

Latrobe City Heritage Study

Volume 1: Thematic Environmental History

**Amendment C14
July 2010**

CONTEXT

**Prepared for
Latrobe City Council**

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Project Team:

Dr Meredith Fletcher, Director,
Centre for Gippsland Studies
(Monash University, Gippsland Campus)

David Helms, Senior Consultant

Fiona Gruber, Historian

Report Register

This report register documents the development and issue of the report entitled *Latrobe City Heritage Study Volume 1: Thematic Environmental History*, undertaken by Context Pty Ltd in accordance with our internal quality management system.

Project No.	Issue No.	Notes/description	Issue date	Issued to
1079	1	First draft	16 September 2008	Nathan Misiurka
1079	2	Second draft	31 October 2008	Nathan Misiurka
1079	3	Final – HV peer review	27 January 2009	Nathan Misiurka
1079	4	Amendment C14	29 July 2010	Nathan Misiurka

Context Pty Ltd

22 Merri Street, Brunswick 3056

Phone 03 9380 6933

Facsimile 03 9380 4066

Email context@context-pl.com.au

CONTENTS

PREFACE	VII
INTRODUCTION	VIII
Purpose	viii
Historical Overview	ix
1 FIRST CONTACT AND EXPLORATION	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Indigenous occupation and way of life	1
1.2 Exploration and first contact	1
HERITAGE	2
Indigenous occupation and way of life	2
Exploration and first contact	2
2 SETTLING THE LAND: LAYERS OF SETTLEMENT	3
INTRODUCTION	3
2.1 Squatters and the pastoral era	3
2.2 Selection	4
2.3 Closer settlement in the twentieth century	6
Closer and soldier settlement schemes	6
Small subdivisions and hobby farms	6
2.4 Migrating to seek opportunity	7
HERITAGE	7
Squatters and the pastoral era	8
Selection	8
Closer settlement in the twentieth century	8
Migrating to seek opportunity	8
3 UTILISING NATURAL RESOURCES	9
INTRODUCTION	9
3.1 Working the land	9
Grazing	9
Dairying	10
Cropping	12
3.2 Developing a forestry industry	12
Development of forest industries in Victoria	12
Sawmilling	13
Managing and sustaining forest resources	14
3.3 Mining	14
Gold	14
Limestone	14
Black coal	15

	Failed ventures	15
3.4	Providing a water supply for towns and industry	15
	Creating township supplies	15
	Water for industry	16
	HERITAGE	17
	Working the land	17
	Developing a forestry industry	17
	Mining	17
	Providing a water supply for towns and industry	17
4	TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS	19
	INTRODUCTION	19
4.1	Developing a road network	19
	Early tracks	19
	The CRB and twentieth century improvements	20
	Bridges	21
4.2	Creating a railway network	21
	Gippsland line	22
	Branch lines	24
	Connecting industry	24
	Post war improvements to the Gippsland line	25
4.3	Providing mail and telegraph services	26
	HERITAGE	27
	Developing a road network	27
	Creating a railway network	27
	Providing mail and telegraph services	27
5	INDUSTRIALISATION AND MAKING A REGION	29
	INTRODUCTION	29
5.1	Providing the State with fuel and power	29
	Brown coal mining, power generation and briquette manufacturing at Yallourn	29
	Making a region	30
	Post war planning	31
5.2	Paper manufacturing	31
5.3	Clothing and textile manufacturing	32
	HERITAGE	32
	Providing the State with fuel and power	32
	Paper manufacturing	32
	Clothing and textile manufacturing	32
6	THE ENVIRONMENT AND MANAGING PUBLIC LAND	33
	INTRODUCTION	33
6.1	Managing the effects of bushfires	33
6.2	Managing the effects of flooding and pollution	34

6.3	Appreciating the natural environment	35
	Morwell National Park	35
	Edward Hunter Bush Reserve, Moe	35
	HERITAGE	36
	Managing the effects of bushfires	36
	Managing the effects of flooding and pollution	36
	Appreciating the natural environment	36
7	BUILDING SETTLEMENTS AND TOWNS	37
	INTRODUCTION	37
7.1	Establishing settlements and towns from the nineteenth century	37
	Selection towns	37
	Mining towns	38
	Railway towns	40
7.2	The SEC towns	44
	Yallourn	44
	Yallourn North	45
	Newborough	45
	Churchill	46
7.3	Developing towns and regional centres in the twentieth century	46
	Moe	47
	Morwell	47
	Traralgon	48
	Dormitory towns	49
	Houses on the move	50
	HERITAGE	50
	Establishing towns and settlements from the nineteenth century	50
	The SEC towns	50
	Developing towns and regional centres in the twentieth century	50
8	GOVERNING AND ADMINISTRATION	51
	INTRODUCTION	51
8.1	Forming local government	51
	Shire and City of Traralgon	51
	Shire and City of Morwell	52
	Borough and City of Moe	52
	Latrobe Shire and Latrobe City	52
8.2	Defending Australia	52
8.3	Public buildings and public works	53
8.4	Educating	54
	State primary schools	54
	Secondary schools and higher education	55
	Church schools	56
8.5	Providing health and medical services	56

HERITAGE	57
Forming local government	57
Defending Australia	57
Public buildings and public works	57
Educating	58
Providing health and medical services	58
9 COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL LIFE	59
INTRODUCTION	59
9.1 Creating places for worship	59
9.2 Memorials and remembering	62
9.3 Mechanics' institutes and public halls	62
9.4 Cemeteries	63
9.5 Recreation and forming associations	64
9.6 Writers and artists	65
HERITAGE	66
Creating places for worship	66
Memorials and remembering	67
Mechanics' institutes and public halls	67
Cemeteries	67
Recreation and forming associations	67
Writers and artists	67
GLOSSARY	68
ENDNOTES	69

PREFACE

The *Latrobe City Thematic Environmental History* comprises Volume 1 of the *Latrobe City Heritage Study 2010* (the Study). The purpose of the Study is to identify, assess and document places of post-contact cultural significance within Latrobe City (the study area) and to make recommendations for their future conservation.

As described in the following chapter, this environmental history provides an explanation of the themes and activities that have been important in shaping the study area so as to provide a context to assist with the identification of heritage places that illustrate its rich cultural history. It should be read in conjunction with the other volumes of the Study, which are:

- *Volume 2: Key Findings and Recommendations.* Volume 2 of the Study provides an explanation of the key findings including a list of heritage places and precincts identified by the Study as well as a series of recommended actions and strategies that form the basis of a Heritage Strategy for Latrobe City.
- *Volume 3: Latrobe Heritage Place & Precinct Citations.* Volume 3 of the Study contains the citations for heritage places and precincts of local significance throughout Latrobe City that illustrate the themes set out in this environmental history.

The terms used throughout this report are consistent with *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Heritage Significance*. A glossary of these terms and their meanings is provided at the end of this report.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This environmental history provides an explanation of the themes and activities that have been important in shaping the present day Latrobe City, which was created in 1994 and comprises (either wholly or in part) the former Shire of Morwell, City of Moe, Shire of Narracan, Shire of Rosedale and City and Shire of Traralgon.

It is important to understand that it is not intended as a complete social or political history of the municipality, but rather as a summary of human use and impact upon the landscape in the years since first contact with indigenous inhabitants¹. It is not a chronological record and should not be read in this way.

Rather, the history is organised according to themes so as to provide a context to assist with the identification of heritage places that illustrate the rich cultural history of the study area. These heritage places include buildings and structures, precincts, objects, ruins, trees and landscapes. The themes are also embodied in the historic or continuing use of places and people's social and spiritual associations with them.

The themes used in this environmental history have been adapted from the Australian Historic Themes (AHT) set down as guidelines by the Australian Heritage Council (AHC). The AHC notes that:

The consistent organising principle for the Thematic Framework is activity. By emphasising the human activities that produced the places we value, and the human response to Australia's natural environment, places are related to the processes and stories associated with them, rather than to the type or function of place.

Finally, it is important to understand that the history is arranged not as a hierarchy, which gives priority, weighting and privilege to some themes, nor is it simply a checklist. One place may have many themes reflecting the integrated, diverse and complex way that places evolve over time. Also while the majority of places identified by the Study will be associated with a theme, not all places are and there may be some that are individually significant for reasons that are independent of the themes identified by the study.

On this basis, each chapter includes:

- A brief introduction, which includes an explanation of which AHT is relevant.
- An outline of the history of the study area associated with the particular theme.
- A description of some of the heritage places associated with the theme. The heritage places mentioned in this report are not exhaustive list; rather they are representative of the many places that the Study has identified.

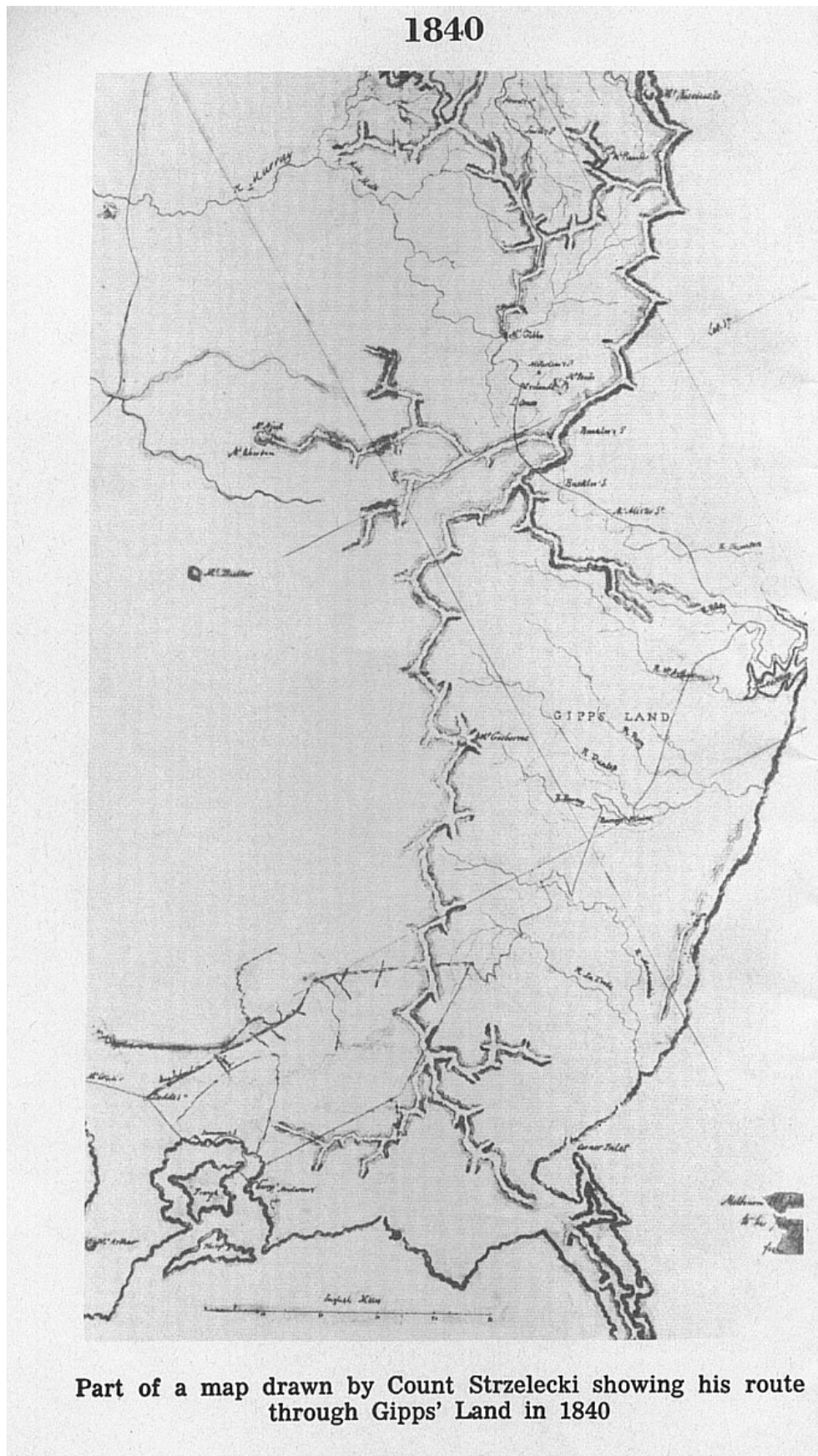
¹ This is referred to as the 'post-contact' period.

Historical Overview

As described above, this thematic environmental history is set out in thematic, but not chronological order. The following table is provided to assist in understand how the historic themes are associated with key dates in the historic development of the study area. Please note that this table is indicative only of broad timeframes associated with each theme and reference should be made to the appropriate chapter in this environmental history for more specific information about the actual periods of influence for each theme.

Theme	Period of Influence										
	Pre-1860	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s
First contact & exploration											
Settling the land											
Utilising natural resources											
Transport & communications											
Industrialisation & making a region											
The environment & managing public land											
Building settlements & towns											
Governing & administration											
Community & cultural life											

	Primary period of influence
	Secondary or continuing period of influence



Source: Cuthill, William J., The River of Little Fish, 1970

1 FIRST CONTACT AND EXPLORATION

INTRODUCTION

This theme addresses the sudden disruption to indigenous space and time with the arrival of European explorers and pastoralists in the 1840s. Dominated by the search for good pastoral land, the newcomers brought a new way of looking at country and assessing land.

This era was very important in terms of establishing the great potential of the study area as a farming district for settlement. The observations made during this time by early explorers led to great interest amongst the early colonial settlers and enabled the first pastoral runs to be established. Out of all the themes in the history of the study area it had perhaps the least impact in terms of its initial effects upon the landscape, however, the impact upon the indigenous inhabitants and their traditional lifestyle was devastating.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- *Peopling Australia*: Living as Australia's earliest inhabitants; Fighting for land; Promoting settlement.
- *Developing local, regional and national economies*: Surveying the continent.

1.1 Indigenous occupation and way of life

The area that is now Latrobe City was part of the traditional lands of the Gunai Kurnai people. The Brataualung, a clan of the Gunai Kurnai, claimed the land south of the Latrobe River, while the Briakalong occupied land to the north.ⁱ

Food supplies on the plains and in the river valleys were plentiful. The people had a valuable supply of silcrete from quarries in the Haunted Hills and used this to make tools for hunting kangaroos and wallabies on the open plains. The rivers and swamps supplied abundant food such as fish, eels, reptiles, freshwater mussels, waterbirds and eggs. The women gathered plants and small animals. Recent archaeological surveys along the Morwell River valley provide an insight to how people lived and where they camped. Besides camping close to water, higher sites such as Macmillan's hill were also important places. From these vantage points, Aboriginal people had good views of the surrounding plains where they could keep an eye on their campfires and other clans' movements. They made their stone tools on these hills.ⁱⁱ

This was a 'totemic landscape', a geography created by ancestral beings whose actions ordered an existing world. The totemic ancestors linked people to country and gave authority, religion and social order to the country.ⁱⁱⁱ The past and present were connected through the bestowal of identity, rights and obligations that came from the ancestral past but that were 'evident and alive' in the totemic landscape.^{iv}

1.2 Exploration and first contact

For European settlers in the Port Phillip District, Gippsland was a little known region until the steamer 'Clonmel', en route from Sydney to Melbourne, was wrecked at the entrance to Corner Inlet, near Port Albert, in January 1841. The rescued passengers and crew publicised the region. The mountains, forests and swamps that surrounded Gippsland had formed a barrier to settlement. From the mid 1830s, there had been several forays into Gippsland from the Monaro in New South Wales by pastoralists looking for grazing areas. Angus McMillan was one of these. After establishing a station on the Avon River, he mounted another expedition to find a port from where he could ship his stock to markets. He reached the coast at Port Albert in February 1841, a month after the 'Clonmel' had been wrecked.

Explorer and scientist Paul de Strzelecki followed a similar route to McMillan. After crossing the Latrobe River he followed the Traralgon Creek, intending to reach Corner Inlet but after an exhausting trek and close to starvation, his party reached Westernport Bay.

With favourable reports from Strzelecki and the passengers on the 'Clonmel', a group of Melbourne citizens formed the Gipps Land Company (inspired by the name that Strzelecki had given to the region) and sailed to Port Albert to investigate its grazing potential. Several of the party, guided by Aboriginal, Charlie Tarra and led by William Brodribb, travelled back overland to Melbourne to look for a stock route. They followed the Latrobe westward and encountered extremely difficult country before they reached Melbourne. In 1842, another small party set off from Melbourne to look for a stock route. They went to the north of the Moe swamp, along the Latrobe River and across to Port Albert, also unsuccessful in the hunt for a good route.

When the Europeans first arrived in Gippsland, the Aborigines thought they were *mrarts*, or returned spirits of the dead.^v But as the squatters took over the land with no recognition of Indigenous rights, there were violent confrontations in Gippsland. Aborigines speared shepherds in outstations and speared stock. The whites retaliated. In the Warrigal Creek massacre near Port Albert, 100-150 Brataualong people were massacred following the spearing of Ronald Macalister.^{vi}

HERITAGE

Indigenous occupation and way of life

Sites that document the pre-contact Aboriginal occupation are found throughout Latrobe Region. They include scar trees, evidence of the Indigenous way of life. They demonstrate the importance of bark as a resource for Aboriginal people, especially for use as shelters and utensils.^{vii}

Exploration and first contact

Part of Angus McMillan's homestead survives and has been relocated to Old Gippstown at Moe. Apart from this no other physical traces survive of the routes taken by the early explorers through Gippsland, but a series of cairns were erected throughout Gippsland in the 1920s to mark the supposed routes taken by Strzelecki and McMillan. Two of the Strzelecki memorials are in the study area – one is at Koornalla and the other is east of Traralgon on the Princes Highway.

The early explorers are also remembered in place names such as the Strzelecki Ranges.

2 SETTLING THE LAND: LAYERS OF SETTLEMENT

INTRODUCTION

From the vast acreages dominated by the squatters, this chapter traces how government settlement policies dramatically transformed the landscape after the 1860s. The pastoral era of settlement began with the arrival of the first squatters in the early 1840s, which reached its peak by the 1850s, and began to wane with the opening up of the land for selection from the 1860s onwards. As we shall see in the following chapter, the primary activity associated with this era was grazing, which is still carried on in parts of the study area today.

The selection era began with the passing of a series of Land Acts in the 1860s, which by the end of that decade opened up almost the whole of Victoria for selection. By the mid-twentieth century much of the land in the study area had been taken up. Under the selection acts, smaller farms were developed and the land was aggressively cleared for more intensive land-use. While most of the region was transformed into productive farms, attempts to select land in the higher parts of the Strzelecki Ranges resulted in failure. As we shall see in the following chapter, this led to the development of a diverse farming community in which dairying, butter and cheese-making, and the breeding of cattle became the basis of the local economy over many decades.

Following the postwar expansion of industrialization in the Latrobe Valley, rural subdivisions were carved from larger farms that surrounded the settlements and towns of the region, and provided another layer of settlement and way of life.

The changes caused by the pastoral and selection eras profoundly altered the natural landscape and formed the basis for the distinctive pattern of settlement in the study area.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- *Peopling Australia*: Promoting settlement; Migrating
- *Developing local, regional and national economies*: Surveying the continent

2.1 Squatters and the pastoral era

The pastoral era began with the settlers who began flooding into the Port Phillip District after 1834. In 1836, the occupation of squatting was legalized and this encouraged a 'further wave of fortune hunters' and by 1850 all but the most uninviting or inaccessible areas of Gippsland had been occupied^{viii}.

The pastoral occupation of the central Gippsland plains was swift after 'Gipps Land', as it was originally known, was proclaimed a squatting district in 1843, which enabled the squatters to occupy large tracts of land that were called runs and pay an annual licence fee of ten pounds for each run. In 1847, new regulations gave the squatters greater security as they were able to buy up to 640 acres of their runs. Port Albert was the port of entry to Gippsland. The squatters' wool clip was shipped from the port and there was a lucrative live cattle trade across Bass Strait to Tasmania.

As the squatters occupied their runs, European names replaced Indigenous ancestral names. The Traralgon run was taken up by Edmund Hobson in 1844 and Jas Rintoul took up the Loy Yang run in 1844. In 1846, John Turnbull took up the River Tyers run, named after Gippsland's first commissioner of Crown lands, while John Reeve occupied Scarne on the north bank of the Latrobe in 1847. The Merton Rush run, which was bounded by the Latrobe and Morwell rivers and Wilderness and Narracan creeks, was taken up by Henry Scott in 1846. Maryville was taken up by Thomas Gorrington in 1845. Haselwood run was taken up by brothers-in-law Albert Brodribb and William Bennett. A smaller run near Yinnar, Scrubby Forest, was taken up in 1848^{ix}.

Surveyor R.G. Shakespeare's map of pastoral properties along the Morwell River in 1864 provides an insight to how landscapes within Latrobe City had changed in 20 years of pastoral occupation. Shakespeare marked the squatters' houses (all close to the Morwell River), location of yards and the type of fencing (Two rail and dog leg fencing), as well as the nature of the soil and vegetation, such as 'rank, rotten soil' along Billy's Creek, the swamps, forest and open grassy areas. While the land was still forested, the map shows how the squatters' initial isolation was diminishing. There was an inn and a bridge over the Morwell River and a stockyard to hold travelling stock. By the time the map had been drawn, the squatters' dependence on Port Albert had ended and most cattle were driven overland to Melbourne.^x

Place names are the main survivors of the pastoral era. A portion of Angus McMillan's homestead, moved from Bushy Park on the Avon River, is on display at Old Gipps town and provides an insight to the squatters' way of life.

