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Proposed C122latr

CONTEXT

Latrobe City ('Latrobe') is the population and regional service centre for Gippsland. The municipality extends over 1400 square kilometres and is centrally located in eastern Victoria, approximately 150 kilometres east of Melbourne. Latrobe is now recognised as one of Victoria's four Major Regional Cities made up of four central towns: Churchill, Moe-Newborough, Morwell and Traralgon, which combined form a 'networked city'. The four central towns are supported by small and district townships. The rural landscapes of Latrobe are diverse ranging from traditional broadacre farming landscapes to rural residential settlements to pristine natural environments.

Latrobe is part of the region traditionally owned by the Braiakaulung clan of the Gunaikurnai people. European settlement began in the Gippsland Plain in the 1840s and extended to most of the Strzelecki Ranges after 1900.

Latrobe is currently home to approximately 75,211 residents (ABS, 2018). The population is forecast to grow by approximately 8,560 to 82,460 people by 2030. The demographic profile is forecast to significantly change over the next 15 years, with 70 per cent of all population growth forecast for Latrobe to occur in the population aged 70 and over (Essential Economics, 2016). The working age, infants and pre-schooler population groups are anticipated to experience below-average growth (Essential Economics, 2016).

Latrobe extends over three natural bioregions: the heavily forested foothills of the Highlands – Southern Fall bioregion to the north, the broad plains of the Gippsland Plains bioregion in the centre, and the northern slopes of the Strzelecki Ranges bioregion to the south. These bioregions support a wide range of ecosystems and contain significant flora and fauna, a number of which are protected under State and Federal legislation.

Although Latrobe Valley has one of the world's largest reserves of brown coal, Latrobe is experiencing a period of economic restructuring associated with the change in traditional employment sectors that support Victoria's power production including manufacturing and mining. Industry diversification and employment generation are major priorities for Latrobe and the Gippsland region, drawing on the extensive natural resource base, built infrastructure and local workforce.

Latrobe is one of Victoria's strongest regional economies. It is the regional retail service centre for Gippsland with retail providing a large proportion of jobs and contributing significantly to the local economy. It is also at the centre of a large forestry industry that services the largest pulp and paper mill in Australia. Other industries in the area include food processing, engineering, health, and post-secondary education. Latrobe also has an agricultural industry that is based primarily on dairy farming and livestock.