toora (432)

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

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

*Dairy: South Gippsland is characterised by dairying. Thank God for stronger prices. However, there have been job losses at some plants, due to rationalisation. Pray for stability and safety.

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 vital faith would be passed on to younger generations. Pray for Chair O Christian School in Leongatha, as it brings together Christians from all the churches.

Evangelism: Pray that God's Spirit would be drawing 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. As young adults move away for further study or work, pray that they would join Christian communities and grow.

*Economy: The loss of rail service continues to constrain growth, with B-double tankers on winding roads and high car dependency. Pray for wisdom re proposed wind farms offshore.

Ageing: South Gippsland's population is ageing. Pray for good care and Christian witness by health providers. Pray too that farming would become more attractive to younger generations.

Tourism: Wilson's Prom, Grand Ridge Road, the Great Southern Rail Trail and Port Welshpools' Long Jetty are iconic destinations, with abundant wildlife and expansive ocean views. Pray for witness in the ranger, tourism and cycling communities.

Communities: Thank God for the many communities in the shire, each with its own attractive individuality. Pray for witness in each and that each will find its niche. May God greatly comfort those affected by the "mushroom murders" in Leongatha.

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, forgiveness and hope, 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, 5 Sep 2025 with info from ABS, DELWP, South Gippsland Shire & Railtrails. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Strathbogie

Population: 11,455 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 13,410

Main Towns: Euroa (3,116), Nagambie (2,036), Avenel (852), Violet Town (717), Strathbogie (351), Longwood (263), Miepoll (223), Mangalore (183), Ruffy (164), Creighton's Creek (162)

Main Industries: Agriculture (incl. Equine, Viticulture), Health, Construction, Education, Tourism and Events, Commuters (26.8%), Retirees

Strathbogie stretches across interesting and varied central Victoria from the Great Dividing Ranges to Graytown, west of the Goulburn River, and north of the Puckapunyal military area.

Churches: Thank God for the faithful witness of Christians in Strathbogie over many years. However, the churches are small and ageing. Pray that God would grow them spiritually and numerically and that they would be salt and light in each of their communities. May they include all generations. Thank God especially for their leaders: may they unite in mission.

*Evangelism: Pray that the Holy Spirit would be at work in Strathbogie, convicting many of their need for salvation and drawing them to Him. Pray that Christians would engage winningly with all, including the agricultural, horse racing, winery and township communities, retirees and young families. May newcomers to the area find new life through the churches.

*Governance: Pray for productive relationships in the new Council and renewed community morale, after a period of Administration following the suspension of the previous Council in 2023.

*Economy: With a large area and dispersed population, Strathbogie's roads are in urgent need of repair, including the closed Kirwan's Bridge. Businesses continue to be impacted by the pandemic and tensions with China. Pray for a rebound, and that people would look to God for their "daily bread" and grow in their faith through answered prayer. Internet connectivity is also an issue.

Aged Care: Pray for good care in Strathbogie's facilities, and for those at home. May there be Christian witness, so that many would know God's love and hope. Pray especially for carers.

Volunteers: Strathbogie depends heavily on volunteers (CFA/SES), with numbers in decline. 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 rivers and lakes. We thank you for her people, their creativity and their industry. Pour out your Spirit on all in Strathbogie. May they find the forgiveness, love and hope won by the life, death and resurrection of your Son, and may your church grow, to be a fruitful blessing to many, in the name of Christ, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 5 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Strathbogie Shire. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Surf Coast Shire

Population: 37,694 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 48,010

Main Towns: Torquay-Jan Juc (22,998), Anglesea (3,191), Winchelsea (2,032), Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven (1,395), Bellbrae (1,346), Lorne (1,248), Moriac (691), Freshwater Creek (454)

Main Industries: Construction, Surfing, Commuters, Tourism, Agriculture, Health, Education

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.

*Growth: Surf Coast continues to grow, both along the coast (Torquay/Jan Juc) and in the hinterland (Winchelsea). Pray that Christians would welcome newcomers into their communities and that a new start would lead to new life in Christ. Thank God for recent church plants and pray for more. Many commute to Geelong and further to Melbourne, making for tiring days.

Churches: With notable exceptions, the churches are not large. Pray for pastors who will lead communities in mission, trained by God's word, and faithfully engaging with local culture.

Evangelism: Thank God for fruitful ministry through playgroups and Mainly Music. Pray that this will transform into discipleship, both by parents and children. Praise God too for the ministry of Camp Wilkin at Anglesea and for Beach Missions at Torquay, Anglesea and Lorne. Pray for fruitfulness. Pray for a fresh movement of God's Spirit across the shire, convicting and calling.

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

Agricultural Communities: Thank God for recent good seasons. Pray for attractive witness in each community, such as at the Torquay, Airey's Inlet, Lorne and Winchelsea 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.