2.2 Selection

The squatters were not destined to keep control over their large tracts of leasehold. After the gold rushes significantly increased Victoria's population, the government introduced legislation that promoted more intensive use of the land and enabled many former gold miners to 'select' land and develop farms.^{xi} Under a series of land acts, the former squatting runs were thrown open for selection. Selectors began arriving in 1865, as a result of the Grant Land Act. A decade later, the railway line that was under construction provided further inducement to select in the study area and a Lands Office was opened in Traralgon. As a series of land acts were passed, conditions that the selectors had to fulfil changed. For prospective selectors moving to Flynn's Creek, for example, after the lease on the Loy Yang run had been extinguished in 1877, boundaries had to be fenced, a house built and a designated proportion of the land had to be cleared and cultivated each year. Selectors had to live on their properties.

Selection has had a major impact on shaping the land in this region. It attracted large numbers of people to the area, resulted in widespread clearing of land, and was responsible for many of the towns and communities in the study area developing. Selection led to the foundation of institutions such as schools and churches and to new local government areas.

Although selectors faced many difficulties carrying out their schedules of improvements including floods, fires, caterpillar plagues, poor prices and limited capital, land on the plains and river flats was transformed from forest and scrub to cleared paddocks, fenced crops and pasture. Swamps were drained. In the early 1880s, selectors began penetrating the southern regions of the study area, selecting land in Jumbuk, Boolarra, Budgerie and Callignee. The rainfall was higher in the densely forested Strzelecki Ranges and it was assumed the land was fertile because of the giant trees that grew there. Ahead of them was the Herculean task of clearing the giant trees, and of trying to get their produce to market. Many of the selections in the steeper areas of the Strzeleckis proved to be unviable and were later abandoned.

Scrubby Forest Homestead, set high on the eastern bank of the Morwell River, is an example of a selector's home. It was built in the 1890s by the Firmin family who selected the homestead section of the Scrubby Forest run in 1885. The homestead replaced their earlier slab house.^{xii} The Flynn's Creek Upper School site illustrates the determination of selector parents to educate their children in the area. With its pine trees, remnants of the horse paddock fence and flat area of tennis court, it marks the centre of a community formed by selectors and is an important survivor in a landscape that has been dramatically changed by the Loy Yang open cut and power stations.^{xiii}

The Firmin family, Scrubby Forest, c.1890

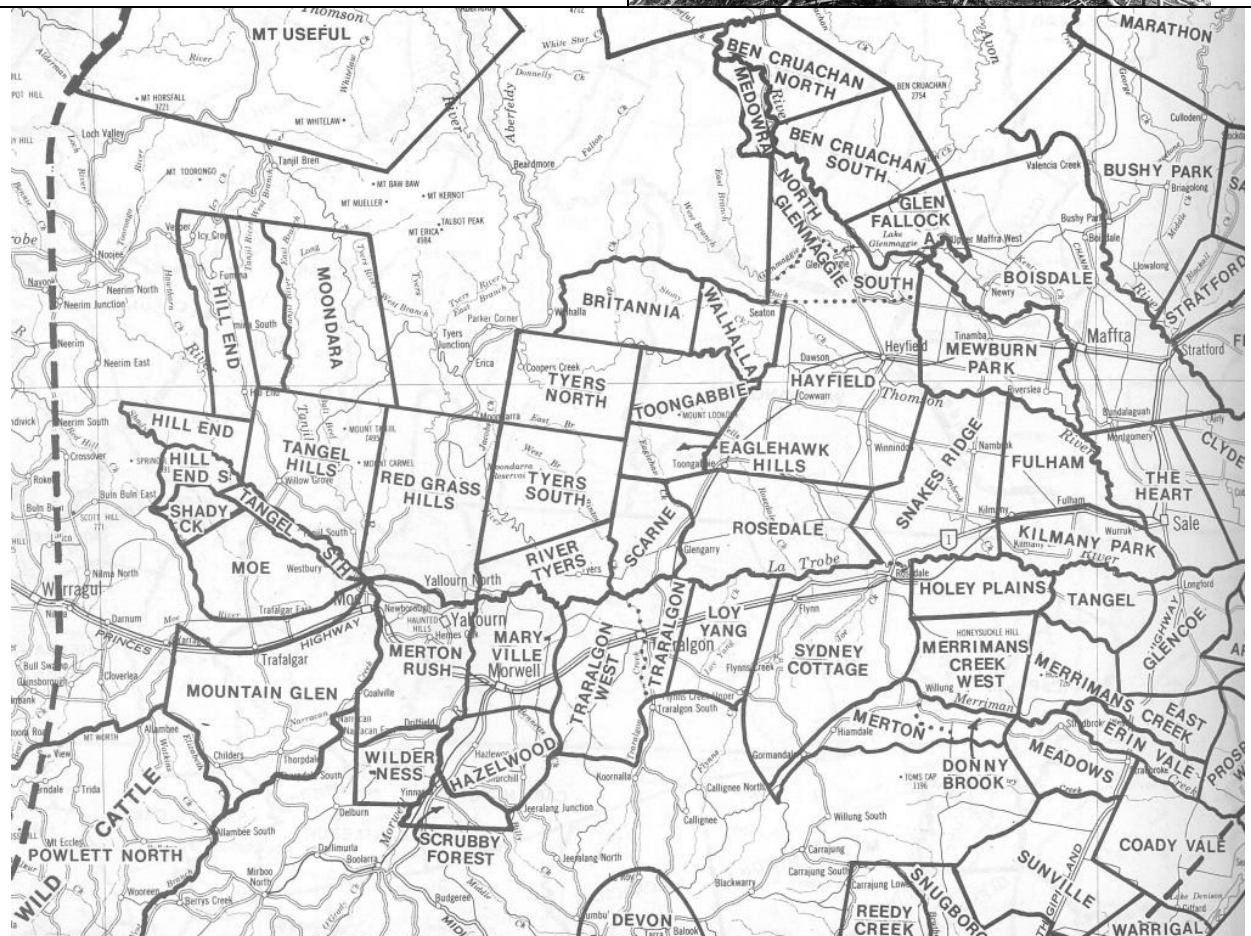
[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.12]

*Cleared hill country, Jumbuk, c.1900*

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.16]

*Pastoral runs in central Gippsland*

[SOURCE: VICTORIAN SQUATTERS]



2.3 Closer settlement in the twentieth century

Closer and soldier settlement schemes

Government policy to promote intensive land use continued after the selection acts with the introduction of the Closer Settlement Act in 1898. Under this legislation, the government purchased large estates (usually large pastoral properties) and subdivided them into small allotments that were available for people with limited capital to turn into farms. The scheme aimed to increase rural populations, promote intensive land use and increase agricultural exports. The policy proved to be a failure, mostly because the allotments were too small to become viable farms. In spite of this, it was massively extended as a repatriation measure after the First World War when the government attempted to settle 16,000 returned soldiers on farms throughout Victoria. The Hazelwood estate was one of the properties that the Soldier Settlement Board bought and subdivided into small farms for soldier settlers.

Originally part of the Hazelwood/Haselwood run, the land became the property of John Macmillan, who first leased the run in 1860 and managed to consolidate a considerable amount of freehold land during the selection years. He developed a renowned herd of shorthorn cattle there and also bred horses for the Indian Army. After the First World War, the Soldier Settlement Board bought part of the estate and subdivided the land into 45 soldier settlement allotments. Returned soldiers began occupying their blocks and trying to turn them into farms. Some of the settlers abandoned their blocks because they were too small, and those along the river were subject to flooding and infested with blackberries. In the mid 1930s there was a major distribution of land to give the remaining settlers a 'living area', that is, to provide them with a viable farm. Those whose blocks flooded were given access to higher ground. In another effort to place the soldier settlers in a better financial position, debts to the Soldier Settlement Commission were written off.

Closer settlement led to the formation of new communities. The Hazelwood Estate School was opened in 1926 to educate the children of soldier settlers. First operating in a hall, the school was given its own building when the closed Koornalla school was moved to the site five years later.^{xiv}

After the Second World War, a much smaller and better conceptualised soldier settlement scheme was instigated. Land was bought for an estate along the Latrobe River, near Glengarry. The distinctive houses that were built for soldier settlers in the 1950s are evidence of this settlement scheme.^{xv}

Small subdivisions and hobby farms

Many of the towns in the study area, from Toongabbie in the north to Boolarra in the south, are fringed by rural farmlets and small rural subdivisions. Since the 1970s, sections of farming properties have been subdivided to provide acreages for people who work in the Latrobe Valley but are attracted to a rural lifestyle where they can have a large garden and a few livestock. Often, substantial homes are built. This embracing of a rural lifestyle has often meant a revitalisation for small rural towns as noted in Chapter 7. A drive along Hazelwood Road from Traralgon to Churchill provides an example of this 'layer of settlement'. While there are still sheep and dairy farms, the acreages have replaced a more intensive dairying area, as the abandoned milking sheds reveal.

2.4 Migrating to seek opportunity

Since European settlement in the 1840s, successive waves of migrants have settled in the study area and have shaped the landscape with names, buildings and sites that reflect their cultural traditions. In the nineteenth century and up to the middle of the twentieth century English, Scottish and Irish migrants predominated. This began to change during the first phase of electricity generation in the 1920s when Maltese workers came to work for the Mines Department and State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SEC), mostly working in the Old Brown Coal Mine and living in the settlement there. In 1927, there were 102 Maltese workers in the SEC workforce.^{xvi} The men came alone and saved hard to enable their families to join them in Australia. Significant numbers of British migrants also came to work at Yallourn in the 1920s, many of whom had served in the First World War.

In 1947 the census revealed that 80% of the migrants who had come to the Latrobe Valley were from the British Isles. However, in the following decade there would be profound changes in migration that would ‘change the human face of the Latrobe Valley forever’^{xvii}. In the post war years, the power industry was responsible for establishing a greater cultural diversity in Latrobe City as migrants from many parts of Europe came to work for the SEC. This was the consequence of a radical new migration policy introduced in 1947 that by 1960 saw 1.7 million people migrate to settle in Australia. Many ‘displaced persons’ and assisted migrants, in return for a free passage to Australia, fulfilled their two year work contract by working for the SEC. They stayed on, many building their own homes and establishing social clubs and places of worship.

As a result Latrobe City has a much higher proportion of migrants in the local population, compared with the rest of Victoria.^{xviii} Key migrant groups include people of British, Italian, Dutch, German, Maltese, Polish and Ukrainian descent. For example in Morwell between 1954 and 1961 the number of migrants increased from 2,300 to 4,300. During that time the percentage of migrants from Great Britain declined markedly from 65% to 45%, while Germans had remained steady at around 10%, Italians had increased from 2% to 11%, the Maltese rose slightly from 3% to 5% and the proportion of Dutch had risen to 15%.^{xix}

The cultural diversity that resulted from post war migration is reflected in the landscape, particularly in places of worship and social clubs and halls. At Newborough, the Ukrainian community built a hall with voluntary labour. A German Club was established at Yallourn, which was later shifted to Morwell. Other institutions include the Italian Club, and the Maltese Community Centre in Morwell. Places of worship associated with migration are discussed in Chapter 9.

Soccer has been strong in the region since large numbers of British migrants moved to Yallourn in the 1920s, but post war migration has given it a new prominence. The Falcons Soccer Club and its impressive complex in Crinigan Road Morwell owes much to Italian migration and the support of the De Fabrizio brothers.

HERITAGE

As we have seen, the story of settling the land in the study area is illustrated particularly by farm complexes, which document the improvements that were made as permanent tenure was acquired. Few physical traces remain of the pastoral era and most of the places are associated with the selection era. However, it is often the later and more substantial homes that remain rather than the early, simple structures that have succumbed to the ravages of time including bushfires. Compared to other parts of Gippsland, relatively few early buildings remain – many early examples to the south of Morwell have been lost as a result of the continuing development and expansion of the open cut coal mine.

Similarly, few early outbuildings remain, although those that do are exceptional examples of their type. These structures are closely associated with the type of farming activity carried out on the property and so will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Settlement of the land is also illustrated by changes to the landscape and particularly by introduced elements such as trees, hedges and windrows. Buildings associated with the formation of communities will be discussed in later chapters.

Some examples of places associated with the theme of *Settling the land: Layers of settlement* are:

Squatters and the pastoral era

Angus McMillan's homestead, Old Gippstown, 211 Lloyd Street, Moe

The ruins of the Hazelwood homestead, Brodribb Road, Hazelwood

This era is also remembered by place names that are derived from the early cattle runs such as Traralgon, Loy Yang, and Hazelwood

Selection

'Scarne', 70 Christensen's Road, Glengarry

'Airlie Bank' homestead, 33 The Boulevard, Morwell

'Traralgon Park' homestead, 21 Hedges Avenue, Traralgon

'Scrubby Forest' homestead, 13 Scrubby Forest Road, Yinnar

The houses and farm buildings at 'Riversdale' and 'Drumrossie', the properties associated with the pioneering Walker family at Yinnar South

Airlie Bank homestead

[SOURCE: CONTEXT, 2005]



Closer settlement in the twentieth century

Hare farmhouse site, now part of Mathison Park, Mackey's Road, Churchill

Soldier settlement farm, 1032 Hazelwood Estate Road, Hazelwood

Soldier settler houses, Marshalls Road, Traralgon

Migrating to seek opportunity

Our Lady of Dormition Greek Orthodox Church, 42-44 Elgin Street, Morwell

German Club, Maryvale Crescent, Morwell

Ukrainian Hall, 20 Balfour Road, Newborough

St Brigid's Catholic Church, 11 Reserve Street, Yallourn North

3 UTILISING NATURAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

The spreading plains and river valleys that drew the first pastoralists to the region also provided scope for more intensive land use such as dairying, cropping and mixed farming. A timber industry developed in several phases as forest red gums and red ironbark on the plains and foothills were milled for their valuable timber, and later, blackwood and mountain ash were logged in the wet forested areas of the Strzeleckis. In response to degradation caused by clearing the Strzeleckis, new 'forests' were created with softwood and hardwood plantations. These activities have contributed to shaping the landscape as it appears today.

With urban development and industrialisation, residents and government authorities had to establish water supplies that provided urban areas with clean water, could be used in fire emergencies and that were later used to supply prodigious amounts of water to the power stations.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- *Developing Local, Regional and National Economies:* Developing primary production; Farming for commercial profit; Utilising natural resources; Altering the environment

3.1 Working the land

Grazing

The first graziers in the study area were the squatters who arrived in the 1840s in search of suitable grazing land for sheep and cattle. A description of the Gippsland squatting runs in the *Port Phillip Government Gazette* in August 1848 gives an insight to the extent of the squatters' domains and their stocking rates. The Traralgon run was 28,000 acres with an estimated carrying capacity of 1600 cattle or 12,000 sheep, while the River Tyers run of 16,000 acres had an estimated stocking rate of 640 cattle. The Loy Yang run, also 16,000 acres had an 'estimated grazing capability' of 8,000 sheep.^{xx}

Cattle grazed on native grasses and vegetation. They were then driven to Port Albert via Rosedale and shipped to Van Diemens Land as part of the live cattle trade that plied across Bass Strait. During the 1850s, they were driven overland to Melbourne.

As the squatting runs were overtaken by selectors in the 1860s to 1890, much of the former grazing land was converted to mixed farming and dairying. Large scale grazing continued on the drier plains east and north of Traralgon, while more intensive farming was carried out on smaller farms where cattle and sheep grazed on paddocks that had been improved through application of superphosphate and sowing pasture.

Stockyards were built at hotels for droving cattle and for local auctions. Toongabbie provides a case study. Auctions were held in hotel stockyards but as the town declined, mirroring Walhalla's demise as a mining town, the hotels also closed. New stockyards were built in 1913, and continued operating into the 1950s. Yards and races were built at the railway station at Toongabbie in 1916 and sheep were sent by rail to Melbourne markets.

In all country towns with saleyards, the sale days were an important social event when farming families converged on the towns.^{xxi} As cars and trucks became more common, people from the smaller centres attended sales in the larger towns. For Toongabbie farmers, this was Traralgon. Theo Little and Co had saleyards in Kay Street, where the civic centre now stands. Now located on the Princes Highway, Traralgon's complex of saleyards documents the continuing importance of the pastoral and livestock industry to the region.

The abattoir at 'Staplegrove', Flynn's Creek, is a significant structure associated with grazing. Originally a farm building, it was adapted as a commercial slaughterhouse in the 1880s. It was built of bark that is now covered with corrugated iron and weatherboards. The building is significant for its size and for the original fittings that document nineteenth century methods of slaughtering.^{xxii}

Dairying

At first, dairying in the region was a small scale cottage industry. With a combination of advances in dairy manufacturing technology, improved transport, and refrigeration providing access to export markets in Britain, the industry was greatly stimulated in Victoria in the late 1880s. Farmers delivered their milk to local creameries where the cream was mechanically separated from the milk. They took the skim milk home to feed their calves and pigs. The cream was sent to butter factories that had been built in the larger centres. These were often cooperative factories formed by the local suppliers.^{xxiii}

Many local farmers were keen to adopt the new dairying innovations. Joseph Walker who started farming at 'Riverdale' in Yinnar South in 1886, was the first local farmer to use a Babcock tester to test his cows' butter fat production and sow subterranean clover for pasture. The first herd testing association in Gippsland was formed at Yinnar in 1921. Herd testing contributed to improved breeding and milk production. Milking machines, which became more widespread in the 1920s, enabled farmers to increase their herd size, as did top dressing with superphosphate.^{xxiv}

As dairying intensified in the region, there were distinct changes to the landscape. A 'dairying farmscape' appeared: similar farm layouts with milking sheds and calf paddocks near houses. The landscape took on a different shade of green as farmers moved from growing crops for their cows to sowing 'sub-clover' and top dressing with 'super'. With herd testing, even the colour of the cows changed as Ayrshire and Shorthorn herds were replaced by higher producing Jerseys.

The earliest milking sheds were small, often containing two bails, and built of slab and bark. Over the years, dairy hygiene regulations changed the design of sheds, as did the introduction of milking machines. Engine and separator rooms were incorporated into sheds as farms became more mechanised. Walk through sheds were common until herringbone sheds were introduced. More recently, herringbone sheds are being replaced by rotary sheds that can milk large herds of cows.

The former milking shed at the Lawless farm at Driffield is significant for what it reveals of building construction and dairy farming. The building has a round pole frame, split paling walls and a shingle roof. Feed was stored in a loft above the milking shed and fed down a chute to the feed trough in front of the bails.^{xxv}

Once farmers had access to farm-based separators, creameries became redundant, although names such as Creamery Road at Yinnar remind us of their existence. Butter factories developed as important buildings in their towns, often located near railway stations and employing significant numbers of the townspeople. Eventually, the number of butter factories was reduced as companies amalgamated and technology changed, and bottled milk and powdered milk were produced.

For example, in Glengarry, the creamery that was established in 1890 was later replaced by a milk factory. In 1953, it amalgamated with Maffra Co-operative. The factory closed in 1973 and is now a farm and hardware store. When the Boolarra factory closed in the late 1950s, milk was sent to the factory in Yinnar, until it closed in 1974. The Yinnar factory is now used by an arts collective. The former milk factory in Traralgon is another reminder of the extensive dairy manufacturing that was carried out in the region.^{xxvi}

Joseph Walker with a Babcock Herd Testing Machine, c.1921

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.18]



Dairy herd and sheds at 'Riverdale', c.1910

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.18]



Moe Cooperative Butter Factory, c.1940

[SOURCE: SLV PICTURE COLLECTION]



THE ROSE SERIES P. 13654

BUTTER FACTORY, MOE, VIC.

Cropping

As an agricultural community, cropping has been an important farming activity in Latrobe City, especially as mixed farming was widespread in the region for many years. In the Tyers area, when the selectors had cleared the land, they were growing oats and barley, as well as grazing cattle, raising pigs and horses. German settlers grew large areas of flax in the Tyers district at the turn of the twentieth century.^{xxvii} Further south in the Driffield area, the Bond family worked on improving the neglected farm they had bought in 1916. They grew crops of oats, rape, turnips and millet to feed their dairy herd before sowing down permanent pasture.^{xxviii}

In the Toongabbie district, cropping became widespread after drought over the summer of 1878-9 caused large stock losses. Oats and wheat, millet and maize were grown. Steam engines arrived on local farms to thresh the crops. Steam-powered chaff cutters produced chaff that was packed into Walhalla.^{xxix}

3.2 Developing a forestry industry

The study area contained extensive areas of forest and woodlands when European settlers arrived to farm the region. While they were an initial impediment to settlement, these forests were also a bountiful resource that led to the establishment of a substantial timber industry throughout much of the study area from the earliest days of permanent European settlement. There have been several phases of the timber industry in the study area. These have included milling timber from the red gum plains, saw milling in the Strzelecki ranges, and the more recent plantation timber industry.

