

21.01 MUNICIPAL PROFILE

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Location

Latrobe City is a large regional city which is centrally located in eastern Victoria, approximately 100 kilometres east of Melbourne. Latrobe City extends over 1400 square kilometres and sits within the boundaries of the Braiakaulung Clan group of the Gunnai/Kurnai people of Gippsland. Latrobe City is located in the heart of Gippsland, offering the best of rural and urban living offering diverse lifestyle opportunities. Latrobe City is within easy reach of pristine beaches and alpine high country, the Gippsland lakes and lush temperate rainforests. There are major retail and community centres providing a wide range of lifestyle options – including the largest shopping centre in regional Victoria, cinemas, theatre, art galleries, museums and recreation facilities. Latrobe City is only a 90-minute drive east of Melbourne, via a multi-lane freeway or the new regional train network. Latrobe City extends from the ridgeline of the Strzelecki Ranges in the south, across the Latrobe Valley and into the foothills of the Great Dividing Range to the north.

People

Latrobe City has a population of approximately 73,000 people who are accommodated in about 30,000 dwellings. Around 75% of the population live in the main urban centres of Traralgon, Morwell, Moe and Churchill; around 5% live in smaller townships; and the remaining 20% live in rural areas. The age profile of the community indicates a youthful population. 35% of the population are in the 0-24 age group, with 12% of the population over 65. Under a high growth scenario population projections indicate that Latrobe City will be home to about 84,000 residents in 2023 by which time the proportion of residents over the age of 60 will significantly increase. Latrobe City is a thriving, diverse, multicultural region whose people have come from many parts of the world.

Natural Environment

The Strzelecki Ranges are a range of rounded hills deeply dissected by numerous streams and with moderate to steep slopes containing cool temperate rainforest. Some soils are young and prone to tunnel erosion and landslips. The highest point in the Strzeleckis is Mt. Tassie at 730m above sea level. The Latrobe City boundary extends to the main ridgeline and watershed, encompassing the catchments of Traralgon Creek, Bennett's Creek and the Morwell River (including Middle Creek) which drain to the Latrobe River. The Latrobe Valley is a broad, relatively flat valley from 20 to 100m above sea level, bordered by low, rounded foothills up to 250m above sea level. The Latrobe River flows west to east through the valley and is fed by numerous tributaries from the Strzeleckis to the south and the Highlands (Southern Fall) to the north, including Tanjil East, Tyers River and Rintoul's Creek. Latrobe City extends across three bioregions being the Gippsland Plain, the Strzelecki Ranges and the Highlands – Southern Fall. These 'natural regions' are determined by their different natural physical features and climate and with unique flora, fauna and vegetation adapted to those conditions.

Built Environment

Urban settlement covers a relatively small area of the municipality. Latrobe City has a hierarchy of townships comprising three main towns, a satellite town, seven smaller settlements and a rural hinterland. While each town and settlement provides many of the services and facilities needed by their residents, they are not separate, self-contained entities which operate in isolation from each other. They all interact, to varying degrees, to create what is, effectively, a 'networked city'. Combined, the main towns of Moe

(approximately 15,300 persons), Morwell (13,700) and Traralgon (21,700) and the satellite town of Churchill (4,600) form a social, economic and physical entity within which people of Latrobe City move for work, schooling, shopping, recreation, entertainment, leisure and to access community services and facilities. These towns are supported by settlements at Boolarra (1100), Glengarry (1400), Toongabbie (900), Traralgon South (300), Tyers (860), Yallourn North (1450), and Yinnar (600).

Latrobe is one of Victoria's strongest regional economies. Despite having less than 1% of Australia's population, the Latrobe Valley accounts for 3% of Australia's Gross Domestic Product.

The Gross Regional Product for Latrobe City (2008) was \$4.07 billion. Latrobe Valley has a multi-skilled, multilingual workforce, with close proximity to extensive raw materials, and unique strength in key sectors such as energy, manufacturing, information and communication technology and agriculture. From 1999 to 2006, Latrobe City attracted hundreds of millions of dollars of investment. There are a number of long standing industrial sectors, such as electricity generation, pulp and paper, forestry, engineering, agriculture and tertiary education. Increasingly, high value-adding industries are basing themselves in the region. New and emerging sectors such as aviation and research and development are locating within the municipality.

Overall, the main industries in Latrobe City in terms of gross revenue generated are electricity, gas and water (26%) and manufacturing (18%). Most of this production is based on processing the local natural resources of coal and timber. The direct contribution of primary industries themselves is comparatively low with agriculture, forestry and fishing directly generating 2% and mining 7% of gross revenue. Latrobe City is Victoria's powerhouse, providing 85% of the state's base load electricity. It is an internationally famous, world-class centre of excellence in brown coal mining and contains the largest accessible coal resources in Australia. The region annually produces over 60 million tonnes of coal for conversion to briquettes, charcoal and electricity. Latrobe Valley coal is used for power generation, fuels, carbons, fertilisers and agricultural by-products. The electricity generators are major employers in Latrobe. Multi-million dollar investments are being planned including clean coal technology, which will increase generating capacity and support the region's engineering and manufacturing firms.

Approximately 40% of Latrobe City is used for forestry, 30% for agriculture and 10% for coal mining. Native vegetation covers around 20% of the land area. Timber production is concentrated in the hills and it includes native forest harvesting in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range and pine and hardwood plantations in the Strzeleckis. Coal mining and agriculture occurs mainly within the valley.

Infrastructure

Latrobe City is the hub of road networks and highways for greater Gippsland. Recent roadwork improvements like the Pakenham Bypass further shorten road travel times to Melbourne. Residents now enjoy a renaissance of rail transport in Gippsland and the benefits associated with major rail infrastructure upgrades to support the Regional Fast Rail service between Latrobe Valley and Melbourne.

The development of the Gippsland Logistics Precinct (GLP) will establish a centre for the efficient and cost effective movement of freight to and from the Gippsland region.

Latrobe Regional Airport is integral to the region's transport network and provides a range of employment and recreation opportunities. Well equipped and of a high standard, it ranks as one of the best regional airports in Australia. The airport's supply of serviced industrial land is currently being expanded to facilitate enhanced aeronautical development [as outlined in the Latrobe Regional Airport Master Plan \(2015\)](#).

Water is among Latrobe's most valuable resources, and water quality, security and management are key opportunities. Latrobe City has a more secure water supply and larger capacity sustainable waste water system than any other Victorian region. Water is supplied from three highly reliable and interlinked sources. The Gippsland Water Factory will add to resources being a new wastewater treatment and recycling system treating up to 35 million litres of domestic and industrial wastewater daily.

Telecommunications advantages in Latrobe include ADSL for business, fibre optic cable, video, ISDN and broadband microwave. Latrobe is served by some of the best medical facilities, services and health related professionals in regional Victoria, including Maryvale Private Hospital and Latrobe Regional Hospital. Latrobe City is also the educational centre for Gippsland, providing pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, as well as a large campus for Monash University, a thriving TAFE college, the Gippsland Education Precinct and hosts Apprenticeships Group Australia.