Safety: Surf Coast is particularly vulnerable to bushfires, road slips and traffic accidents, with international tourists used to driving on the other side of the road distracted by scenery.

Anglesea: The health of the Anglesea River remains a controversial issue, with studies showing ongoing toxicity, low fish numbers and fish kills. Pray for repair.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for all you have wonderfully made in Surf Coast: the rugged seas and forests, the beaches and rolling fields. As the shire grows, grow your church. 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, bought 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, 3 Oct 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP, Surf Coast Shire and Christian Surfers. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Rural City of Swan Hill

Population: 21,403 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 20,660

Main Towns: Swan Hill (10,869), Robinvale (2,441), Lake Boga (762), Nyah West (532), Woorinen South (300), Nyah (270), Woorinen (262), Tyntynder South (250), Manangatang (193)

Main Industries: Horticulture, Agriculture, Food-related Manufacturing, Retail, Government Services, Tourism

Bordered by the Murray for 300 kms, Swan Hill is highly dependent on the river for irrigation, water and recreation. Recent diversification into horticultural products such as olives, almonds and grapes has substantially strengthened the economy, though climate change, water availability, labour, affordable housing, ageing infrastructure and varroa mite are major challenges.

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

Evangelism: Pray for a fresh movement of God’s Spirit, drawing many. Pray that Christians would share their faith winningly 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 nine-month seasonal visas or refugees from the Middle East, Africa or Burma. Pray that God would be a constant comfort to those who are anxious about loved ones elsewhere and that God would use these links to grow his church.

Indigenous: 967 (4.5%) 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: Labour and housing shortages are significant. Road, bridge, water and hospital infrastructure urgently needs upgrading. Council puts the true population of Robinvale at 7,900, significantly more than the ABS figure above! Pray for fair distribution of government resources and attractive work environments. Pray too for a resolution to varroa mite - a pest destroying bees.

*Smaller Towns: Praise God for his people in the smaller towns, such as Nyah West, Manangatang and Lake Boga, as they seek to preserve community cohesion and reach out.

Father of all nations, pour out your Spirit of love and hope on the people of Swan Hill Rural City. May they honour each other, knowing that all are made in your image. Strengthen their families, churches and communities, so that in turn they may be a blessing to many nations, 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, 3 Oct 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & City of Swan Hill. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Towong

Population: 6,223 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 6,340

Main Towns: Corryong (1,186), Tallangatta (1,016), Bellbridge (393), Cudgewa (254), Eskdale (238), Bethanga (198), Walwa (191), Mitta Mitta (171), Towong (143), Dartmouth (130), Granya

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. It also has some excellent tourism resources. Thank God for good seasons, work on the High Country Rail Trail and further funding for the Great River Road project. However, the shire's median age is 52. May people move to the shire and in so doing, may God's church grow.

Size: The shire is large, with a dispersed population in a number of small communities. Distances are also great, with many windy roads. Pray for long-term sustainability and wise use of resources.

Churches: Thank God for Christian witness in Towong over many generations. However, the churches are generally small and ageing. Pray for good pastoral leaders, who teach God's word faithfully and fruitfully and lead in mission. May the churches grow in maturity and number. Pray especially that God would raise up leaders for children's and youth ministry.

Evangelism: Pray that God's Spirit would be working, drawing many to Him. May there be attractive, leavening Christian witness and service in each locality. May people understand that faith is about a relationship with Christ, rather than an organisation or institution.

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

Men: Pray that God would raise up men to reach out to the many men in the farming, fishing, forestry, hunting and 4WD communities. Pray for God's Spirit to draw many through His Word.

Aged Care: Thank God for the hospitals and aged care facilities in Tallangatta (Bolga Court) and Corryong (Mittamatite Lodge). May there be good care and loving outreach.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the rich resources you have provided in the Shire of Towong. We praise you too for your love for all in the shire, wherever they be scattered. Pour out your Spirit on Towong, that many would come to Christ and drink, and know the forgiveness, love and hope won by his life, death and resurrection, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 3 Oct 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Towong Shire. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Rural City of Wangaratta

Population: 29,808 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 32,260

Main Towns: Wangaratta (19,712), Oxley (503), Glenrowan (355), Milawa (270), Markwood (230), Whitfield (220), Cheshunt (213), Moyhu (208), Everton (193), Peechelba (177)

Main Industries: Health, Manufacturing (Food/Wine), Retail, Government, Education, Construction, Agriculture/Viticulture, 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.

*Churches: Thank God for the witness of Christians in the city over many years. However, prayer is especially sought for the churches. Many still have a traditional Christendom culture. Pray that the churches would be unified, live holy lives in submission to the Word of God and reach out together with Christ's love in "everyday language". A real movement of the Spirit is desired.