As we shall see, the development of the timber industry in the study area was closely related to the opening up of the land for selection and the development of transport links, particularly railways. Sawmillers exploited the eucalypt forests, often as a means of clearing land for later agricultural activity. Numerous sawmills and tramlines were constructed as part of timber-getting operations in the study area.

The early development of the timber industry was haphazard and it was not until the establishment of the State Forests Department (later and better known as the Forests Commission of Victoria - FCV) in the first decade of the twentieth century that a more co-ordinated approach to harvesting and management of forest resources was initiated. As we shall see, the FCV played an important role in the development of the forest industry by providing infrastructure to support activities such as sawmilling and, perhaps more importantly, developing long term strategies to manage and sustain Victoria's forest resources.

Development of forest industries in Victoria

The rush for gold described in this chapter led to a population explosion in Victoria. This, in turn, led to a huge demand for timber for building, mining and firewood. In addition, the need for food stimulated the agricultural development in the study area described in the previous chapter.

The vast forest resources found in Victoria in the nineteenth century apparently seemed an inexhaustible resource to the Colonial Government as they initially placed very few controls on the harvesting of timber in the belief that it should be available at low cost. The 1869 Land Act that opened up the land for selection provided for the reservation of land specifically for timber production, however, despite a number of reports and enquiries little else was done to effectively manage the exploitation of the ever-dwindling forest reserves. A series of critical reports during the later decades of the nineteenth century eventually led to a Royal Commission in 1897, which resulted in no fewer than 14 reports. The first 13 described in detail the major forest areas, while the last criticized the 'short sighted manner in which the Victorian forests were being exploited'. The Commission recommended 'the need for legislation, policy, funds and bureaucratic support'.^{xxx}

The Royal Commission led to the introduction of the *Forests Act* in 1907, which established a State Forests Department under a Minister for Forests. In December 1918 a more comprehensive *Forests Act* was passed, which led to the establishment of the Forests Commission of Victoria (FCV) in 1919. The FCV played an important role in the development of forest industries and the management of forest resources. The FCV also became a key agency involved in bushfire management – this is discussed in Chapter 6.

Sawmilling

Sawmilling was essentially a transport industry and sawmills did not operate in isolation. They depended on timber resources (logging areas), transport infrastructure (tracks and tramlines) and labour crews (sawmills and camps) to transform forest trees into sawn timber for market. These elements were integral to the success of the sawmilling industry, and must be considered together to understand the development of timber-getting in the study area. An efficient means of transporting heavy logs to mills and sawn timber to market was needed to ensure profitability.

In the absence of navigable rivers and in the presence of poor quality roads, sawmillers in Victoria typically relied on timber tramlines for transport. Sawmillers operating in the study area were no different. Tramlines connecting sawmills to railways provided a vital means of transport and communication in otherwise largely inaccessible areas. Thus, as railways expanded, the timber industry followed. The history of timber-getting in the study area is therefore related to the development of railways in the region. As described in Chapter 4, these include the opening of lines to Sale in 1879, from Morwell to Mirboo in 1886, Traralgon to Stratford in 1886, and Walhalla in 1910.

When selectors first came to the plains in the Toongabbie and Glengarry areas during the 1860s, they used the timber they were clearing for their new farms as building material and for fencing. It also had commercial value, particularly the forest red gums and the red ironbark that grew in the foothills. Possibly the first saw mill in the district was started by George Anstey in 1874, to mill red gum, iron bark, stringybark and box trees. The saw mill provided timber for the Sale to Melbourne railway line that was under construction and later for the branch line from Traralgon to Maffra.^{xxxi} At Glengarry, red gum timber was used for paving blocks, wheel rims and building materials. The crane at the Glengarry railway station is typical of cranes that loaded the heavy piles, logs and sawn timber onto waiting railway trucks.

With selectors moving into the Strzeleckis and railway construction beginning in the hills, the timber industry developed in this area. At Boolarra several sawmills operated and paling splitting was also widespread. The palings and blackwood logs were sent out by rail. The sawmills operating at Darlimurla from the 1880s also produced significant numbers of sawn logs.^{xxxii} Saw milling was also an important industry at Yinnar. The mills were located in the forest and tramways linked them to the railway station. Henry Collins set up his mill in Mill Road south east of Yinnar around 1911 and built a tramline along Whitelaw's Track.^{xxxiii}

Higher in the Strzeleckis, where beautiful mountain ash forests grew, settlers burnt the trees they had ringbarked and felled, although some were split for palings. During the 1920s, there were advances with kiln drying mountain ash and it became highly sought after as a building timber. Small saw mills such as the Duff sawmill operated in the higher part of the Strzeleckis until the timber became too difficult to extract.^{xxxiv}

At Tyers the Christensen brothers operated a sawmill for many years, and in 1929 it was taken over by H.J. Saunders and C.J. Price who acquired what was reputedly the first logging tractor in Gippsland. Australian Paper Manufacturers (APM – see below) acquired the sawmill in 1950.

The devastating bushfires of 1939 were to change the sawmilling industry forever – this is discussed further in Chapter 6.

Managing and sustaining forest resources

Another important role of the FCV has been the sustainable management of Victoria's forest resources. One of the first initiatives was to establish softwood and hardwood plantations and during the 1930s Depression considerable work was carried out on plantations as part of unemployment relief measures. At the same time, programs were developed to reforest previously cleared land in the Strzelecki Ranges that had been abandoned by failed settlement schemes described in Chapter 2. This program was expanded after the Second World War to meet the unprecedented demand for sawn timber that was a result of the severe housing shortage experienced at that time. This program, which commenced in 1949 and expanded in 1960, resulted in the area of State-owned plantations increasing from 20,000 hectares to over 100,000 hectares.

After the First World War, many settlers in the higher Strzeleckis abandoned their farms. Blackberries, rabbits and ragwort invaded and scrub was taking hold of the hillsides. Before the end of the Second World War, the FCV made plans to rehabilitate the Strzeleckis and establish a timber supply. It was joined in the venture by Australian Paper Manufacturers (APM), which had built a paper mill in the Latrobe Valley (The story of the development of the APM mill is told in Chapter 4). APM announced the formation of a subsidiary company, APM Forests Ltd, and planned an enormous re-forestation scheme with to supply softwood pulp to the mill^{xxxv}. Research indicated that the best softwood to plant in the area was *pinus radiata* and the best hardwood was mountain ash. The Morwell River Prison Farm was established and inmates carried out much of the preparation and planting of the FCV plantations. By 1986, 11,000 hectares of eucalypts and 18,000 hectares of softwood had been planted in the Strzeleckis.^{xxxvi} Extensive APM plantations have also been planted in the Latrobe Valley, closer to the Maryvale Mill. APM also logs for pulpwood north of Tyers in the Boola Boola Forest where it established a forestry camp between 1947 and 1958.

3.3 Mining

The mammoth coal deposits lying under the Latrobe Valley have had a tremendous impact on shaping the landscape within the study area and transforming much of it from an agricultural area to an industrial region. The history of exploiting the region's brown coal encompasses several themes and is addressed in Chapter 4. Other resources to be exploited in the study area included gold, limestone and black coal.

Gold

Although little gold has been found in the study area, gold mining has had a considerable impact on the evolution of the landscape, especially the rich gold fields at Walhalla, which are situated just outside the study area to the north of Toongabbie.

When Ned Stringer discovered gold in Stringers Creek late in 1862, a route via Toongabbie proved to be the easiest way to the isolated mountain valley. It was on a track already cut by Archibald Campbell when he entered the competition to find a route between Sale and the Jordan gold fields.^{xxxvii} With the publicising of Ned Stringer's discovery, Toongabbie was poised to become a major supply post and its fortunes became linked to Walhalla's rise and fall. Gold mining at Walhalla was also responsible for tracks, roadways and railway lines being built in the study area and many people who made their fortune at Walhalla established businesses in Traralgon and Morwell. After the mines closed, houses were relocated from Walhalla to Traralgon and other towns in the study area.^{xxxviii} Ned Stringer died at Toongabbie and is now buried in the Toongabbie cemetery. A memorial has been built there to commemorate him.

Limestone

Limestone has been quarried from a site along the Tyers River for use as a building material and for agricultural purposes. In September 1932 Chandler Brothers of Balwyn took out a lease on the limestone deposits. The limestone was burnt and the lime carted to the Traralgon

Railway Station for transportation to Melbourne. In the 1960s the Traralgon Brickworks quarried limestone and used sand deposits at Tyers for the manufacture of calcium silicate brick. A tunnel kiln and a dryer fired by natural gas were used in manufacturing the bricks.

Black coal

Black coal deposits lie to the south of Moe in the Narracan Creek valley. In the nineteenth century, Victoria's coal supply came from New South Wales and the government was keen to establish local fuel sources, especially at a time when the railways were expanding. From the mid 1880s, companies began mining the coal near Moe but their progress was slow until the completion of the Moe to Thorpdale railway line. A station was built at Coalville that had sidings for coal. In 1887, the first supply of coal went all the way from the mine to Melbourne by train. The companies experienced major difficulties mining the coal. The seams were thin and frequently lost, and new tunnels had to be opened. Freight proved very expensive and strikes were also frequent. An uneasy relationship with the Railways developed and several times the Railways Department refused to take any coal, causing the mines to close. Coalville's heyday as a mining town was from the mid 1880s to 1900.^{xxxix}

Failed ventures

As well as supplying the gold mines, Toongabbie residents put their faith in other mining ventures, neither of which eventuated. In the 1880s, Toongabbie residents and businessmen were optimistic about marble that had been found in the area and formed a company to begin quarrying the resource. Because of the marble's isolation and the cost of cartage, the two attempts to exploit it failed. A staircase of Toongabbie marble still exists in a Ballarat mansion.^{xl}

Shale oil was also discovered at Toongabbie in the 1880s. It had the potential to be a valuable resource because shale oil was used in the process for making kerosene and paraffin. Attempts to exploit it petered out.^{xli}

3.4 Providing a water supply for towns and industry

The provision of a safe, secure and adequate water supply was a vital component in the establishment and development of settlements. For this reason, many early settlements were situated on or near a watercourse, which provided a ready made supply until the inevitable impacts of pollution forced towns to look further afield. As townships in the study area grew the first engineered water supply systems were constructed in the first decades of the twentieth century. The development of the power industry from the 1920s onwards also created a demand for water and separate supplies were created to serve the needs of the SEC and other industries.

Creating township supplies

Local governments had the responsibility of supplying water for domestic use, in a response to public health issues and creating a water supply for fighting town fires. In Traralgon, for example, the first public water supply was a pump installed on the Traralgon Creek in 1877. In 1880 the Victorian Railways constructed a reservoir in Hickox Street for the supply of water to the railway station only, but in 1884 the Shire of Traralgon obtained permission to tap into the railway pipeline for fire-fighting purposes. By the following February, pipes had been laid to Franklin Street. Eventually, a Water Trust was formed in 1907 to provide Traralgon with a domestic water supply from the Tyers River. As the township of Traralgon grew a water tower was built in 1928 on high ground in Henry Street to provide increased water pressure to the town and in 1933 the Hilltop reservoir was constructed to provide a reserve supply.

At Morwell, two disastrous fires in 1912 provided the demonstrated need for a reticulated township supply, which was completed one year too late in 1913. The second of the two fires destroyed shops that replaced buildings lost in a previous conflagration in 1890. Morwell Shire Council considered two schemes and eventually decided upon a scheme proposed by Traralgon

Shire Engineer, Mr Sambell, to pipe water through a six inch main from Billy's Creek to a concrete reservoir situated on the Ridge, where the Powerworks complex is now situated. From there it was reticulated by gravity to the town. The weir served Morwell until the construction of the Moondarra Dam as noted below.^{xlii}

When the Moe Water Trust was formed in 1933, it organised a water supply for the town from a small dam on the Narracan Creek at Coalville. A pipe connected the dam to a small holding reservoir close to Moe where the water was fed into the town system by gravity. After the Second World War faced with the huge increase in population, the Trust sought additional supply from the Narracan Creek and later from the Tanjil River.^{xliii}

With post war expansion in the Latrobe Valley, existing water supplies were soon inadequate. The Latrobe Valley Water and Sewerage Board (LVWSB) was established in 1954 with a mandate to oversee the water supply for towns and industries of the Latrobe Valley, as well as waste disposal. Plans were drawn to build a large reservoir on the Tyers River that could meet much of the Latrobe Valley's domestic needs and those of industry. Building the Moondarra Reservoir involved drowning the town of Gould. The reservoir and its pipeline system were built between 1959 and 1962 and now the majority of towns in Latrobe City receive their water from the Moondarra Reservoir.^{xliv}

Water for industry^{xlv}

The construction of the first power station at Yallourn in the 1920s, and the subsequent addition of new stations after the Second World War created the need for an additional, dedicated water supply. Over time a series of reservoirs on the Latrobe River known collectively as the Yallourn Storages were designed and constructed by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SEC) to facilitate the extraction of water for power generation purposes.

The first storage to be constructed was Yallourn Weir in 1934, which formed the Yallourn Pondage. Later, as the power stations were expanded and new stations planned, it was found that increased demands for water could not be met from the Yallourn Pondage alone. The Yallourn Storage Dam was then designed to solve this problem and was constructed between 1959 and 1961. The storage formed by the dam became known as Lake Narracan. With its significantly larger volume, and its easily adjusted penstock and spillway gates, Yallourn Storage Dam is used to regulate flows into the Pondage so that the required extractions of water can be achieved.

Between 1979 and 1984, the large Blue Rock dam was built to create a 208,000 ML storage to meet projected power generation water needs well into the 21st century. This now forms the primary water source for the Yallourn Storages, which are together operated as regulating devices to ensure proper flows to users.

The Yallourn Storages were originally operated and maintained by the SEC. Later the operation was carried out by the LVWSB with maintenance still being done by the SEC. The LVWSB was subsequently incorporated into Gippsland Water, which took over the operational duties. In 1996, as part of the break up and privatisation of the SEC, ownership of the Yallourn storages was transferred to Southern Rural Water who assumed responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the structures.

The Yallourn Storages are operated in such a way as to maintain flows not only to the power companies' pumps, but also downstream of their off-takes. These downstream flows are essential for irrigation, stock and domestic diversions, town water supplies and the environment. However the source of supplies for these uses is from run of river flows or from releases from Blue Rock Dam; it is not from Lake Narracan itself.

A further water storage, known as Hazelwood pondage, was constructed by the early 1970s to provide the millions of litres of cooling water for the Hazelwood power station's steam condensers.^{xlvi}

HERITAGE

Working the land

As we have seen in the previous chapter, relatively few early farm buildings remain – many early examples to the south of Morwell have been lost as a result of the continuing development and expansion of the open cut coal mine, while others have been lost to the ravages of time and bushfires. Nonetheless, those that do are exceptional examples of their type. The theme of *Working the land* is also illustrated by changes to the landscape and particularly by introduced elements such as trees, hedges and windrows. Some examples include:

- The former slaughterhouse at ‘Staplegrove’, 50 Berkley’s Road, Flynn
- The former Lawless family milking shed and stables, 40 Walsh & Gibson’s Road, Driffield
- The farm complex at ‘Mingara’, 175 Old Walhalla Road, Toongabbie

Developing a forestry industry

In the Morwell National Park and in areas along the Grand Ridge Road, there are sites of earlier saw milling activities including tracks, stumps with springboard holes and mill sites.^{xlvii}

Remnants of the tramway formations leading from the Morwell-Mirboo Railway can also be seen near Yinnar and Boolarra.

Mining

There are few remnants of the early mining industries in the study area (other than brown coal mining – see Chapter 4). One example is the ruins of Lime Kilns on the W.3 Forest Track, near Tyers.

Providing a water supply for towns and industry

Some examples of early water supply infrastructure are:

- Surviving elements of Traralgon’s first water supply in the Tyers area including the weir, a pipe bridge, earthworks from the original storage basin and segments of wooden pipes.^{xlviii}
- The water tower in Henry Street, Traralgon.
- The weir at Billy’s Creek, which can be seen in the Morwell National Park, and the concrete reservoir on ‘The Ridge’ at Morwell
- The holding reservoir in T.W. Drew park in Moe
- Moondarra Dam
- Yallourn weir and Yallourn Storage Dam (Lake Narracan)

*Using a horse scoop to construct Middle
Creek Road, c.1900s*

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.55]



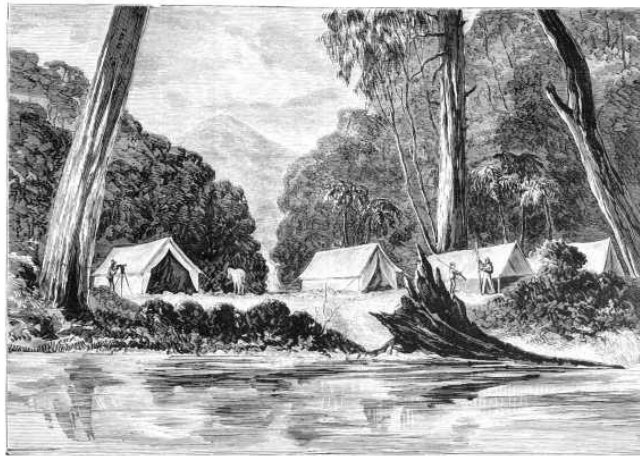
Bluff Causeway Bridge, c.1920s

[SOURCE: SLV PICTURE COLLECTION]



*Gippsland Railway surveyors camp on banks
of the Latrobe River*

[SOURCE: SLV PICTURE COLLECTION]



SURVEYING PARTY AT THE BUNYIP-GIPPS LAND RAILWAY.

Traralgon Court House and Post Office

[SOURCE: TRARALGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY]



4 TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Developing as a predominantly agricultural region in the nineteenth century, a high priority of the new settlers was to establish transport networks that would enable them to get their produce to the Melbourne markets. Tracks developed into roads and later into highways and freeways. An extensive railway network had a significant impact on the settlement pattern of the study area as first the main Gippsland line was constructed and then branch lines snaked off to the north and south of this line, serving selectors, mining and the timber industry.

Exploiting the region's brown coal deposits in the twentieth century as described in the following chapter led to the need for significant improvements to the region's east-west transport axes that included major upgrades to the Gippsland line after the Second World War, and to the Princes Highway, which is now one of the State's major highways.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- *Developing local regional and national economies:* Establishing communications; Moving goods and people

4.1 Developing a road network

In Gippsland road making was a difficult and costly procedure, and few Shire councils had sufficient means to provide satisfactory roads. As Graeme Butler explains:

In the past the roads had been laid out by surveyors to fit gridiron subdivisions. They were essentially surveyor's roads and did not work – they took no notice of hills or valleys but went straight over them. Subsequently Shire Engineers had struggled, with limited funds, to right these wrongs but always facing the expensive task of land acquisition to form the necessary deviations, around hills, rather than over them.^{xlix}

The theme of developing a road network is of particular relevance to the Gippsland region for, as will be explained below, it was the actions of Gippsland councils that provided the impetus for the creation of the Country Roads Board, which greatly assisted rural councils in developing and maintaining road networks.

Early tracks

For the squatters, the easiest route into their runs was by sea to Port Albert and then overland via Rosedale, but they were keen to find a route that directly linked them to Melbourne. This meant finding a way through the wet, densely forested areas of West Gippsland, with its steep hills and gullies, and the seemingly impenetrable Moe swamp. C.J. Tyers (Gippsland's Commissioner for Crown lands) surveyed a route between Melbourne and the region in 1847, and a track was completed later that year. One of the first to 'test' it was C.J. La Trobe. Leaving Melbourne, it took him three days to reach Hobson's run at Traralgon Creek, and four days to return.ⁱ Other travelers began to use the route and the accounts they left, such as that of Mrs Perry who traveled to Gippsland with her husband Bishop Perry in 1848, indicate its roughness and the difficulties of the terrain. During floods it was dangerous.ⁱⁱ

Discovery of gold to the north of the study area provided a sudden impetus to improve the Gippsland road and to form a new network of tracks that gave hopeful prospectors access to the diggings. The road was upgraded and followed a route surveyed earlier by Archibald Campbell, which headed north from Moe and linked with the previous track near Shady Creek.ⁱⁱⁱ Coach services were started in 1865, although for some years it was not a comfortable ride. The 'Glue Pot' west of Shady Creek was a particularly notorious section of the trip.

With the population increasing as selectors began settling in the river valleys away from the east-west axis of the Gippsland road, new tracks were cut. Great hardship was experienced by

the selectors who settled in the Strzeleckis as the steep hills, dense forest and high rainfall limited their access.

The CRB and twentieth century improvements

In 1911 representatives of 18 Gippsland councils met in Warragul and resolved to ask the State government to form a Gippsland development trust with a loan of one million pounds for road construction. The State government had already identified the need for a central authority to assist local councils throughout the State, but it seems that the Warragul meeting gave some impetus to the formation of the Country Roads Board in 1913. The new Board was to provide long-term loans to shire councils and acted as a road construction authority, initially for roads declared as Main Roads. The Board divided the State into 10 districts, which were ranked according to need. Following a State-wide inspection by the Board members, Gippsland was ranked as the district with the highest need and long-awaited improvements to roads in the study area began in earnest at the end of the First World War.