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

Evangelism: Wangaratta has an extensive rural surround. Pray that God would establish a Christian presence in each community, who share their faith winningly. Pray too for attractive witness right across the sporting, farming, business, health, arts and tourism networks.

Schools: Pray for witness in schools, including Cathedral College and its Chaplain. Pray that students/staff would hear the good news and find forgiveness, love, identity and hope in Christ.

Economy: Thank God for Wangaratta's rich and diverse economic history with numerous entrepreneurs. In addition to pastoral, viticultural and food industries, manufacturing has been a feature, notably textiles. Tourism has been affected by the pandemic and cost-of-living issues.

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

Transport: Thank God for new Velocity services and the completion of the rail line project enabling container double-stacking. However, line maintenance and catering remain issues.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for the Rural 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 and wine, who washes away our sin and wins for us an eternal city, and in whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 3 Oct 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & City of Wangaratta. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the City of Warrnambool

Population: 35,406 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 38,580

Main Towns: Warrnambool incl. Dennington (32,894), Allansford (718), Bushfield (619)

Main Industries: Regional Service Centre, Dairying/Meat-related Food Manufacturing (Saputo, 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. Pray for the annual AFES and Scripture Union Theos and Beach Mission teams and for evangelistic endeavours that reach the whole city. May they be fruitful.

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 (699). 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 Southwest TAFE and at Deakin Warrnambool, attended by a number of international students from different faiths.

Economy: Pray for the restoration of tourism after Covid restrictions, particularly internationals. Pray too for stability and a positive future in dairy after much change. Thank God for recent streetscaping and work on improving rail. As the city grows, pray for attractive development without loss of farmland, and witness in new housing areas. 4,500 new homes are planned!

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 your Son as provider, saviour and shepherd, the fountain of living water, In whose name we pray, Amen.

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 3 Oct 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Warrnambool City. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Wellington

Population: 45,639 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 51,040

Main Towns: Sale (14,100), Maffra (4,548), Stratford (2,185), Yarram (1,739), Heyfield (1,529), Longford (1,489), Rosedale (1,249), Wurruk (1,027), Loch Sport (1,020), Briagolong (626)

Main Industries: Agriculture, Health, Retail, Government Services, Education, Manufacturing, Construction, RAAF, Offshore Oil/Gas, Jail, Timber, Tourism

Wellington is the third largest municipality in Victoria, stretching from the Dargo High Plains across Central Gippsland to 90 Mile Beach and the Nooramunga Coastal Park south of Port Albert. 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 Bishop Richard Treloar: may he raise up and lead godly, mission-minded pastors who teach God's word faithfully and relevantly.

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.

Economy: Thank God for each community, with its own identity and economy. Sale is a well-serviced regional centre, with attractive public gardens and a new Art Gallery/Library. Maffra and Yarram are dependent on dairy and timber. Heyfield has the largest hardwood mill in Australia. Stratford has many new homes. Pray for safety on worksites, farms, roads, rigs and in the mills.

Transport: Thank God for the duplication of the highway from Sale to Melbourne and an increase in rail services. Interstate air services from Sale would significantly boost accessibility and appeal.

*Disaster Recovery: Thank God too for the recovery to date from fires, floods and the pandemic, all in recent years. Keep praying for refreshment, especially for those in emergency services.

Institutions: Pray that many would be transformed by the Kairos Prison Ministry at Fulham Jail (800 prisoners). Pray too that Christians would testify to their faith in Sale's other large institutions, including schools, such as Gippsland Grammar, the RAAF base and the Hospital.

Indigenous: Thank God for the contribution made by the Indigenous community (923). Pray for godly leadership and discipleship, and for wisdom in responding to the awful sins of the past.

We praise you, Heavenly Father, for all you have made in the Shire of Wellington: the forests and the fields, the rivers, lakes and sea. Look with mercy on the shire and pour out your Spirit, that all may honour you as Lord, know your forgiveness, love and hope, 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, 12 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Wellington Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of West Wimmera

Population: 4,006 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 3,610

Main Towns: Edenhope (713), Kaniva (683), Apsley (329), Goroke (208), Harrow (184)

Main Industries: Farming and Grazing, Forestry, Tourism

West Wimmera is Victoria's fourth largest council area. It stretches along the South Australian border from the Big Desert Wilderness (north of the Western Highway) south to Dergholm and 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: West Wimmera is currently in drought. Pray for good falls, refilled dams and restocked barns. The shire has been working on its tourism assets and there is much potential, given its highway and rail location. Pray for this and other means of diversification, such as renewable energy, to help manage fluctuations in the weather and stem discouraging population decline.

Distance: West Wimmera's low population density has great impact: economically (with more proportionally spent on roads), educationally, socially and spiritually. Pray for creative ways forward. Thank God for recent community-building initiatives, such as the Edenhope Community Centre, the Harrow Rec Reserve, Lake Charlegrark and the Kaniva Wetlands. Lake Wallace in Edenhope has a significant effect on the town's well-being – may there be good water in it!

Churches: Praise God for the witness of Christians in West Wimmera, especially through drought and flood. Pray for renewal and fresh energy for witness in each community, for godly leadership and Biblical training. May mature Christians with gifts in outreach move to the shire.

Evangelism: West Wimmera's relative isolation means that it can feel forgotten. Some wrestle with depression. Pray for winning Christian communities, that all will know they are not forgotten by God, who loves them and is deeply concerned for their welfare.

Children/Young Adults: Pray that children/young adults would clearly hear the good news and find the identity, purpose and fellowship only Christ can give. Christian camps have a role here.

Indigenous Redress: Thank God for the 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 wisdom re further means of redress and reconciliation.

Heavenly Father, we praise you for all in West Wimmera, for its parks, fields and wetlands, for its birds and animals, for the crops you give and the stock that's cared for. Pour out your Spirit on the shire, that all would know your love and mercy, in dry times and good, and that all would look to the future with their daily 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, 19 Sep 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP, Wimmera Mail & West Wimmera Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the City of Wodonga

Population: 43,253 (2021) (Indigenous:1,479)

Estimated Population 2036: 53,670

Main Towns: Wodonga incl. Killara/Bandiana (37,839), Baranduda (1,950), Bonegilla (610)

Main Industries: Health, Government Services, Retail, Construction, Manufacturing (Mars, Visy, Vitasoy), Education (La Trobe Uni), Hospitality, Defence, Warehousing/Logistics (Woolworths)

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

Cityscape: Wodonga has completely rebuilt itself, with the moving of the railway station, new bypasses, powerline undergrounding and streetscape renewal. Pray for attractive development. Pray too for wisdom about Albury Hospital's redevelopment: many would prefer a greenfield site.

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 witness of Christian staff/students at La Trobe, including the AFES group. May many staff/students find faith and be well-disciplined through the Scriptures, so that they would be fruitful witnesses for Christ, especially across regional Australia.

Army: Wodonga is home to a large Army logistics/training centre. Pray for those who identify as Christian. May God give them wisdom and skill at being his ambassadors, help them find fellowship and contribute to the city. Pray for the Focus Military Ministry, led by Pete Ritchie. May they put on the full armour of God (Ephesians 6:11–18).

Newcomers/Immigrants: Many retirees, young families, international students and immigrants (11.3%), such as Bhutanese, are moving to the city. Pray for witness in the new housing estates. Amid the stress of establishing new lives, may newcomers find new life in Christ and his church.

Industry: Pray for safety, respect and Christian witness in the manufacturing, logistics, and hospitality sectors, often places of first employment for newcomers to the nation (e.g. Indians).

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

Notes prepared by Adrian Lane, Bush Church Aid, PO Box 281, Heidelberg, VIC 3084, 3 Oct 2025, with info from ABS, DELWP & Wodonga City. vic@bushchurcaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

Pray for the Shire of Yarriambiack

Population: 6,556 (2021)

Estimated Population 2036: 5,930

Main Towns: Warracknabeal (2,227), Murtoa (780), Hopetoun (509), Minyip (424), Rupanyup (353), Patchewollock (149)

Main Industries: Agriculture (Wheat, Barley, Lamb, Wool, Legumes, Oilseeds), 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, the shire is totally dependent on favourable weather for its agricultural base.

Churches: Praise God for faithful Christian witness in Yarriambiack over many generations, especially through drought. Pray for the churches, that they would be encouraged, well taught and mature. Praise God too for the Wimmera Easter Convention and the kids, teens and young adults' camps, held annually at Warracknabeal. Pray for hungry, obedient and sharing hearts.

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

Spread: With a small population spread over a large area, Council has identified these key issues: Road repair, Affordable housing, Infrastructure connection, Recreational water, NBN access, Project funding, Waste disposal costs (Recyclables \$1,302 per ton!) and diminished Volunteering. Pray for fair consideration, especially from federal and state governments.

Economy: Thank God for good results from new crops such as legumes and the morale-boosting Silo Art Trail and Murtoa Stick Shed. Keep praying for a more diversified economy that addresses population decline and takes advantage of the climate. The nearby Donald Rare Earths project could be such a boost. Child care is a major issue, leading to many jobs being unfilled.

Young People: Pray for healthy family life. Pray that as young people leave, they will find supportive Christian communities. May those remaining know God's love and purpose for them.

Seniors: Pray for witness at the aged care facilities at Hopetoun (24 beds), Warracknabeal's Yarriambiack Lodge (59) and Minyip's Dunmunkle Lodge (36). May seniors know Christ's love.

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 many 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 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, 19 Sep 2025, with information from ABS, DELWP & Yarriambiack Shire. vic@bushchurchaid.com.au (03) 9457 7556