From Main Roads to Freeways

The Gippsland Road was declared a Main Road in 1913, but the section running through the study area was still impassable in winter. The *Highways and Vehicles Act 1924* recognised the increase of motorised vehicles and the growth of through traffic on Main Roads, and authorised the declaration of State highways, thus removing the burden of their construction and maintenance from local councils. The Gippsland Road was the main coastal link between Sydney and Melbourne, and therefore part of an important national highway. It was renamed the Princes Highway in 1921, following a visit by the then Prince of Wales. At this time, a notorious section of the highway continued to be the Haunted Hills section - little more than a winding, muddy track that was dreaded by many motorists.^{liii} By 1930 the Princes Highway had been surveyed, remade and sealed.

From 1956 the CRB began to construct By-pass roads or Freeways, with dual carriageways, which directed heavy through traffic around centres of population. Postwar industrialisation of the Latrobe Valley led to major works on the Princes Highway with significant changes at Moe in 1968 when the highway was diverted from the town centre. As the Road Construction Authority wrote in the 1980s, the Princes Highway was important to the Victorian economy as a whole.^{liv}

By 1985, 20,000 vehicles a day were passing through the commercial centre of Morwell and work began on building a bypass for the city. Passing between the SEC works area and the town, the bypass stretched from the Morwell River in the west to Alexander's Road in the east. As part of the project, the RCA promised landscaping that would 'reduce visual and noise intrusion'.^{lv}

Developmental roads

Following the formation of the CRB in 1913, the Shire of Warragul with the support of other Gippsland Councils sought to achieve their 'ultimate goal' at a Conference of Shires held in Melbourne in October of 1914. After the declaration of Main Roads in 1913 it was recognised that development of these roads alone would not be sufficient to provide access for farmers to railways. Consequently, a motion was moved at the conference to extend the Board's powers to include what became known as Developmental Roads – William Calder expressed 'total agreement' for this motion and the *Development Roads Act* was ratified in 1918. This provided for roads that connected settlers with railway stations, which were to be funded by the CRB and then maintained by Councils. Many of the roads in the study area today are a legacy of this Act and were constructed in the inter-war period. One example of a structure constructed under the auspices of this program is The Bluff Causeway Bridge on the Traralgon-Tyers Road where it crosses the Latrobe River, as described below.

Tourist and isolated settlers' roads

From 1924 the CRB funded the construction of roads that would make places of interest accessible to tourists. The Grand Ridge Road, an iconic road that now forms the southern boundary of the study area, was one such significant CRB initiative in the 1920s. First called the Ridge Road, it was intended to wind through the Strzeleckis from the settlement of Strzelecki in the west to Carrajung in the east, where it joined the Traralgon to Yarram road.^{lvi} Now well-known as a scenic drive, the road documents CRB attempts in the 1920s to revitalise settlement in the Strzeleckis and provide road access for isolated settlers.

Beginning in 1925 the CRB also funded 'isolated settler's roads', to provide settlers with access from their farms to the nearest Developmental or Main road. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, funds for such roads were increased to give work to the unemployed.

Bridges

The study area encompasses well-watered plains with rivers, creeks and swamps, as well as steep mountain ranges. It has been a constant challenge for Councils to provide bridges so that settlement could be facilitated and efficient transport and communications services could be developed.

When it was built in 1875, the Scarne bridge over the Latrobe River was a boon for early settlers at Tyers and Glengarry. Instead of traveling to Rosedale, they now had a link with the developing town of Traralgon. The bridge was partially washed away in the 1934 floods. The present concrete bridge is built at a different site.

Similar to the Scarne bridge, most of the timber bridges that were built in the region have now been replaced by concrete bridges. A significant structure that has survived is at 'The Bluff' on the Latrobe River, north of Traralgon on the Tyers road. This bridge was built as part of the Developmental Roads scheme, as noted above. A bridge has been on the site since before 1889 but there were continuing problems among selectors wishing to gain access to Traralgon, and maintenance of the bridge was a recurring local issue. Repairs were carried out during the first decades of the twentieth century before a new bridge was built in 1920-21 under the supervision of the CRB. This bridge has now been replaced, but still exists today.^{lvii}

A bridge built over the Narracan Creek on the Princes Highway east of Moe was dedicated to William Calder. The bridge was re-built in 1962 and later widened, but still bears a plaque with the dedication.

Significant contractors of roads and bridges in the region were Hourigan Brothers who had selected land at Gunyah in the Strzeleckis but turned to road and bridge construction in 1918 and later settled in Traralgon and Morwell. Besides building roads and bridges throughout Australia and Gippsland, the Hourigans constructed the first road to the APM works, and subdivisions in postwar Morwell and Traralgon.^{lviii}

4.2 Creating a railway network

The rail network in the study area had a major impact on the development of the region. It has been responsible for developing new towns, attracting settlers, overcoming isolation and stimulating the region's economy. The many sites associated with railway history demonstrate the importance of railways to the historic development of the study area. When the first train steamed into Moe from Melbourne in 1878, the Gippsland road was still rough and flooded regularly and the coach ride was lengthy and arduous and would remain so well into the twentieth century. With the main Gippsland line forming a spine, branch lines were built on either side of the track and snaked off along river valleys or looped through agricultural districts.

Gippsland line

Initial surveys for a railway from Melbourne to Sale began in the early 1870s. One survey party started from Sale and another from the west. Crossing the Moe Swamp was an obstacle, and routes to the north and south were proposed before a more direct route to the south was adopted. Despite the survey being carried out, debates continued about other route options. One was a Sale-Port Welshpool link combined with the sea route from Port Albert. Another was a northern route via Heyfield and Toongabbie, making easier the connection to Walhalla. In 1873 the matter was decided. The *Gippsland Railway Construction Act* was passed and further survey work proceeded from the Haunted Hills (near Moe) to Bunyip.

The Gippsland Railway to Sale was constructed by the Victorian Government and opened for traffic in a series of unconnected stages, which in chronological order were:

- Morwell to Sale 1 June 1877
- Oakleigh to Bunyip 8 October 1877
- Moe to Morwell 1 December 1877
- Bunyip to Moe 1 March 1878

The last section to be completed was in the Melbourne suburban area between South Yarra and Oakleigh. Once this section was opened on 2 April 1879 trains could proceed direct from Melbourne to Sale.^{lix}

The opening of the railway brought great economic and social benefits to Gippsland by facilitating the opening up the land for selection, and improving the transportation of farming produce from the region to the markets and vice-versa. Townships grew around the main stations established along the route while some existing settlements declined after being bypassed by the new line. One example was Morwell Bridge, which was replaced by a new town - Morwell - that sprang up close to the railway.

The first station buildings were established soon after at stopping points along the route. Many of these were simple, temporary structures that were opened as construction was completed and eventually replaced as demand increased. More substantial stations were constructed at main towns such as Warragul, Traralgon and Bairnsdale by the 1880s; however, the onset of the 1890s Depression saw a cessation of building activity until the early 1900s when new stations were erected at towns including Traralgon (1901), and Moe (1909).^{lx}

First as stations on the main Gippsland lines, and then as junctions for branch lines, Moe, Morwell and Traralgon developed as busy railway towns. Depots were established at key points along the line and intense lobbying by locals led to Traralgon being established as a depot in 1903, replacing Sale. This necessitated the construction of a large engine shed in 1902 and a turntable in 1910-11.^{lxi} The establishment of the Depot at Traralgon stimulated its development in the early twentieth century.

The complex of railway buildings in Traralgon today is testament to its importance as a railway centre in Gippsland. Now replaced by a newer station in the Southside complex on the Princes Highway, the Traralgon station, built in 1901, still stands on the southern side of the line. It retains the atmosphere of a large country station that hummed with constant arrivals and departures. 'You always knew if there were honeymooners on the train', remembers the daughter of a railway worker. 'Detonators would be put on the track and all the passengers would know there was a couple setting off on their honeymoon'.^{lxii} Nearby are the engine shed or roundhouse and the locomotive turntable. Also near the station are many of the houses where railway employees and their families lived. A close knit community developed among the families who lived in the houses in Queens Parade (formerly Railway Parade) and the narrow network of streets. It is not hard to imagine Jack Power, the 'caller up' man, cycling around the railway workers' houses in the dark, rapping on windows an hour before their early morning shifts began.^{lxiii}

Morwell Railway Station, c.1900s

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.29]



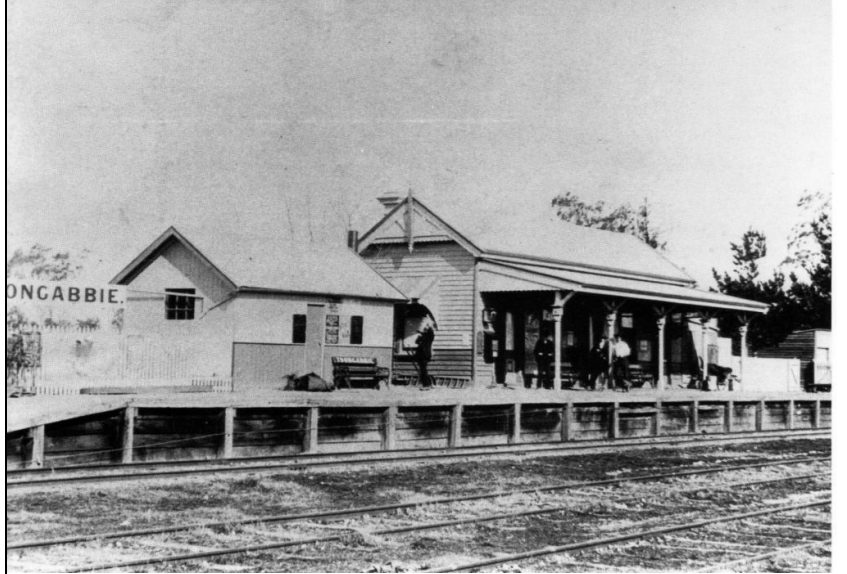
Trestle bridge at Darlimurla, c.1900

[SOURCE: SLV PICTURE COLLECTION]



Toongabbie Railway Station, c.1940

[SOURCE: TOONGABBIE, P.67]



Branch lines

Branch lines extended north and south in the 1880s linking outlying settlements into the railway network as settlement pushed ever further into the Gippsland Hills and the plains to the north of Traralgon:

- Morwell to Mirboo North 1886
- Traralgon to Stratford 1886
- Moe to Thorpdale 1888
- Moe to Walhalla 1910

The branch line from Moe to Thorpdale helped to stimulate the coal mining activities at Coalville, as well as farming and timber activities further south. Along the branch line from Morwell to Mirboo North railway construction camps at Boolarra and Yinnar soon developed as towns and became busy centres where timber, dairy products and livestock were railed out.

The loop from Traralgon to Stratford was completed in several stages in the 1880s and trains steamed through rich agricultural land and helped to stimulate the newly developing dairy industry as well as transporting vast tonnages of timber and railing livestock. In the late 1880s, Toongabbie was a particularly busy station as supplies and heavy machinery for Walhalla could be railed all the way from Melbourne, before the final arduous haul through the mountains.

After decades of investigating the best railway link with Walhalla, a narrow gauge line was built from Moe. The first train arrived in Walhalla in 1910 just as the town was beginning to decline.

As roads improved and road transport became more efficient, the branch lines began closing from the 1950s. The last to close was the line to Stratford, which was closed to passenger traffic in 1977 with freight traffic ceasing in 1987.

Some of the closed lines are now being developed as rail trails: Moe to Yallourn, Boolarra to Mirboo North and Traralgon to Stratford. Walkers and cyclists can have first hand experience of the surviving railway infrastructure: the cuttings and embankments, the remains of platforms, the fruit trees that have grown along the lines and the resilient bulbs that flower every year in long abandoned railway workers' gardens.

Connecting industry

With power generation beginning at Yallourn in the 1920s, a rail link with Moe was an important priority. In January 1922, a new branch line from Hernes Oak to Yallourn was opened to provide access to the newly developing town of Yallourn, built to house workers at the open cut brown coal mine and power station. The new railway allowed brown coal and briquettes to be transported from Yallourn to Melbourne.^{lxiv} As noted below, this was replaced by a new link in 1953. A familiar sight was the seemingly endless goods trains, their wagons filled with briquettes, coming into Moe.

The SECV also constructed a narrow gauge railway for the haulage of brown coal and overburden between the Yallourn open cut mine, briquette works, and power station. The Morwell Interconnecting Railway was later constructed, linking the Yallourn mine complex with the Hazelwood open cut, briquette works, and power station. The Yallourn railway was replaced by conveyor belts in 1984, while the connection to Hazelwood was closed and dismantled in 2001.

Another branch line was constructed in the 1950s to serve the Australian Paper Mills north of Morwell.

Post war improvements to the Gippsland line

Prior to World War 2, the mining operations at Yallourn had been used to produce electric power on the coalfield itself and for the local manufacture of briquettes (which were used for heating). However, when the supply of black coal from New South Wales became erratic after the war, the Victorian Government encouraged the SEC to prepare long term plans for development of the coal reserves in the Yallourn area. This enabled briquette output to be greatly increased as well as additional power generation.

The increase in briquette production raised a number of issues, which included the significant increase in the numbers of trains using the line, which was single track beyond Dandenong and the adverse grades of up to 1 in 50 for 'Up' trains (i.e., returning to Melbourne), which required assistant engines. This was particularly significant for fully laden trains travelling from Yallourn.

The SEC closely co-operated with the Victorian Railways (VR) to find a solution and an internal body named the Operation Improvement Committee was set up within VR to consider the problems. After considering a number of options including steam, diesel and electric it was decided that electric traction should be adopted as the most economical means of operation. A further recommendation was that eventually most of the line from Dandenong to Traralgon should be duplicated.^{lxv}

In approving the Gippsland line upgrading, the Government of the day stressed the necessity of an early completion date so that the benefits of the entire project could be realised as quickly as possible. Because of this, the VR sought and received greater than normal freedom of action from the State Government in regard to the purchase of the necessary plant and materials.

By June 1949, the V.R. Annual Report could state that a good deal of engineering work had been done. As a result of projected increases in brown coal production, proposals were brought forward for duplicating the entire route from Dandenong to Morwell, rather than carrying out these improvements only between Longwarry and Yarragon as originally envisaged.

The duplication works were completed in stages between 1950 and 1953 and although the construction schedule for the Gippsland electrification was continually upset during the early 1950s by the Government's inability to make sufficient funds available for capital, the project was sufficiently complete for the first section to be officially opened as far as Warragul on 21 July 1954. This marked the opening of the first non-suburban electrified rail service in Australia and the completion of the initial stage of the of the first main line electrification project to be undertaken by an Australian railway.^{lxvi}

Electrification works continued and by September 1955 had been extended to Moe and Yallourn. The latter works were along a new direct line to from Moe to Yallourn that was constructed in 1953. Then, on 15 March 1956 the final stage of electrification was completed between Moe and Traralgon thus completing this component of the project.^{lxvii} To provide power, sub-stations were built at various places including Moe, Yallourn, Hernes Oak, Morwell and Traralgon.

The construction of the new direct line from Moe to Yallourn in 1953 reduced the journey of loaded trains from Yallourn by 5km and eliminated the steep grades that existed on the old line. The old line was retained for a time so that a circular one-way route was created; however, it fell into disuse and was eventually closed in 1957 after a new signal box was opened in 1953, which allowed the new line to be operated in both directions. Part of the route of the old line was eventually subsumed by the open-cut mine.

Expansion of the open-cut coal mine resulted in a deviation of the main line between Moe and Morwell in 1963, which was later provided with automatic signalling in 1966. Associated with this work was the construction of a remotely controlled crossing loop, which became known as Hernes Oak.

Although the principal reason for electrification and duplication of the Gippsland line to Traralgon was to expedite the haulage of brown coal to Melbourne, this traffic declined

considerably due to brown coal becoming a less popular source of energy for industrial and domestic purposes. The remaining line to Yallourn was closed as a result.

The Gippsland line between Traralgon and Melbourne remains a busy line and was further upgraded between 2004 and 2007 to provide a fast rail link between the two centres. As part of this project most of the infrastructure associated with electrification was removed with the exception of the sub-stations.

4.3 Providing mail and telegraph services

Even in the early days of settlement, the settlers were able to keep some form of contact with the world beyond the barrier of swamps and forests that made travel and communications so difficult. Mail was brought in weekly by packhorse from the 1850s. Historian John Adams writes of the 'Postman's Yard', an enclosure where the mailman would camp when the Moe River and Narracan Creek were flooded.^{lxviii} After the inn was established at the crossing on the Morwell River (later Morwell Bridge), local residents collected their mail from a mailbag that was hanging on a tree there, until a post office was established in 1870.^{lxix} In Traralgon, mail was first collected from the Travellers Rest.^{lxx} Once coaching services were started from Melbourne in 1865, there was a daily mail service to Gippsland.^{lxxi}

As the main towns developed, impressive post offices were built on prominent sites. The court house and post office in Traralgon was built in 1886. Its grandeur reflects the importance of Traralgon as a regional town in the 1880s. In Morwell a large two storey post office was built on the corner of Tarwin Street and Commercial Road in 1892. The clock tower was empty until the 1930s when a clock donated by former Morwell school students was installed. The post office was a familiar landmark in Morwell and there was regret when it was demolished in 1955, at a time when Morwell's population was increasing dramatically. A symbol of Morwell's country town days, it was replaced by a modern building on the northern side of the railway line. As historian Stephen Legg writes, this became an important site for new residents in the town, especially the many migrants relying on letters to keep in touch with their families and former homes.^{lxxii}

The large post offices contrasted with facilities in the more isolated districts where there were no designated post office buildings. Schools sometimes served as post offices, as was the case with the Koornalla School that was built in 1915, or people conducted post offices in private homes. Railway stations often acted as post offices until they were closed.

In 1864, a telegraph line was established between Melbourne and Sale, helping to bring speedy communications to the district. When the first telephone exchange opened in Morwell in 1912, there were six subscribers. When it was upgraded to an automatic exchange in 1955, telephones were commonplace items.

A recent advance in communications is the microwave link at Monash University, which will provide a valuable resource for the community.

HERITAGE

Examples of places associated with the theme of *Transport and Communications* are:

Developing a road network

Bluff Causeway Bridge, (adjacent to) Traralgon-Tyers Road, Traralgon

The Moe By-pass

Creating a railway network

Glengarry railway station. Surrounded by its station yard, it is one of the few small country stations to survive in Central Gippsland

Glengarry Railway Station

[SOURCE: CONTEXT, 2005]



Trestle bridges across the Latrobe River between Traralgon and Glengarry

The Morwell rose garden, which marks the site where the Mirboo North line approached the Morwell station

The sites of railway reservoirs at Traralgon and Moe, built to provide a water supply for the steam trains

The Goods Shed at Yinnar and remains of the platform formation

The Oak tree adjacent to Lloyd Street at Moe, on the former site on the Stationmaster's house

The railway substations at Moe and Morwell

Providing mail and telegraph services

Traralgon post office

Morwell post office

Morwell Post Office

[SOURCE: CONTEXT, 2008]



Maryvale Paper Mills, 1953

[SOURCE: SLV PICTURE COLLECTION]



Yallourn 'A' power station, 1928

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.85]



Loaded coal train on Morwell Interconnecting Railway passing over Gippsland main line, 1984

[SOURCE: NLA PICTURE COLLECTION]



La Mode factory, Morwell, c.1945

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.82]



5 INDUSTRIALISATION AND MAKING A REGION

INTRODUCTION

Lying under the study area is one of the largest brown coal fields in the world. Since the 1920s, when the State Electricity Commission of Victoria began mining the coal, this region has been responsible for meeting the bulk of the State's electricity supplies. The dramatic industrial landscape of the Latrobe Valley with its network of open cut mines and power stations has developed in response to Victoria's fuel and power needs.

Associated with the development of the coal and power industry is the development of other major industries in the study area, which have exploited its natural resources and provided additional employment opportunities, particularly for women.

As we shall see in later chapters, the influence of this theme is woven like a thread throughout many of the other themes, particularly in relation to the theme of *Building settlements and towns*.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- *Developing Local, Regional and National Economies*: Constructing capital city economies; Utilising natural resources; Developing an Australian manufacturing capacity
- *Peopling Australia*: Migrating.

5.1 Providing the State with fuel and power

Henry Godridge was prospecting for gold on the north bank of the Latrobe River in 1874 when he found brown coal instead and decided to promote its use. A syndicate of Melbourne investors formed the Great Morwell Coal Mining Company in 1889 to mine the brown coal and provide Victoria with an alternative fuel to the black coal that was imported from New South Wales. Although the company abandoned its efforts ten years later, it had pioneered open cut mining and the manufacturing of briquettes (blocks of dried, pulverised coal) in Victoria.^{lxxiii}

The Victorian Government was aware of the vast resources of brown coal that lay along the banks of the Latrobe River and their potential for electricity generation. During the First World War, a time of critical fuel shortages, the Mines Department re-opened the abandoned mine on the northern bank of the Latrobe to provide emergency fuel supplies. At the same time, a government-formed Brown Coal Advisory Committee investigated the use of brown coal to generate electricity and produce briquettes and recommended developing a mammoth scheme of open cut mining and electricity generation that would produce a State-wide electricity supply.^{lxxiv} The scheme would be implemented after the war and it would be a government initiative.

Brown coal mining, power generation and briquette manufacturing at Yallourn

The State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SEC) was formed after the war with engineer and war hero, Sir John Monash, appointed to lead the SEC and oversee the development of the impressive technological scheme. The new site was called 'Yallourn', said to be an amalgamation of Aboriginal words meaning brown and fire. Relying on German technology, work began on a new open cut mine, power station and briquette factory in the 1920s, and a model town was built to house SEC workers and their families (The story of Yallourn is told in Chapter 7). In 1924, electricity from Yallourn flowed along the transmission lines to Melbourne. The SEC had faced technological challenges, especially when the moisture content of the brown coal was found to be 66%.

The SEC began operations using the old open cut mine re-opened by the Mines Department as noted above while the Yallourn open cut was developed south of the river. Although designated for early closure, the old mine was reopened in 1934 when the Yallourn open cut was flooded. It kept electricity supplies going during 1944 when the Yallourn open cut caught alight, and it continued operating into the post war period.

Within a few years the landscape had been transformed from several dairy farms and thick ti-tree scrub on the southern bank of the Latrobe River to an industrial enterprise. Steam shovels scooped the coal into waiting railway trucks that shuttled between open cut, power station and briquette factory, a relentless rhythm of machinery and production. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the briquette factory chimney and the power station chimneys from A and B stations dominated the landscape, while farms and towns in a large radius could hear the blasts of the power station siren (formerly the steam whistle of the vanquished German raider, the *Emden*) sounding out the rhythms of the industrial day.^{lxxv}

The site of the first open cut mine is now surrounded by cyclone wire fences and a reforestation project. It represents the earliest attempts to mine brown coal along the Latrobe River by the Great Morwell Coal Mining Company, and the beginning of the SEC enterprise to electrify Victoria. Also surviving from the first phase of the SEC's industrial enterprise is the former administration building, designed by SEC architect A.R. La Gerche. With its impressive entrance of ionic columns, the building portrays the confidence and importance of an organisation that would modernise Victoria.

Making a region

Before the Second World War, all open cut mining and electricity generation was concentrated at Yallourn. The other towns in the valley of the Latrobe River - Moe, Morwell and Traralgon - were a combination of railway towns, shire seats and centres for their farming and forestry hinterlands. There was no Latrobe Valley as an integrated region. With the escalating demand for electricity in the post war years, the SEC was forced to dramatically increase its production. In 1947, plans were outlined to develop a new open cut south of Morwell and build up to four briquette factories there, and exploratory boring was being carried out in the Traralgon area. Plans were also underway to massively extend the Yallourn power station and develop Moe as a dormitory town for the waves of employees who would come to work at Yallourn. The term Latrobe Valley began to mean an industrial region that integrated Moe, Morwell and Traralgon with the SEC's enterprise at Yallourn.

Premier Henry Bolte called the region the 'Golden Valley of the Latrobe', because he believed that it would surpass even the staggering wealth produced by the Victorian gold rushes a century before. According to Legg, Bolte 'made no secret' of his ambitious plans for the Valley. His vision was evidently sanctioned by the Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies who saw in the Latrobe Valley 'a model of industrial development for the nation'.^{lxxvi}

During the 1950s, an open cut mine, power station, coal gasification plant and briquette factory were developed at Morwell - with varying degrees of success. Motivated by the need to make Australia energy-independent during a particularly tense period of the Cold War, the SEC ordered four prefabricated briquette factories from Germany in 1949 and 1950. However, an international credit squeeze forced the Commonwealth Government to cut loans to the States and forced Victoria to cut its Public Works expenditure programme by 30 per cent.^{lxxvii} These caused a cessation of works until 1954 and by then the focus changed from briquette manufacturing to electricity generation and only two of the factories were installed. Instead, plans were drawn for a new power station to be built at the southern end of the open cut. When the Morwell briquette factory began manufacturing its first briquettes in 1959, coal from the Morwell open cut was found to be unsuitable for briquette making. Until its recent closure, the briquette factory relied on coal railed across from Yallourn.

Between 1964 and 1971 the Hazelwood power station was constructed.^{lxxviii} Work also began on the huge Loy Yang complex south of Traralgon in the late 1970s. The SEC anticipated completing the first power station in 1989 and the second in 1992.^{lxxix} Meanwhile at Yallourn,

the equivalent of three power stations was built in the post war years: C, D and E stations. They were gradually replaced by the Yallourn W power station, which began operating in 1973 and was the first power station in Australia to use natural draught cooling towers.^{lxxx}

Hazelwood Power Station

[SOURCE: CONTEXT, 2005]



The SEC's power generating had shaped an industrial landscape and forged a region. In the mid 1990s, its empire was dismembered. The SEC was privatised and the power stations were sold as separate companies to American and British interests.

From the lookout at the Yallourn open cut, the industrial empire of the former SEC is spread out below. Nearby are the massive Yallourn W cooling towers. Further east, the black stocky chimneys of the Morwell briquette factory can be seen, part of the prefabricated components that were ordered from Germany in 1949. Set against a backdrop of hills is the elegant line of eight chimneys of the Hazelwood power station. The huge Loy Yang complex can be seen in the distance. The buildings document fifty years of changing technology in electricity generation and briquette manufacturing, responding to the state's insatiable energy demands.

Post war planning

Creating the new industrial region involved transforming agricultural areas into industrial and urban zones, and also protecting coal reserves through legislation. The SEC commissioned idealistic planner Frank Heath to work with its chief architect, W.E. Gower, and make planning recommendations. The recommendations included building a 'New Morwell' to replace the existing town as it was built over coal. However the task was left to the Town and Country Planning Board to prepare a planning scheme that would be implemented by legislation. Its aims were to protect the brown coal, determine appropriate land use and plan ahead for a region whose 1949 population of 19,000 was predicted to increase to 100,000 at the end of the century. This became the first statutory subregional plan to be implemented in Victoria and set the scene for the massive expansion of Morwell in the 1950s as described in Chapter 8.^{lxxxi} The planners claimed in 1951 that no part of Victoria had been 'planned in advance of development more than the Latrobe Valley'.^{lxxxii}

5.2 Paper manufacturing

As noted in Chapter 3, in 1937 the Australian Paper Manufacturers (APM) established a pilot paper pulp plant at Maryvale, north of Morwell, after securing a government agreement that gave the company favourable access to forests. The aim was to exploit lower-quality timber left after sawlogs had been felled for pulp manufacture.^{lxxxiii} A 900 acre site that included two dairy farms was chosen. Water was available from the Latrobe River and a direct transmission line from Yallourn provided power. The plant was expanded after the Second World War to meet the need for timber for building materials and to reduce Australia's almost total dependence on softwood pulp imports. Besides developing the large complex at Maryvale, APM has developed

tracts of land in the Latrobe Valley for pine plantations and established forestry camps such as the Boola Boola forestry camp near Tyers.

A major employer in study area, APM has also provided houses for its employees in Traralgon and Morwell, as well as hostels and work camps. This contributed to the significant growth of both of these towns in the post-Second World War era as discussed in Chapter 7.

5.3 Clothing and textile manufacturing

When the SEC began its operations at Yallourn in the 1920s, very few women were employed. This left a surplus female labour force and many young women had to leave the district to gain employment elsewhere.^{lxxxiv} Aided by local government encouragement, new textile industries that would provide opportunities for female school leavers were attracted to the Latrobe Valley in the post war years. Kaysers glove factory, locally known as 'Glovers', opened in Moe in 1943 and was significant as an early decentralisation initiative.^{lxxxv} Many Moe women have fond memories of working at Glovers. The La Mode factory, making 'fashion foundations for comfort and grace', was built in Morwell in Church Street in 1945 and later opened another branch in Traralgon. La Mode employed women from throughout the study area, and the company's closure in the 1960s had a significant impact on the area.^{lxxxvi} By this time, the workforce had changed from consisting of predominantly school leavers to married women. Other clothing manufacturers to operate in the study area included Givoni (1968) and Valentine Lee (1971) and the Rocklea Spinning Mills.

HERITAGE

Some examples of places associated with the theme of *Industrialisation and making a region* include:

Providing the State with fuel and power

Briquette factories, Morwell

Hazelwood Power Station, Morwell

Former SEC Administration Building, Yallourn Drive, Yallourn

The site of the first Yallourn open cut mine, and infrastructure associated with the first Yallourn power stations

Paper manufacturing

The Australian Paper Manufacturers complex, Maryvale

Former APM worker's housing, Morwell and Traralgon

Clothing and textile manufacturing

The former La Mode factory, 73-83 Church Street, Morwell

6 THE ENVIRONMENT AND MANAGING PUBLIC LAND

INTRODUCTION

The theme of *Environment and managing public land* is related to the themes explored in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5. As noted in Chapter 2 when settlers first came to the region, they had to learn to live with a new climate and environment - devastating bushfires, prolonged droughts and periodic floods.

Clearing the land led to erosion problems, while introduced species such as blackberries choked creeks and gullies. The series of open cuts and power stations made demands on the region's rivers – especially the Latrobe – and led to temperature change and pollution that posed major challenges for water managers.

New attitudes to conservation and preserving the natural environment have led to the formation of national parks and protection of bushland reserves, as well as community involvement in natural resource management, landcare and revegetation.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- *Developing local regional and national economies:* Altering the environment; Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure.
- *Governing:* Administering Australia

6.1 Managing the effects of bushfires

Fire has played an important role in shaping the Australian landscape, as environmental historian Stephen J. Pyne has discussed in *Burning bush: A fire history of Australia*.^{lxxxvii} Victorian forests are among the most fire-prone in the world. Eucalypts are adapted to and, in many cases, dependent on fire. Short wet winters and long hot summers, periodic droughts and regular hot northerly winds often combine to create explosive conditions for destructive bushfires. As we have seen in preceding chapters, Europeans also used fire as a tool; miners burnt the bush to ease prospecting, graziers burnt their paddocks, and selectors cleared their land with axe and fire. Bushfires occurred in most years and in the study area, it was possibly the Black Thursday fires in February 1851 that first demonstrated to new settlers the frightening force of Australian bushfires and their devastating effects.^{lxxxviii}

Nearly fifty years later, the fires of 1898 were terrifying and destructive. The fires raged through the Strzeleckis where selectors had moved to carve farms from the forest, as well as along river valleys such as the Morwell River valley to Driffield, Yinnar and Hazelwood. Sir John Longstaff's painting, 'Gippsland, Sunday Night, February 20th, 1898 captures the experiences of settlers in the fiery world of the Strzeleckis. In the aftermath of the fires there was an ironic twist. While some selectors had lost everything, others benefited from the clearing that the fires had provided. Settlement in the Strzeleckis was stimulated.^{lxxxix}

Upon its formation in 1919, the Forests Commission of Victoria (FCV) identified the need for fire prevention and management and recognised that native forest vegetation was adapted to survive repeated fires. Even in these early days the FCV recognised that protection of forests from wildfire should be an important objective of forest policy and its response to fire protection was prophetic in that it forecast the continuance of major bushfires. The FCV recommended a number of restrictions on the use of fire over summer months, that precautions be taken during forest operations over summer, and a hazard reduction program with penalties for non-compliance should be developed. Very few of these recommendations were implemented at the time. At the time many fires were deliberately lit, mainly to clear land for agriculture and in the first annual FCV report, the fledgling government body noted that:

Many people have no compunction in setting the forest ablaze, and who for small immediate gain, can watch without pang the immediate destruction in flame and smoke of the timber that might provide their sons with employment and wealth.

By 1920, as it remains today, the basic problem was how to achieve enough public awareness so that 'wanton or grossly careless fire raising shall become a thing of the past'. Consequently, by the end of the 1920s, the FCV had organised foot, mounted and motor patrols each summer, a system of lookout towers connected by telephone, and a network of firebreaks and tracks to try to control fire outbreaks. However, despite the efforts of the FCV, bushfires continued to wreak havoc upon forest settlements in the study area. A series of bushfires in the 1920s and 30s led to some safety improvements such as the requirements for dugouts to be provided, but the scale of the 1939 fires, which became known as 'Black Friday', meant that few of these measures were effective and was to change forever how people lived and worked within fire-prone regions of the study area and elsewhere in Victoria.

While the 1939 fires hold iconic status in Victoria, it is the 1944 fires that caused the greatest loss of life in the study area. On 14 February, a smouldering burn-off on a farm north of Yallourn was whipped into flames by a sudden wind change. Fanned by northerly winds, the fire burnt houses at the Haunted Hills settlement and destroyed several buildings in Yallourn. It rained embers on the open cut, causing fires to break out on the coal face. Moving south east, the fire threatened Morwell and then swept through Hazelwood and Jeeralang into the Strzeleckis towards Yarram. Thirteen people died in the Hazelwood district.

Before the devastating fires of 1939, the Saxton family, saw millers with mills deep in the forest in the Erica/Tanjil Bren area, had established a saw mill in Bell Street in Moe. The recommendations of the Royal Commission into the 1939 fires spelt the end of saw mills located in the forests. They had to be relocated in town centres. The Saxtons, who had suffered terribly when the fires swept through Tanjil Bren, expanded their operations in Moe.^{xc}

Another recommendation arising from the 1944 fires was the formation of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the creation of a clearly defined three tier system for fire prevention and management with the FCV responsible for all State forests and national parks, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works in charge of water catchments and the CFA looking after all other rural areas outside the metropolitan fire district.

In the landscape, visible responses to the devastating effects of bushfire are memorialisation and community involvement in fighting fires. Granite pillars at the Hazelwood Cemetery record the names of the people who died in the 1944 fires. From Toongabbie to Boolarra, there are well-kept CFA sheds that house fire trucks and fire fighting equipment.^{xcii}

6.2 Managing the effects of flooding and pollution

As we have seen in Chapters 3 and 4, farming and industry have resulted in major changes to the region's rivers, as well as its landscapes. Floods like bushfires are a naturally phenomenon and the periodic floods that swept over river flats in the study area have had a sometimes devastating effect, washing away infrastructure and threatening houses.

Draining the Moe Swamp in the 1890s for farming land to the west of study area resulted in increased flooding of the Latrobe. As Stephen Legg explains, the swamp had acted as a filter that controlled the volume of river flow.^{xciii} Clearing in the river's forested watershed also contributed to increased flooding.

A memorable flood was the 1934 flood when heavy rains fell in Victoria at the end of November. The Latrobe breached its banks. Spectacularly and devastatingly, water poured into the Yallourn open cut, transforming it into a lake. The dredgers were submerged in mud and floodwaters. It took 20 months to pump out the open cut and Victoria had to depend on coal from the Brown Coal Mine open cut for its power supplies.

The floods were also devastating for the town and farming communities. Morwell was marooned with all roads and the railway cut. Along river valleys, stock drowned, fences were

washed away and crops and pasture were destroyed. People were rescued from the roofs of their houses. After the devastating floods of 1934 had threatened Victoria's power supplies, extensive flood mitigation works were undertaken on the Latrobe.

Coal mining and power generation at Yallourn soon had an impact on the Latrobe. The water temperature rose. Coal dust and overburden seeped into the water. In the post war years, the river was increasingly polluted as industry in the Latrobe Valley expanded. After the Yarra, it became the second most polluted river in Victoria.^{xciii} Unknown quantities of nutrients and saline waste were flowing down the Latrobe and into the Gippsland Lakes. In 1957, the Latrobe Valley Water and Sewerage Board responded by building an open 'outfall sewer' to divert the waste from the Latrobe and take it to a treatment plant at Dutson Downs near Lake Wellington. Five million gallons of effluent per day - mostly generated from the APM's Maryvale plant and the Gas and Fuel's Morwell gasification plant - began flowing down the newly opened channel. But despite the new channel and the Dutson Downs treatment plant, effluent continued to seep into the Latrobe and end up in the Gippsland Lakes.^{xciv}

The Morwell River provides another dramatic example of changes to a river as a result of industrial development. Its route has been diverted several times. Because of plans in the 1970s to expand the Morwell open cut into the Morwell River flood plain, the river was diverted for four kilometres. Further north, a diversion to the river was also completed in 1987, so that the SEC could expand coal mining operations in the Yallourn east field. International Power Hazelwood has plans for a further diversion of the Morwell River so that it can expand operations in the Driffield coal field.

6.3 Appreciating the natural environment

While farming, forestry and industrial developments in the region have transformed the landscape, national parks and reserves preserve the natural environment and provide opportunities for people to experience the vegetation, flora and fauna that are native to the region. The Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists' Club is a community group that has been active in preserving native vegetation, preparing submissions for the Land Conservation Council and lobbying for reserves. Its motto is 'protect and enjoy'.^{xcv} This section focuses on a national park and a community-managed reserve, both of which are important sites for people of the study area.

Morwell National Park

The study area has one national park within its boundaries, Morwell National Park. Established in 1966, the park's main aim was to protect remnant vegetation of the Strzelecki Ranges, especially the Butterfly Orchid and its wet fern gully habitat. A small park, it began as 138 hectares but has gradually been extended.^{xcvi} Its main significance lies in its natural values: damp sclerophyll forest of blue gum, grey gum and manna gum and areas of warm temperate rainforest. There are 40 species of orchids in the park. It also has high scenic values from low valleys to spectacular views of the Baw Baws. Reflecting the changing attitudes of park management, the cultural features of the park are also valued. Evidence of earlier land use includes saw milling, mining and farming, while the weir at Billy's Creek is a significant site documenting Morwell's early water supply.

On the border of the study area but just outside it is the Tarra Bulga National Park, filled with magnificent forests and fern gullies, conveys a sense of the landscape before settlers cleared the hills and before the plantations of softwood and hardwood were planted in an effort to create new 'forests'.

Edward Hunter Bush Reserve, Moe

Few towns have a resource such as the Edward Hunter Bush Reserve – 57 hectares of bushland - within their boundaries.

With Moe developing as an important railway centre, the land was originally reserved as a water catchment area and storage dam that provided water for steam trains. Water was piped to the railway station. During the 1950s, the deep reservoir became a popular swimming area with a kiosk operating, but its popularity declined after two children drowned in the reservoir. The dam wall was blasted in an effort to recover one of the bodies in the 1960s and the dam became a shallow waterhole.

In the 1970s, interested members of the community formed a committee to manage the reserve, which was named after a much respected Moe representative on the Narracan Shire Council. Community efforts have resulted in a well-managed reserve that is noted for its bird life and native orchids, and is accessible for residents through a network of walking tracks that wind through the bush. The original storage dam is evident and part of the kiosk signboard is still nailed to a tree, documenting the reserve's railway and recreational history.^{xvii}

HERITAGE

Some examples of places associated with the theme of *The environment and managing public land* include:

Managing the effects of bushfires

Memorial Gates, Hazelwood Cemetery

Managing the effects of flooding and pollution

The altered route of the Latrobe and Morwell river systems

Appreciating the natural environment

Morwell National Park

Edward Hunter Bush Reserve

7 BUILDING SETTLEMENTS AND TOWNS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers how the settlements and towns have evolved and how buildings and sites document the layers of settlement history.

Within the study area, the earliest settlements developed in the middle of the nineteenth century around accommodation houses built for travellers, often near creek and river crossings. This was the case with Morwell Bridge and Traralgon. As the selectors began developing farms and homes, they were anxious to establish community facilities and cultural institutions in the new areas: a school for their children, a church for worshipping and a hall to act as a community hub, as at Tyers and Traralgon South. With the population increasing as a result of selection, and a railway network taking shape, new settlements sprang up around railway stations and developed into towns that serviced the agricultural industries such as dairying. Moe and Morwell began as railway towns, as did Boolarra, Yinnar and Glengarry. Other settlements developed as a result of black coal mining and forestry.

The transformation of the Latrobe Valley from an agricultural area into an industrial region in the twentieth century had a major impact on towns in the study area existing at that time as well as creating new ones and eventually destroying others.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- *Developing Local, Regional and National Economies*: Marketing and retailing
- *Peopling Australia*: Migrating
- *Building settlements, towns and cities*: Planning urban settlements; Supplying urban services; Making settlements to serve rural Australia; Remembering significant phases in the development of settlements, towns and cities

7.1 Establishing settlements and towns from the nineteenth century

This section considers the establishment of towns and settlements from the mid to late nineteenth century and their development until the early decades of the twentieth century.^{xviii}

As noted in Chapter 2 the pastoral era attracted small numbers of people to the study area and it was only after the opening up of land for selection that permanent townships were to develop. However, it was the opening of the Gippsland railway in 1879 and the consequent expansion of branch lines that was to have the most profound and lasting influence upon the pattern of settlement in the study area. As the population increased with selection and the arrival of the railway lines Moe, Morwell and Traralgon developed as the main commercial centres and shops, hotels, banks, solicitors' rooms and newspaper offices were built to cater for local and regional needs.

Selection towns

Morwell Bridge

As noted in Chapter 2 from 1844, pastoral runs had been taken up along the Morwell River, which flows from the Strzelecki Ranges into the Latrobe River. The first settlement developed at Morwell Bridge where a hotel had been built and a staging post was established on the coaching route between Sale and Melbourne. However, the development of the settlement effectively ceased when the Gippsland Railway was opened in 1878 and the station was built several kilometres to the east where a new settlement developed.

Traralgon South

Traralgon South, in the valley of the Traralgon Creek, has had two incarnations. The selectors who came to the area in the 1870s slowly began clearing the heavy timber. Once cleared, the creek flats proved fertile and dairying became a major occupation. A school opened in 1879 and a church used by all denominations was built in 1889. A mechanics' institute opened the following year. A creamery opened in Traralgon South around 1890 but when farm separators became available, cream was sent to the factory at Traralgon. A trout hatchery operated in the creek for twenty years until it was relocated to Snob's Creek in northern Victoria in the 1940s.

Tyers

When selectors came to the area in the 1870s, this district was first known as Boola Boola. A school opened in 1878, a mechanics' institute was erected in 1888 and the township was gazetted in 1893. The school's name was changed to Tyers in 1918 adopting the name of the nearby river and original pastoral run and commemorating the first Gippsland commissioner of crown lands, C.J. Tyers. It was some years before the town's name was officially changed.

Dairying and the timber industry were significant factors in Tyers' development. In the early 1890s, the Galbraith family set up a creamery and butter factory at Tyers. Saw mills operated in the forest north of Tyers, with the timber used in building, railway and mining construction. Reflecting the influence of the SEC's new power station at Yallourn, a bush mill in the Boola Boola forest was the first to be entirely powered by electricity.

Jean Galbraith, garden writer and naturalist, wrote her famous books, field guides and gardening articles in her house at the western entrance to Tyers. The rustic front gate leads the way into her 'garden in a valley'.^{xcix}

Mining towns

Toongabbie

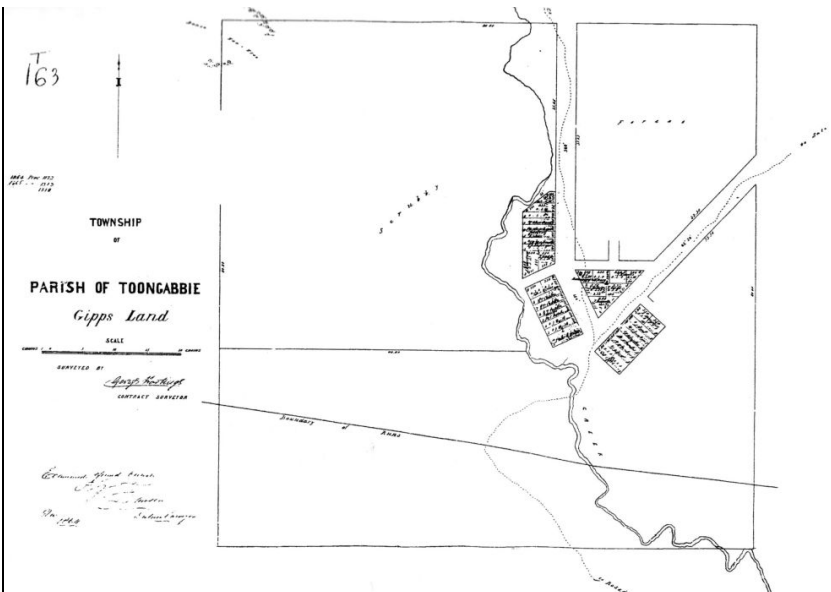
At first a shepherd's outstation on the Heyfield run, Toongabbie's development as a settlement is directly connected to the discovery of gold at Walhalla in 1862. Miners, who rushed to the isolated gold field deep in the Great Dividing Range, came via Port Albert and Sale, across the red gum plains. Toongabbie was the last supply post before people attempted the difficult mountainous route to Walhalla. As soon as the gold discovery was publicised, a store and accommodation house were set up at Toongabbie and a town began to develop as a stopping place en route to the goldfields where miners, businessmen and carriers were constantly passing through. A station on the new railway line connecting Traralgon and Stratford opened there in 1883, enabling heavy mining machinery to be railed from Melbourne for transport on to Walhalla. There were hotels, saw mills, a coach service to Walhalla, blacksmiths and saddlers, stables and storehouses.

The development of Toongabbie in the late nineteenth century can be gauged by the fact that in 1874 it had a similar population to Traralgon. A further measure of progress came in 1883 when an imposing mechanics' institute was built, which was extended in 1891. With the coming of the railway, the population peaked at 275 in 1901. Street lighting was added in 1885 and by October 1887 the streets in the town were formed and the footpaths gravelled. For the first time, it is said, Toongabbie had the appearance of a 'neatly planned town'.^c

However, Toongabbie's growth was soon to come to end. By 1910, mining at Walhalla had begun to decline. That year, a railway line was built from Moe to Walhalla, providing a direct route to the gold town and Toongabbie was by-passed. The town's population declined and the last hotel closed in 1929. No longer linked to the goldfields, Toongabbie's role contracted as it became a centre for its farming district. Its school, churches and hall provided facilities for the surrounding community.

Toongabbie township survey, 1864

[SOURCE: TOONGABBIE, P.19]

*Frank Toll's Commercial Hotel, Toongabbie, c.1910*

[SOURCE: TOONGABBIE, P.103]

**Coalville**

After prospectors and government drillers found good quality deposits of black coal in the area south of Moe, several mining companies formed to mine the reserves at Coalville in the 1880s. When the railway line from Moe to Thorpdale was built along the Narracan valley, a station was built at Coalville with sidings for loading coal. A township grew around the station with a hotel, several stores and a boarding house. The Coalville School opened in 1887 and two churches were built in the 1890s, a time when the population peaked. Coalville fielded sporting teams. Friendly societies were formed.

Coal mining was short-lived. The coal seams were narrow and poor working conditions led to strikes. The Railways Department, which had purchased most of the coal, began reducing its quota and then stopped buying the coal altogether. By 1898 the mines closed. Miners left the town and many of the buildings were moved away.

As dairy farms had been established in the area, the township was surveyed again in 1904. No longer a mining town, it served the small farming community instead. The school closed in the 1980s. A reserve and tennis court now marks the township site. The coffee palace is now a private home.

Railway towns

Boolarra

Set in the Strzelecki Ranges, selectors came to the area in the late 1870s to clear the forest and develop farms. When the railway line from Morwell to Mirboo North was under construction in the early 1880s, a camp and station were set up at the 'twelve mile peg' from Morwell. A township was surveyed there in 1884 and named Boolarra.

While black and brown coal was mined in the area, the attempts were short-lived. Timber cutting developed as an important industry, with saw mills and paling splitters operating in the area. The palings and blackwood logs were sent from Boolarra by rail. Slowly, sections of forest were cleared for farming. The 1898 bushfires burned large areas of scrub, leaving an ash bed that stimulated the rapid growth of grass. In 1900, the Heymans opened a butter factory in Boolarra, and a factory operated in the town until the late 1950s.

The town became the second largest in Morwell Shire with a population of over 200 in the 1890s. After the timber industry declined, so did the population of the town, but it still remained an important centre of the local district. In spite of a fire that destroyed a hotel and shops in the main street the year before, in 1938 there were still two hotels, three general stores, bakers, butchers, blacksmiths, bootmakers, a tinsmith and a coachbuilder. The monthly cattle sales brought people into town. Community life included sports meetings, woodchops, horse races and dances.

Glengarry

First known as Toongabbie South, Eaglehawk and Latrobe, the district of Glengarry was opened for selection in 1865. When the Traralgon to Stratford railway line was built in 1883, the station just north of the Latrobe River was named Glengarry, adopting the name that Angus McMillan had given to the Latrobe River in 1840.

Set on the red gum plains, saw milling became a major occupation. Paving blocks, wooden wheel rims and building timber were sent to Melbourne from the Glengarry station. Dairying also became an important industry in the district, as well as grazing. First a creamery and then a butter factory and milk factory operated at Glengarry. Once the town was established around the railway station, St John's Church of England was relocated from private property to the town.

Moe

By the early 1860s, a small settlement developed to the north of the Moe Swamp at Westbury as a staging post on the coach route to Gippsland. When the railway line between Sale and Melbourne was constructed, the new railway station to the south east became the focus of activity, and the town of Moe was surveyed in 1879. The new town soon had hotels, banks, churches, a school and a mechanics' institute and became a centre for the surrounding farming community and the timber industry. A co-operative butter factory began operating in the town in 1906. Moe's importance as a railway centre increased when branch lines were built to Thorpdale in 1888 and Walhalla in 1910, and, as a result of SEC operations, to Yallourn.

Morwell

As previously noted, when the railway line between Melbourne and Sale was built in the late 1870s, the Morwell railway station, several kilometres to the east of Morwell Bridge, became the new centre of activity and the old settlement of Morwell Bridge ceased to develop. The first township blocks were surveyed around the railway station in 1878. Businesses were established to supply railway workers and travellers, as well as settlers who had been taking up selections in the area from the 1870s. During the 1880s, a mechanics institute was built, as well as a post office, hotels, churches, school and the first commercial buildings and houses.

Commercial Road (originally known as Main Street) was the first surveyed street of Morwell, with three blocks of allotments being surveyed on the south side of the street in 1878; subsequent surveys covered the sections south of George Street. Ten traders were reported to

have already set up business in Commercial Road prior to the first land sales in 1879 being part of the first surveyed township section. The 1881 Census recorded Morwell as having 28 dwellings. Over the next three years over 134 other buildings were added and Commercial Road became the business centre of the town.^{ci}

A branch line was opened to Mirboo North in 1884 and the timber industry expanded. Dairying became an important industry in the surrounding area and a butter factory was built in Morwell. Morwell began developing as a major centre for a large agricultural district. Industries such as brick making and pottery making were also established in the town. One symbol of the increasing prosperity of the town was the opening in 1884 of Morwell's first bank, a branch of the Colonial Bank of Australasia. Other brick buildings included Conlan's Club Hotel.

Conlans Club Hotel, Morwell, c.1900

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.39]



Legg notes that the construction of the Mirboo railway encouraged a 'real estate boom'. Land surrounding the junction of the Gippsland railway and the Mirboo railway was subdivided into more than 130 township allotments, which were auctioned in December 1884 and promoted as 'the largest subdivisional land sale ever held in the Gippsland Province'. The peak of the land boom in Morwell came late in 1890 when two sales in September and October offered 300 township allotments for sale in six separate subdivisions.^{cii} Legg cites a local newspaper, which made the following comments about development in the town:

One has only to look around to see the wonderful strides being made in a twelve month [sic]. One every side, new buildings are springing up, industries of all descriptions are being started in our midst, and only last week the tender for the erection of the first smoke stack to be built in Morwell was let by the Maryvale Coal Co.^{ciii}

Commercial Road, Morwell, c.1905

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.39]



In 1890 two fires destroyed several shops in Commercial Road. In their place arose imposing new brick shops, which were described as an 'ornament to the town' and were a symbol of Morwell's progress. By 1892 the population had reached 600 and Morwell was described as 'the most progressive town in Gippsland'.^{civ}

Traralgon

Traralgon's origins date from the early pastoral period. Edward Hobson occupied the Traralgon run in 1844 and an accommodation house near Traralgon Creek provided shelter for travellers on the route between Melbourne and Sale. The town was surveyed in 1858 and a census in 1861 revealed there were 36 residents.^{cv} However, it was the construction of the railway line between Sale and Melbourne, which was completed in 1879, that was a major impetus to the town and most development thereafter took place on the western side of the creek to the north of the station.

In 1880, the Traralgon became the centre of the Shire of Traralgon, which separated from the Shire of Rosedale. The construction of a branch railway line from Traralgon to Stratford by 1886 further consolidated the role of Traralgon as a legal, administrative and educational centre for the surrounding hinterland where dairying and saw milling were developing as major industries. In the 1880s four brickyards were operating, substantial public buildings were constructed in the town and new subdivisions provided land for housing. The importance of Traralgon as a regional centre was illustrated by the construction of the new post office and courthouse in 1886.

As noted in Chapter 4, Traralgon's importance as a railway town increased when it became a service depot in 1903 employing over 90 workers, which boosted development and created a demand for housing. Consequently the town began to expand beyond the 1858 boundaries. To the south of the railway many railway workers moved into cottages in new subdivisions including the Queen's Parade (formerly Railway Parade) area and the combination of houses and railway buildings in this precinct reveal the integration of work and community. To the north the subdivision and sale from 1907 onwards of the former Traralgon Park estate enabled the town boundaries to extend beyond Grey Street creating Moore Street and Campbell Street (now Gordon Crescent). The commercial centre continued to grow, extending along the length of Franklin Street between the station end and the post office and courthouse. Imposing new two story commercial buildings were constructed including the Gippsland Trading Company in 1903, and Layton's Stores in 1907. Traralgon's growth continued after World War One before the on-set of the Great Depression. In the early 1920s after a period of inactivity after the war, Traralgon experienced a 'building boom'^{cvi} as a number of new houses were built including Wigg's brick house in Hickox Street.

Yinnar

Originally part of the Scrubby Forest run, Yinnar owes its existence to the branch railway line that ran from Morwell to Mirboo North. Opened in 1885, the railway station at the 'seven mile peg' became the nucleus for a township, which was situated in what was part of Henry Wicks' selection. The town was surveyed in May 1885 and two months later 100 allotments were auctioned at the offices of Mr Wicks' agents. John Quigley from Morwell bought many of the allotments and built Yinnar's first buildings including a house, store, butcher's shop, boarding house and wine saloon. For his part, Mr Wicks built the town's first hotel in 1885.^{cvi}

During 1888 Yinnar grew rapidly and the town hummed around the railway station, timber industry and the expanding dairy industry. The goods and timber platforms and trucking yards at the railway station were completed in 1888, while civic buildings such as the Mechanics' Institute and a church were built in the same year. By 1891 the Census recorded that Yinnar had 131 inhabitants and 21 dwellings. This compared to Boolarra, which had grown to 220 people with 44 dwellings.^{cvi}

Many of the selectors who had moved into the area in the 1870s began transforming their selections into productive dairy farms. A co-operative butter factory opened in Yinnar in 1891. This was replaced by a new factory in 1929, later operated by Nestles and Murray Goulburn. In the 1920s, the Yinnar district dairy farmers were the first to establish herd testing services.

Like Boolarra, the decline in the timber industry slowed the development of Yinnar. The role as a local service centre also diminished as improved road transport links meant that people travelled to Morwell or Mirboo North for shopping.

7.2 The SEC towns

The activities of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria as described in Chapter 5 have had a profound impact upon the pattern of settlement in the study area. This section considers the four new towns that were created to house SEC works, starting with Yallourn, the 'model town' in the 1920s. The impact of the SEC upon the growth of the existing towns will be examined in the following section.

Yallourn

As the SEC was making plans to develop the major industrial complex on the banks of the Latrobe River and provide Victoria with an electricity supply, it also drew up plans for a model garden city to house the new SEC employees. Designed by SEC architect A.R. La Gerche in 1921, the plan was anchored by a town square with streets that radiated from the town centre and followed the topography of the site. Parks, gardens and extensive street plantings were designed by landscape gardener Hugh Linaker. Visually, Yallourn was a model of town planning. The houses and public buildings were also designed by La Gerche, giving the town architectural cohesion. Yallourn quickly became the largest town in Morwell Shire with a population of over 3,000 by 1940.

The SEC aimed to provide model housing for its employees and much time was devoted to planning ideal worker housing. Despite this aim to give its workers ideal living conditions, the SEC instituted tight control over the town and its residents. There was no private ownership or local government at Yallourn. The SEC was employer, shopkeeper, landlord and town governor. Residence was mostly restricted to SEC employees, who were expected to live in the town. A tight-knit community developed. Despite the residence requirement, many workers earning the basic wage left Yallourn and established shanty towns nearby as they couldn't afford to pay the rents for the model houses. In 1928, the SEC discovered that there was easily winnable coal under the town and future plans for extending the town were compromised.

After the open cut caught alight in 1944, a royal commission was held to investigate the disaster. Judge Stretton's criticisms that residents lacked 'freedom, fresh air and independence' paved the way for a loosening of SEC control of the town in the post war years.

As the SEC began transforming the Latrobe Valley into an industrial region with workers living throughout the Valley and the Housing Commission taking responsibility for providing new houses, a company town became less of a necessity for the SEC. With its beautiful parks and gardens and extensive sporting ovals, Yallourn was expensive to maintain. Houses were in need of renovation and the town had reached its limits of expansion. In 1961, the SEC announced that the town would be dug up for the coal that lay underneath. Although this was first mooted to take place in the 1990s, the demolition date was brought forward and destruction of the town began in the 1970s. Little remained after 1980.

Yallourn houses have been moved throughout the study area and remain identifiably 'Yallourn' because of their distinctive style. Avon Court in Newborough is one example of a street with many relocated Yallourn houses. The general superintendent's house has been moved to Toongabbie, one of 24 houses moved to that town between 1976 and 1981. As part of the resettlement process, the SEC established comparable facilities in many Latrobe Valley towns, to compensate for the loss of facilities in Yallourn. Kernot Hall in Morwell is an example of this. As noted in Chapter 9 other items to be relocated from Yallourn to other parts of the study area include the Sir John Monash memorial (to Morwell) and the war memorial (to Newborough).

For visitors standing at the lookout of the Yallourn open cut today, there is no plaque or sign to tell them that a town - one of the most comprehensively planned in Australia and perhaps the nation's best evocation of the garden city movement - has disappeared into the blackness of the open cut.

Yallourn North

Yallourn North, originally known as Brown Coal Mine, developed from the first attempts at mining brown coal in the Latrobe Valley. The Great Morwell Coal Mining Company began mining there in 1889, but ceased operating ten years later. The mine was re-opened by the Mines Department in 1916 to provide emergency fuel during a New South Wales coal strike. The Mines Department provided some huts for the workers, a marquee that was used as a school and a pump for a water supply.

After the State Electricity Commission was formed a new open cut was developed on the southern bank of the Latrobe River in the 1920s and a model town was built to house SEC workers. The original open cut at Brown Coal Mine and the small settlement passed into SEC jurisdiction. The SEC planned to close the old open cut by 1928. But instead of declining, the Brown Coal Mine settlement grew rapidly as SEC workers migrated across the river when they realised they could not afford to rent the houses that had been provided for them at Yallourn. Brown Coal Mine became a haphazard, independent settlement of huts, away from the coal dust that rained on Yallourn. The SEC was forced to acknowledge the settlement's existence and provide basic services for the residents. Instead of being phased out in 1928, mining continued at the open cut into the post war years.

Brown Coal Mine was transformed after the Second World War. Its name was changed to Yallourn North and the SEC began developing housing estates, including installing 275 pre-cut houses from Nottingham, to accommodate its expanding workforce. As a result the population increased rapidly from 800 just after the Second World War to 1457 by 1954 and 1867 in 1961.^{cx} The school was expanded and new community facilities including a medical centre and an infant welfare centre were built to meet the needs of the growing population.

The symbolic end to the 'shanty town' occurred in 1950 with the 'Big Slip' when a landslide caused a large section of the main street to fall into the open cut. As part of the new approach to post war planning and 'regulated' development, the Town and Country Planning Board prepared a planning scheme for Yallourn North.

During the Yallourn resettlement process in the 1970s, the SEC provided facilities such as a swimming pool, impressive football oval and netball courts for the town. On a prominent site in Yallourn North is the former Yallourn North Camp Recreation Building, now renovated as the Old Brown Coal Mine Museum. Built in 1949 by the SEC, it provided facilities for SEC workers, many of whom were migrants, coming to work on extensions to the Yallourn power station complex during a period of critical power shortage.

Newborough

First known as Moe East, a small settlement to the east of Moe began developing as several families moved on to 10 acre allotments in the 1930s. As the population grew, a name change competition was held in 1942, to give the settlement a separate identity from Moe. 'Newborough' was judged the winning entry.

In the post war years, with massive extensions planned for the Yallourn power station, the SEC compulsorily acquired land at Newborough to build a new housing estate. At a time of great housing shortages, the SEC was aware that it would not attract skilled workers to the new construction site unless housing was provided. Influenced by a housing solution adopted by the Victorian Railways, the SEC placed an order with a Nottingham firm for 300 pre-cut houses that could be shipped from England and assembled on site. Although manufactured in England, the houses were designed by Australian architects. The houses were likened to a meccano set: one basic set of components could be assembled in different ways to produce a variety of designs.^{cx}

The houses for the East Newborough subdivision arrived in 1950 and another 400 were ordered for the North Newborough subdivision. Because of the labour shortage, the SEC recruited skilled tradesmen from Britain and guaranteed them housing. The new employees who had travelled from Britain to Newborough also moved into houses that had travelled from

Britain – for this reason the project was also dubbed ‘operation snail’, not to imply slowness, but because the new residents were said to be bringing their houses with them. Most of the houses in the Newborough subdivision were reserved for British migrants; however, a number of other migrant groups including Ukrainian, Germans and Latvians came and settled in Newborough. As noted in Chapter 9 they constructed places of worship and halls to meet and socialise.

Newborough had another influx of population when the SEC began demolishing Yallourn in the 1970s. Within the study area, Newborough was the preferred area of relocation for Yallourn residents. The SEC organised subdivisions in Newborough and many Yallournites built here or moved Yallourn houses to the new sites. A large retirement village was also built for Yallourn residents. As with other towns in the study area, the SEC provided community facilities in Newborough as part of the resettlement process.

The ‘snail houses’ are an important record of migration and ways of finding a solution to the post war housing shortage. In East and North Newborough today, many of the houses have been remade and ‘restyled’ with verandahs, new roofs and cladding, showing how they have been adapted to contemporary taste and requirements.

Churchill

Planned in 1964, Churchill was designed as a town predominantly for employees of the power industry in the Latrobe Valley.

By the 1950s, the development of the Morwell field and plans to build the Hazelwood power station had shifted development in the Latrobe Valley from the western end to focus on Morwell. In 1961, the SEC informed the Housing Commission that the Valley’s population would grow by 60,000 by the year 2000 and more homes were urgently needed. The Housing Commission selected a site in the Hazelwood district at the foot of the Strzeleckis to build a new town that would have an anticipated population of 40,000 by the end of the century. Building had just started on the new Hazelwood town, when Sir Winston Churchill died. In February 1965, the government announced that the new town would be named Churchill and a bitter controversy followed as locals argued in favour of retaining the name with local historical associations. Imperial connections won out and the first families moved into their homes in Churchill, not Hazelwood. In 1967 the Housing Commission built a 32 metre statue in Churchill. Originally known as The Spire (reputedly to inspire the new residents) it was not initially popular with residents who would have preferred a swimming pool.^{xi} Now known as ‘the Cigar’, it has become a local landmark.

Churchill did not grow into the large town that the Housing Commission anticipated and its population in 2000 hovered around 5,000. In 1972, Churchill became the site for the new Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education. Now amalgamated with Monash University, the campus has expanded greatly and there is much interaction between the university and the town.

7.3 Developing towns and regional centres in the twentieth century

This section considers the development of townships from the inter-war period onwards. As noted above much of the growth during the inter-war period in the study area was concentrated in the new town of Yallourn; however, the three main centres of Traralgon, Morwell and Moe, which were boosted by closer settlement of their hinterland and by the development of the SEC, each experienced periods of strong growth during the 1920s and 30s while the other smaller towns grew slowly in the first decades of the twentieth century or began to decline in population. However, it was the opening of the APM mill complex in 1937 and massive expansion of the SEC after the Second World War as described in Chapter 4 that would have the most profound impact upon the three main towns in the study area. All experienced significant population growth in the period after the Second World War when they were transformed from small country towns to large urban centres, which each began to rival Sale for the role of ‘Capital of Gippsland’. After experiencing years of decline, many of the

smaller rural towns were also to find new life as dormitory suburbs serving the employment centres in the three towns that would soon become cities.

Moe

As at Morwell, closer settlement near Moe, in this case in the swamp land to the west stimulated growth as did the emerging role of Moe as a dormitory suburb for people who could not afford to live at Yallourn. As a result the population increased from 400 in the 1920s to 1000 by 1939. This trend continued after the Second World War when the SEC transformed the Latrobe Valley into an industrial region and designated that Moe would become a dormitory suburb for the SEC. From 1947 to the mid 1950s, the Housing Commission of Victoria built 1,500 homes in Moe, mainly south of the railway line, to house people coming to work at the rapidly expanding Yallourn power station, while another 71 houses were constructed by A.V. Jennings. The town's population increased from 2,811 in 1947 to 13,500 in 1955 and then to 15,555 by 1961. There were corresponding changes in local government. Moe was excised from the Shire of Narracan, and became a borough in 1955 and a city in 1963. New secondary industries were established in the town, including textile and clothing mills, concrete pipe manufacturing, engineering works and photographic processing. Dairy processing and timber milling also continued.

In Moe as in other towns the commercial centre expanded on both sides of the railway line. The English Scottish & Australian Bank, which in 1962 opened a branch in a striking modern style in Lloyd Street, was one of a number of banks that opened new or expanded premises in the town. Purvis Stores, which had its origins in Moe, provides an example of how retail facilities developed from a small general store to the largest retail chain in Gippsland. Begun as a general store on the banks of Narracan Creek before Moe developed around its present site, the Purvis family bought the business in 1910. Eventually there were 20 stores spread throughout Gippsland. Purvis Plaza in Moe has been built on the site of the former Purvis department store.

ES&A Bank, Lloyd Street, Moe, c.1962

[SOURCE: SLV PICTURE COLLECTION]



The privatisation of the SEC in the 1990s had a significant impact on Moe, as did the relocation of services during the period of council amalgamations and Kennett government restructuring, including the closing of the Moe Hospital.

Morwell

After growing slowly during the early decades of the twentieth century the closer settlement of the farming flats to the south of Morwell after the First World War saw the population of the town and the Shire double in size during the inter-war period. Most development occurred in the 1920s before the Great Depression. When APM located its paper mill at Maryvale in the 1930s, employees moved into Morwell as well as Traralgon. APM built houses for staff and workers, as well as a staff hostel in the town. Private entrepreneurs also constructed housing in anticipation of the housing demand that would be created – In the five years after 1937 300 houses were constructed in the town. By 1940 the population of Morwell Shire had reached 9,000 people with the town of Morwell accounting for 1,762. It was the second largest town in the Shire after Yallourn.^{cxi}

When the SEC began expanding its activities from Yallourn in the postwar years to create the industrial region of the Latrobe Valley, Morwell became a crucial centre of operations. At first there were discussions about Morwell's survival as a town as it lay over coal and preliminary planning documents recommended building a 'New Morwell'. In little more than twenty years, an open cut mine, briquette factory and a power station were built to the south of the town. A plant converting brown coal to gas was built, as were two gas turbine power stations. The residential area of Morwell expanded to the east and north and shops were built on the north side of the railway line. The Housing Commission built over 2,000 houses to cater for the sudden increase in population. In the decade after 1947 Morwell grew by 10,000 people to a population of 13,000.

*APM staff housing estate, Vincent Road
1947*

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.81]



To meet the demand for housing temporary accommodation was supplied at a number of sites. In 1947 APM established the Derham's Hill transit camp for its Maryvale workers, which at its peak in 1956 accommodated about 500 people. White City, so named for the predominant exterior colour of the pre-fabricated houses, was a larger settlement of about 200 houses established by the SEC near the Thorpdale Road. It survived until 1962 when the Shire enforced new building regulations regulating minimum house sizes.^{cxiii}

Another measure of Morwell's progress was the expansion of the commercial centre. For example, between 1956 and 1959 four new bank branches were established in Morwell, while the ANZ and the National Bank (former Colonial Bank) both erected new premises to replace their existing buildings in Commercial Road.

As noted in Chapter 2 many of the newcomers were migrants. The shopping precinct of Church Street has been dubbed 'Little Italy' by locals, reflecting the impact of post war migration on the town.^{cxiv}

Traralgon

It was in Traralgon that APM's decision in the 1930s to build a paper mill had the most impact. APM built 1,000 houses for its employees in Traralgon. The APM estates were influenced by garden suburb planning ideas and included generous areas of open space.^{cxv} An elite group of six houses was also built by APM for senior staff in Kay, Clarke and Grey Streets. Workers were able to buy their houses by paying a deposit and using their rent to contribute to the balance. Now a major component of housing in Traralgon, the APM estates reveal insights to company housing and facilities considered suitable for staff and workers.

The construction of the APM mill resulted in a shortage of housing. In 1945, Cuthill notes that:

It was still impossible for people not working out at the mill to find an empty house, and the Victorian Housing Commission took over a large piece of Traralgon Park in Gordon Street. The Commission called for people to give a price for building houses there, and Mr. J.J. Clift from Melbourne was successful in getting the job, Mr. Gavin Blythman, his foreman, came up from Melbourne, and work was started. The Commission built 199 houses in this particular part of the town, the scheme in this area being finished in 1952.^{cxvi}

Further housing was provided in estates developed by private entrepreneurs, however, despite all of this housing shortages were still experienced in Traralgon. As a result many large older

houses in Traralgon were converted to boarding houses to meet demand. One example is 'Etheldale' at 15 Collins Street, which was operated by APM as a 'Staff Boarding House' from 1946-54.

During this time the commercial centre of Traralgon extended beyond Franklin Street into the intersecting streets. Imposing new buildings such as the Roland Hill centre and the AMP centre, which was designed by noted Melbourne architect Harry Norris, symbolised the confidence of the town.

Developing the Loy Yang open cut and power stations integrated Traralgon into the power generating rhythms of the Latrobe Valley. The town's population of 14,666 in 1971 had increased to 19,774 in 1991, as tradespeople and SEC workers moved to Traralgon.

Dormitory towns

The continuing development of the SEC and other major institutions such as GIAE also affected the development of the outlying towns such as Glengarry, Toongabbie, Boolarra and Yinnar.

The decline in Boolarra's population reversed in the 1970s when people coming to work in the Latrobe Valley and at GIAE in Churchill moved there for its rural lifestyle. This is reflected in the new layers of housing in the town and acreages in the hills. New residents relocated Yallourn houses to Boolarra and the community also moved a Yallourn building to house its infant welfare centre and playgroup.

An estate to the west of Glengarry was subdivided for soldier settlement after the First World War and two more estates were subdivided after the Second World War. Dairying was the major occupation and by the 1950s, 150 farms supplied the milk factory. The factory closed in 1973. However, despite the closure of the factory, Glengarry's proximity to Traralgon meant the population increased in the 1970s with people employed in the Latrobe Valley power industry moving to new subdivisions in the town and to live on acreages.

At Yinnar the closure of the railway in 1974 contributed to the closure four years later of the former butter factory that had been producing powdered milk. However, Yinnar's population didn't decline because of a new wave of settlement in the late 1970s when workers in the Latrobe Valley power industry came to live at Yinnar, as well as people employed at Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education at Churchill.

The expanding activities at the APM had an impact on Tyers. From 1947 to 1958, migrants worked at the Boola Boola forestry camp nearby, cutting and splitting timber for pulpwood. With its view over the Latrobe Valley and forested mountains to the north, Tyers had a further influx of population from the 1970s as people moved on to small acreages surrounding the town.

After years of decline, the development of Toongabbie was also stimulated by industrial development in the Latrobe Valley. In the 1970s, workers associated with the Loy Yang development, but preferring to live in a country town or on acreage, moved to Toongabbie. This co-incided with the demolition of the SEC's model town of Yallourn, and as a result, many Yallourn houses have been moved to the small town, and relocated near nineteenth century cottages. Of particular note in Toongabbie is the relocated general superintendent's house, '58 Narracan Avenue', designed by A.R. La Gerche in 1929. Several of the distinctive Yallourn attic houses have been moved to Toongabbie (see 'Houses on the move' below).

Traralgon South lay over coal and its fate was sealed when plans to build two power stations south of Traralgon were announced in 1967. The SEC acquired the township site for the project. Construction of the first Loy Yang power station started in 1977. Further down the creek valley, a new Traralgon South has been formed through housing subdivisions and bush acreages.

Houses on the move

Beginning with Walhalla in the early decades of the twentieth century the process of town decline and building removal has been a tradition in Gippsland. It is said that the opening of the railway to Walhalla in 1910 was just in time to start moving houses out. A number were apparently moved to Traralgon, many by Sam Phillips, a businessman from Walhalla who established a carrying business and livery stables in Traralgon. Phillips moved buildings by horse and lorry to many parts of Gippsland, including to land he owned in Allard Street. His own house at No.15 comprised parts of the former Grand Junction Hotel. Other Walhalla houses ended up at Moe and Morwell. Prefabricated houses from the 'White City' settlement in Morwell became holiday houses throughout Gippsland in the 1960s. As previously noted, when Yallourn was destroyed many of the distinctively designed houses were relocated to Toongabbie, including the former SEC Superintendent's house, now at 340 Henderson's Road (this is just outside the boundary of Latrobe City) and the house at 48 Main Street.

HERITAGE

Some examples of places associated with the theme of *Building settlements and towns* include:

Establishing towns and settlements from the nineteenth century

Glengarry township, Toongabbie township and Main Street, Yinnar

Commercial development such as the former Selector's Arms Hotel, 2-4 Austin Street, Boolarra, 'New buildings', 168-78 Commercial Road, Morwell, the former Layton's buildings, 24 Franklin Street, Traralgon, and the former Star Hotel, Peterkin Street, Traralgon

Residential development such as the houses at 9 High Street, Moe, 28 Hazelwood Road, Morwell, 8-14 Henry Street, Traralgon, and the Queens Parade area, Traralgon.

House, 9 High Street, Moe

[SOURCE: CONTEXT, 2005]



The SEC towns

Newborough North and Newborough East estates

Yallourn North Infant Welfare Centre, 39 Carmel Avenue

Churchill Cigar, Monash Way

Developing towns and regional centres in the twentieth century

Residential development including private estates in Langford Street and Moore Street, Moe, and Anderson Street, Traralgon, HCV estates in Moe, Morwell and Traralgon, and APM staff housing estates in Morwell and Traralgon, and the APM senior staff houses in Grey and Kay streets, Traralgon.

Commercial development such as the former ES&A Bank, 37 Lloyd Street, Moe, and Commonwealth Bank, 200 Commercial Road, Morwell

8 GOVERNING AND ADMINISTRATION

INTRODUCTION

This section considers the impact on the landscape of services provided by the different levels of government, and also the role of communities in securing these services. Buildings such as schools and hospitals are important community structures that are invested with heritage significance because of the connection that people have with these institutions in their everyday lives. They have high social value.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- *Governing*: Developing institutions of self-government and democracy; Administering Australia; Defending Australia; Establishing regional and local identity.
- *Educating*: Establishing schools; Building a system of higher education
- *Developing Local, Regional and National Economies*: Providing health services

8.1 Forming local government

In common with the rest of Victoria, the study area has had a complex history of shifting local government boundaries reflecting population movements, local attitudes, changing roles of councils and State government policy. Local government evolved from the District Road Boards that were formed to take control of local roads and bridges.

Shire and City of Traralgon

With the town of Traralgon growing after the completion of the Melbourne to Sale railway line, and more selectors moving into the area, the Shire of Traralgon was formed in 1879, separating from the Shire of Rosedale. Its boundaries were altered in 1892 when the new Morwell Shire was established. The Traralgon Shire stretched from the Latrobe River in the north to the ridge of the Strzelecki Ranges in the south, encompassing hilly and heavily forested land in the south and lightly timbered plains to the north. In 1896, the shire's population was 2,100. As the town of Traralgon grew rapidly in size after the Second World War, the town and rural area separated and the borough of Traralgon was formed in 1961, becoming a City three years later. In 1994, before widespread council amalgamations, Traralgon City had a population of 22,000 and Traralgon Shire's population was 4,900.

*First Traralgon Shire Hall and councillors,
1881*

[SOURCE: TRARALGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY]



Shire and City of Morwell

Morwell Shire was created in 1892 from parts of Traralgon and Narracan Shires. At that time the town of Morwell was developing as an important railway centre and the rural population had increased due to selection. The shire covered 649 square kilometres, with the bulk of the area extending south from the town of Morwell into the Strzeleckis. In 1896, the young shire's population was 2,000. In 1990, the shire was proclaimed a city. At the time of council amalgamations its population was 26,472.

Three buildings in Morwell document the history of municipal government in the region. The former town hall and shire offices, now the Latrobe Regional Gallery, were built in 1936 to replace smaller council premises. They formed a strikingly modern addition to the Commercial Road streetscape at the time. With Morwell's transformation as an industrial city in the post war years, it outgrew these shire offices. The council built a large new civic centre on the corner of the Princes Highway and Monash Way, away from the central business district. Opened in 1980, the complex was set on expansive landscaped grounds and incorporated Kernot Hall, a new hall financed by the SEC to replace Yallourn's Kernot Hall. The former civic centre – it was sold after council amalgamations – reflects the confidence Morwell Shire experienced in the late 1970s when the SEC had announced a mammoth expansion of coal winning and power generation in the Latrobe Valley.^{cxxvii} The third building is the new Council offices built for Latrobe City in 2005, as described below.

Borough and City of Moe

The Shire of Narracan was proclaimed in 1878, a year after the Gippsland railway had been built and offices opened in Moe in 1885. After strong representation from the West Riding, Trafalgar became the Council's seat, and shire offices were moved to Trafalgar in 1909. Because of Moe's strong growth in the post war years, Moe and Newborough were excised to form a separate borough in 1955 and a City in 1963. New municipal offices were opened in the same year that it became a city.

Latrobe Shire and Latrobe City

In the 1990s, the newly elected Kennett Government introduced widespread changes to Victoria's municipal system, drastically reducing the number of municipal councils by enforced amalgamations. Latrobe Shire was formed in 1994, through the amalgamation of Moe, Morwell and Traralgon City Councils, the Shire of Traralgon and parts of the Shires of Rosedale and Narracan, an area of 1,422 square kilometres and a population of 71,000. The first councillors were elected in 1997, with Traralgon originally serving as the shire's 'seat'. Latrobe successfully sought city status in 2000. In 2005 the council moved into new offices that will serve as the headquarters of the City of Latrobe. Diagonally opposite the former town hall in Commercial Road, they are located back in Morwell's commercial centre, wedged between the street and the railway line. They represent a changed economy and a response to amalgamation and revitalisation issues.

8.2 Defending Australia

During the Second World War the Yallourn Power Station made a significant contribution to the war effort by ensuring a constant supply of power to heavy industry. Between 1940 and 1942, Yallourn Power Station was responsible for generating more than two-thirds of Victoria's electricity, and logically it would have been a major target if the Japanese forces, rapidly moving south through Asia by the end of that period, had attacked.

For this reason, the government set about shoring up Yallourn's defenses. About £30,000 was spent on additional fire protection at principal SEC sites at Yallourn, while many precautions were taken to protect buildings and workers in case of an enemy air attack. These included the construction of earth walls, blacking out windows, protective casings for vital plant equipment, air raid shelters for key personnel and the construction of walls made from brick and concrete.

These walls were designed to withstand the impact of a high explosive 500 pound (227 kilogram) bomb detonating at 16 metres.^{cxviii}

By the middle of 1941, the 11th Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery unit began its protection of Yallourn Power Station and the project area. Four guns, three inch 30 cwt mobile units, were initially provided to guards against air raids while gun crews, headquarters personnel and machine gun units were allocated to the works area. The Old Brown Coal Mine and the south west end of the Yallourn ovals were selected as sites for 3.7 inch guns. Each round for one of these guns weighed 49 pounds (22 kilograms), and to operate the gun took 11 men.

Bofors guns were later placed behind the briquette factory, near the open cut office, on the far side of the Latrobe River on the hill opposite the power station and between the screen house and the open cut. An extensive network of volunteers, were the eyes and ears of the formidable range of guns around the works area. Aircraft were prohibited from air space within eight kilometres of the open cut. Fortunately, the guns were only fired once in anger; a night in December 1941 when a large Melbourne-bound plane strayed into the prohibited area. The plane was not, as suspected, a Japanese bomber.

Toward the end of the war bombers did land near Yallourn. To the east of the study area a base was established by the RAAF at Sale and on a foggy night in February 1945 an Australian bomber squadron heading for the base lost its way in central Gippsland. Legg recounts the story:

Low on fuel, the pilots circled desperately to discover some recognizable landmarks, but to no avail. Hearing the drone of the engines, and realizing the pilots' plight, many of the townsfolk from Morwell drove down to a cleared paddock off the Latrobe Road. The local fire brigade and most of the cars in the town illuminated the strip with their headlights. Three of the Avro Anson bombers were able to put down in the paddock, but two of those planes crash landed. None of the crew was badly injured and the planes were later dismantled and trucked to the Sale airbase.^{cxix}

After this incident an illuminated landmark was constructed on the side of the Yallourn reservoir in case of similar emergencies.

Industry in the study area also played a part in the war effort. As noted in Chapter 3 flax had been grown as a crop since the nineteenth century and in 1941 a flax mill was built along the Latrobe Road north of Morwell to supply the raw material for urgently needed webbing belts for the military. Meanwhile the Maryville mill began to manufacture gun cotton and nitro-cellulose for use in high explosives. At Yinnar Nestles Ltd took over the butter factory in 1940 and changed the primary output to whole milk supply for the company's Maffra condensery where evaporated and condensed milk were being supplied to the armed forces.^{cxx}

8.3 Public buildings and public works

An early function of the Public Works Department (PWD) was to design and maintain public buildings such as post offices, court houses, schools, police stations, gaols, lighthouses, customs houses and bridges. These buildings and structures document the impact of government policy on local areas and were prominent features in the streetscapes. Schools are discussed later in this chapter. The Traralgon post office and court house, built in 1886, was one of the first major public buildings in the study area. Designed by J.R. Brown of the PWD, the building's grandeur emphasises government authority, the importance of its functions - justice, law and order and communications - and Traralgon's prominence as a regional centre. Its clock tower continues to be a landmark in Traralgon through sight and sound.

As noted in Chapter 2, after much lobbying, a fine new brick post office was constructed at Morwell in 1892. However, the onset of the 1890s Depression meant that few other public buildings (apart from schools, as described below) were constructed in the study area in the nineteenth century.

With the growth of Morwell in the 1950s many public buildings became inadequate. The need for a courthouse, which at that time was housed in the Council offices, became so acute that in August 1952 the Law Department requested the use of the Council Chamber for court proceedings. Council refused this request. In September 1953 Sir Herbert Hyland M.L.A. for Gippsland South inspected the court on one of his regular visits to Morwell. He was extremely critical of what he found and with his assistance plans and specifications for a new courthouse were drawn up. The new purpose built court house was opened on Thursday, 7 March 1957. Mr. A.G. Rylah, Victorian Chief Secretary, performed the ceremony. The building, situated behind the Police Station (built in 1953) in Commercial Road was constructed at a cost of £30,000. The courthouse and police station were demolished and replaced in 2007 by a new justice complex.

The growth of Moe after the Second World War also led to the construction of new public buildings. The new Moe Magistrates Court, designed in the Brutalist style by the PWD in association with Peter Tsitsas, was opened by the Hon. Haddon Storey, Attorney General of Victoria on 16 November, 1979. It replaced the old court building in High Street.

8.4 Educating

At the heart of the communities throughout the study area are the many schools that have been built by the Public Works Department – from one-teacher schools in isolated communities to larger schools on busy streets such as Commercial Road in Morwell, Grey Street in Traralgon and Albert Street in Moe. The surviving buildings document not only the education history of the study area but also community involvement and social history. The schools' designs may have often been a standard plan reproduced throughout Victoria but communities have infused them with an identity and they have become special community places.

State primary schools

Although the State took over responsibility for primary education following the passing of the *Free, Compulsory and Secular Education Act* 1872, and subsequently began building State schools throughout Victoria, parents often had to lobby hard to persuade the Education Department that a school was urgently needed in their area. This was the case at Tyers. Although parents first requested a school in 1875, one was not established until 1879. Parents often had to provide a venue, as at Traralgon South, or classes were held in community buildings such as churches or halls before a school was built. For many parents getting a school and keeping it open was a continuous struggle with the Education Department, as the history of the Driffield School illustrates. Driffield parents were anxious to have a school on their side of the Morwell River because of the dangers children faced crossing it. The first school was a portable building, opened in 1881, with a two roomed teacher's residence - quite useless in this case as the first teacher had 10 children. When it was burnt in bushfires in 1905, the Department decided not to rebuild and the school was effectively closed. Eventually, a teacher was appointed in the 1920s but classes had to take place in the church. Driffield did not get a new school until 1946.^{cxix}

The one-room rural schools that still dot the landscape of the study area illustrate how quickly communities formed in the wake of the selection era. For example, in the Morwell district a total of 12 schools were opened in the 1880s alone, with a further three in the 1890s. Many schools did not survive for long and increasingly they were centralised on a single site. Few nineteenth century schools remain and most of the one-room rural schools in the study area are the result of the massive building program undertaken by the Education Department in the inter-war period when over 700 rural schools were built.^{cxx}

The Glengarry School, for example, shows how the school buildings document the district's history. Two buildings were moved to the present site to form a two-room school in 1916. The larger schoolroom, built in Glengarry in 1895, was only moved across the road from its wet and low lying site. The other, originally the Toongabbie West School that had been built in 1889 on the Eaglehawk Creek, was also moved there in 1916 after it had closed.^{cxxi} More

classrooms, offices and a staffroom have been added to this nucleus as the town of Glengarry has grown.

Yinnar South School No.2370, 1914

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.52]



Riding to school, Violet, Arthur and Annie Coleman, c.1910

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.53]



After opening in portable or rented buildings and changing sites several times, substantial brick schools were eventually built in central locations in the main towns. In Morwell, teacher John Irving stepped off the first through train from Melbourne to Sale to open a school in a former butcher's shop in 1879.^{cxiv} The school moved to its present site in Commercial Road in 1881, and gradually brick classrooms were built. The main section of the Commercial Road Primary School was designed by chief architect of the Public Works Department, Percy Everitt, who had also designed the impressive Yallourn Technical School in the 1930s. In Moe, a brick school was built in 1926, after its timber building was destroyed in a fire. At Traralgon 'All things come to those who wait', said Councillor Pettit, president of the school council, when Traralgon's Grey Street Primary School, with its substantial brick buildings, was finally opened in 1912 after much community lobbying.^{cxv}

Moe, Morwell and Traralgon were each to have a single primary school until after the Second World War. Just as the growth of communities in selection era was reflected in the opening of one room rural schools, the massive growth experienced in each of these towns was reflected in the new schools that opened in the 1950s. For example at Moe a new primary school was opened in 1949 to serve the new township of Newborough. It was followed in quick succession by South Street Primary School in 1951, Newborough East Primary in 1952 and Elizabeth Street Primary in 1956. Meanwhile, a Catholic Primary School was opened in 1950 as noted below. At Morwell three new State primary schools opened in the 1950s.

Secondary schools and higher education

Secondary education in Victoria began in 1910 with the passing of the *Education Act*. In Gippsland secondary schools were established in Warragul, Leongatha and Sale, but none within the study area although Traralgon was declared a Higher Elementary School in 1915. The first secondary schools in the study area were opened at Yallourn in the 1920s. The Yallourn Technical School opened in 1928 and soon attracted students from throughout Gippsland in the 1930s to study the trade qualifications it offered and its tertiary diplomas in mechanical and electrical engineering. As a result of post war expansion in the Latrobe Valley, the school massively outgrew its Percy Everitt-designed building in Yallourn and moved to an

expansive new site in Newborough in 1957, where it became the Yallourn Technical College. It is now the site of the TAFE College. Students throughout the Latrobe City region also travelled to the Yallourn High School, which provided secondary education before the Second World War, before high schools were built in the three major towns.

The 1950s saw a major expansion of secondary education in the study area. Moe High School, opened in 1953, was one of the first new high schools to be built after the Second World War. The first high school in Morwell opened in 1956 and was joined by Morwell Technical College in 1959. In 1966 Maryvale High School was opened, to become the second high school in Morwell.^{ccxvi}

The tertiary education offered by the Yallourn Technical College provided the nucleus for a new college of advanced education, for Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education, which opened at Churchill in 1972. Added to the existing science, business and engineering studies were degrees in visual arts, social sciences and education. Now part of Monash University, there are 7,500 on campus and external students studying at Churchill. With close links between the town and campus, Churchill has become a university town.

Church schools

In the era before the introduction of the 1872 Act, education was often provided by church-run schools. In 1884 a school was established by the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Morwell. At Traralgon Catholic education was introduced by the Sisters of St Joseph when they came to open a school next to St Michael's church in 1901.

As previously noted, migration after the Second World War boosted the Catholic Church in the study area and a second Catholic school at Morwell, St Vincent's was opened in 1954. At Moe the Presentation sisters opened St Kieran's primary school in 1950, and also a secondary school, Presentation College. A new Presentation campus opened in Newborough in 1984, as the school had outgrown the Wirraway Street site. In 2001, Presentation College in Moe and the Catholic Regional College in Traralgon (the former St Paul's and Kildare) amalgamated to form Lavalla Catholic College.^{ccxvii}

8.5 Providing health and medical services

The study area did not have a large public hospital until 1956. Patients requiring intensive hospital care had to travel to Sale (from the 1860s) or Warragul. The earliest hospitals in the study area were private hospitals and bush nursing hospitals. The Moe Bush Nursing Hospital began as a private venture when it was built in 1922 as the St Helen's Private Hospital, becoming a bush nursing hospital in 1933. At that time, it was registered as a nine bed hospital. The majority of cases were maternity patients but people with injuries from timber mill accidents in the Erica district were also frequent patients. In 1952, the hospital was handed over to the Yallourn Hospital, and became known as the Moe Annexe. The SEC had founded the Yallourn Hospital and Medical Society and built the Yallourn Hospital in the 1920s and many Latrobe Valley residents used the Yallourn Hospital. The Moe Annexe continued to operate until the new Latrobe Valley Community Hospital opened in Moe in 1972.^{ccxviii} St Helen's/Moe Bush Nursing Hospital/Moe Annexe is now a private home.

Similarly in Traralgon, private hospitals provided nursing care. Around 1927, 'Cumnock' was purpose built as a hospital with maternity wards and an operating theatre.^{ccxix} It closed in 1956 when the Traralgon and District Hospital opened, and is now a private home.

As the Latrobe Valley towns increased in size, the need for comprehensive hospital services became acute. A combination of vigorous community fund-raising and government grants led to the opening of the Traralgon and District Hospital (later the Central Gippsland Hospital) in 1956. The impressive cream brick structure occupied a prominent site on the Princes Highway. When the Latrobe Valley Hospital was built in Moe in 1972, large hospitals operated at either ends of the Latrobe Valley. In 1991, the hospitals merged as two campuses of the Latrobe Regional Hospital.

By the mid 1990s, the Kennett Government decided to close the two hospitals and invited tenders from the private sector to build and manage a new hospital that would provide services for public patients. Despite strong community protest at closing the hospitals, especially from Moe residents, a site was selected at Traralgon West and Australian Hospital Care built the new hospital that opened in 1998. The Traralgon Hospital was demolished and the Moe Hospital closed. The public/private hospital experiment proved to be a failure and the new 'LRH' has been restored to public management and control.^{xxx} Helimed, the helicopter medical evacuation service, operates from the Latrobe Regional Hospital, often travelling to remote areas of Gippsland to airlift injured people to hospital.

Until 1963, there was no regional psychiatric facility in Gippsland and patients with a mental illness had to travel to Melbourne for care that sometimes involved long periods of hospitalisation. After much lobbying for a hospital in Gippsland, Traralgon was finally chosen as a central site for the whole region. A large site - 249 acres - was bought for Hobson Park, as the new hospital was called, and it opened in December 1963. The hospital was commended for its facilities and innovative ideas: there was single ward accommodation and staff and patients ate together in a communal cafeteria.^{xxxi} Influenced by policies of mainstreaming and community care, in the 1990s, Hobson Park was closed and the new Latrobe Regional Hospital took over in-patient psychiatric services for Gippsland. The buildings and expansive grounds are now part of Dalkeith.

HERITAGE

Some examples of places associated with the theme of *Governing and administration* include:

Forming local government

Former Shire of Morwell Offices and Town Hall, Commercial Road, Morwell

Former Moe City offices and Jack Purvis memorial, Albert Street, Moe

Defending Australia

Bofors anti-aircraft gun, Anzac Road, Moe

World War Two aircraft direction sign, Yallourn reservoir

Bofors anti-aircraft gun, Anzac Road, Moe

[SOURCE: CONTEXT, 2005]



Public buildings and public works

Moe Magistrates Court, 59 Lloyd Street, Moe

Morwell Post Office, 209 Princes Drive, Morwell

Traralgon post office and court house, 161 Franklin Street, Traralgon

Educating

Former Boolarra Primary School and residence, Tarwin Street, Boolarra

Former Flynnstead Primary School, Flynn's Creek Road, Flynn

Former Glengarry West Primary School, Tyers-Glengarry Road, Glengarry West

Albert Road Primary School, Moe

St Kieran's Catholic School, Lloyd Street, Moe

Commercial Road Primary School, Morwell

Former Flynnstead Primary School

[SOURCE: CONTEXT, 2005]



Providing health and medical services

Former Moe Bush Nursing Hospital, 70 Moore Street, Moe

'Cumnock', 46 Moore Street, Traralgon

'Danora', 135 Seymour Street, Traralgon

Former Moe Bush Nursing Hospital

[SOURCE: CONTEXT, 2005]



9 COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL LIFE

INTRODUCTION

As we have seen in Chapter 2, as the opening up of land for selection from the 1860s onwards drew increasing numbers of families to the study area there soon became a need for places for meet, socialise, learn and worship. During the squatting era, the large private houses of wealthy squatters often served as meeting places, as schools and even churches, however, the selection era led to the need for permanent public buildings, which in turn led to the development of the first community centres.

These buildings are important markers on the landscape, which express the hopes, dreams and optimism of the first settlers for the future development of their communities. In some places, these buildings were among the first structures that marked the beginnings of important towns such as Moe, Morwell and Traralgon. In other areas such as Flynn's Creek, the optimism expressed by the community was never fully realised in the development of a permanent town and these buildings where they remain are often the only physical reminder of some of the very early settlements in the study area. One building often served many purposes - many early churches often acted as schools and public halls before these buildings could be obtained (and sometimes vice versa).

The places also represent important stages of life within communities from early childhood until old age. Consequently, these buildings have great social value and associations with local residents.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- *Educating*: Forming associations, libraries and institutes for self-education
- *Developing Australia's cultural life*: Organising recreation; Forming associations, Worshipping; Remembering the fallen; Pursuing excellence in the arts
- *Marking the phases of life*: Dying

9.1 Creating places for worship

While the first church services were held in people's homes or farm buildings – travelling Anglican minister, Francis Hales, held a service at the Hazelwood station in 1848 as he moved around Gippsland – once communities became established a church was often one of the first buildings they constructed.^{xxxii} Here, people have performed some of their most important ceremonies and rituals

The churches and their associated buildings, such as halls, residences and schools, have made distinctive contributions to town streetscapes and rural districts throughout the region. Communities have had close affiliations with their churches, especially during times of sectarian rivalry when people's denominations greatly influenced their identity, work and social contacts. Churches also contain community memorials to local people through stained glass windows, monuments and plaques.

St John's Church Glengarry is an example of an early rural church in the study area. Built from local red gum on a site in Cairnbrook Road by John King in 1879, it was moved in the 1890s to its present site at Railway Parade in Glengarry and extended.^{xxxiii} During the influenza pandemic of 1919, services were held in the church grounds. Its organ was carted to the Glengarry war memorial for Anzac services.

In rural areas it was not uncommon for churches (like schools and halls) to be moved from one town to another to meet community needs. A well-travelled church in the study area is the former Methodist church, which was originally erected at Benambra, near Omeo, in 1882.

From there it was moved by bullock team to nearby Hinnomunjie and after 50 years was brought by truck to Newborough where it was renovated and extended by the Methodist congregation, who used it until the mid 1960s. It was then purchased by the Dutch Reformed church and moved to their property in Luke Street, Moe, and its fourth and final site. The Reformed church is an example of the churches established by post-Second World War migrants as described below.

St Mary's parish in Morwell and its three churches provide insights to the settlement and industrial themes that have contributed to Latrobe City's development and the evolution of its landscapes. St Mary's became a parish when the small wooden church was built in Chapel Street in 1886. This building still stands on its original site but is now part of the Commercial Road Primary School. The present St Mary's site in Latrobe Road was bought in 1931 but plans for its development were delayed first by the Depression and then by the Second World War. As an interim measure after the war, former RAAF barracks were used as a church and parish buildings until a temporary church was built in 1958, with plans to convert it to a hall. The permanent church was being designed in the 1970s, at a time when many former Yallournites had moved to Morwell and become parishioners at St Mary's after the demolition of their town. Through this connection, the Gippsland Diocese decided to install the Arthur Boyd mural, 'The Ascending Christ', recently removed from St John's Church Yallourn, in the new building. It would become the focal point of the church's design. The new St Mary's opened in 1980. Lit by a skylight and amber lights from the side windows, 'The Ascending Christ' inspires feelings of 'peace and contemplation' and is a continuing link with St John's, Yallourn, and the ideal, model town.^{ccxiv}

The creation of the Uniting Church in 1977 (which comprised the Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist Churches) resulted in some churches being made redundant, as happened at Traralgon. The first Presbyterian Church service in the Traralgon area was held in the Turnbull home in 1854. After building a brick church in 1877, a second St Andrews was built in Kay Street in 1914. Meanwhile, the first Methodist Church, a simple wooden building, was built in 1879 - this was replaced in 1939 by a larger brick church. After the creation of the Uniting Church a large complex for the combined congregations was built in Park Lane, away from the town centre. The former Presbyterian Church has since been modified and is now a restaurant. The 1879 Methodist church was moved to become part of a new development on the Princes Highway near the railway station and refurbished as a visitor information centre, while the brick church was used until recently by the Salvation Army.

Churches in the study area also reflect the influence of migration. Many of the first settlers in the study area came from Britain, Scotland and Ireland and this is illustrated by the predominance of Protestant churches among the early churches established in the region. In the twentieth century the numbers of Catholics was boosted by immigrants from continental Europe who came to work for the SEC and this resulted in the upgrading of existing churches or the construction of new ones. For example, the influx of predominantly Catholic Maltese immigrants who settled around Yallourn in the 1920s led to the opening of a new Catholic church at Yallourn North in 1934. At both Morwell and Moe, new Catholic Churches were constructed in the 1970s, along with convents and schools to serve the growing congregations.

Another church associated with migration is the Greek Orthodox Church of Gippsland at Morwell, which was founded in 1955 - this was one of the first non-metropolitan Greek Orthodox Churches to be established in Victoria. When the congregation of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church built a new church in 1961, the old church was sold to the Greek Orthodox Church who used it for about 5 years before they constructed a new church of the site. Called Our Lady of Dormition it now features a bell tower that was added in 1976. The Holy Trinity Free Serbian Orthodox Church in North Road Yallourn North, built in 1975, is another example of churches that European migrants built to serve their communities.^{ccxv}

Middle Creek Church, c.1900s

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.47]

*St Mary's Church, c.1900*

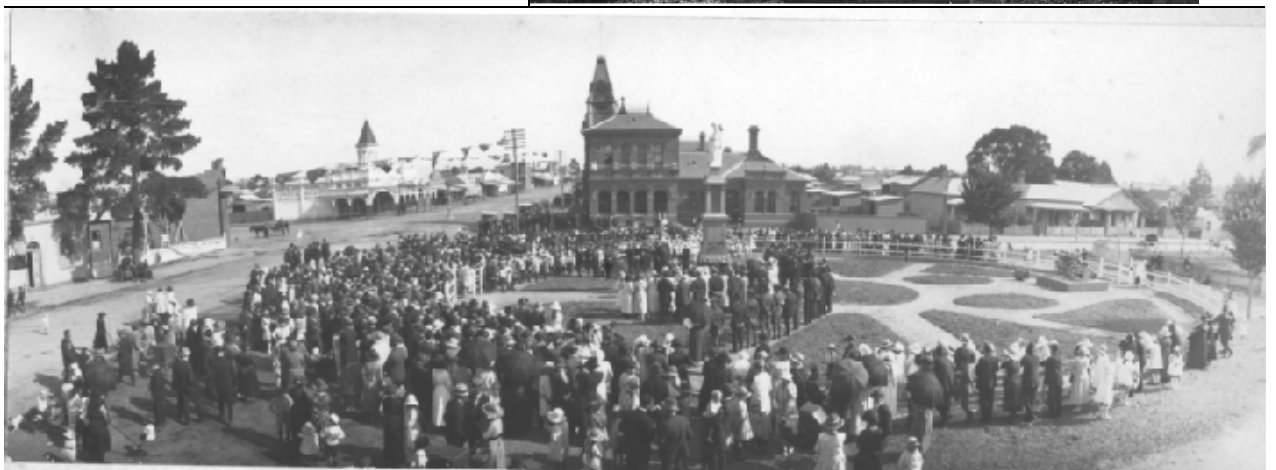
[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.47]

*Morwell War Memorial at its original site*

[SOURCE: GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST, P.62]

*Unveiling of the Traralgon War Memorial*

[SOURCE: TRARALGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY]



9.2 Memorials and remembering

Memorials may be placed in prominent sites in towns or they may mark a site of significance where an incident took place. They may celebrate or mourn, but they act as a way of infusing remembrance into the landscape. The memorials document what people feel should be remembered and marked on the landscape.

In common with other communities throughout Australia, memorials have been erected in small and large towns in the study area to remember and honour those who died in the First World War and other conflicts. At Yinnar, a soldier blows a bugle; at Morwell the memorial, now relocated to a roundabout in Elgin Street, is surmounted by a soldier in a slouch hat holding a rifle. When the town of Yallourn was destroyed the memorial was moved to Newborough. APM erected memorial gates at the entrance to the Maryvale mill.

Besides the stone obelisks, statues and pillars erected on prominent sites, there are many other ways that soldiers have been commemorated. In Boolarra, a recreation reserve, Memorial Park, was opened in 1924 with First World War memorial gates at the entrance. Victory Park in Traralgon commemorates the Second World War. In schools, churches and halls throughout the study area are honour boards that commemorate those who served. On an honour board at Toongabbie are the names of the three Hilsley brothers who enlisted in the First World War and did not return.^{ccxxvi} In Traralgon, there are street names in the APM subdivisions that commemorate employees who were killed in the Second World War.^{ccxxvii} The avenue of honour is a uniquely Australian tradition and citizens in Traralgon South planted trees to honour the dead. After the township was acquired for the Loy Yang development, ten trees were planted at the new township site, ensuring that the men were not forgotten. At Glengarry schoolchildren planted pines and cypresses at the recreation reserve after the First World War and an avenue of honour was established along Cairnbrook Road after the Second World War. Sixteen flowering gums were planted in July 1918 opposite the Yinnar South State School, but it is not known whether they survived.

Some memorials are monuments erected by later generations to remember the achievements of explorers and pioneers who came before them. The memorials to explorer Paul de Strzelecki on the Princes Highway just east of Traralgon, and at Koornalla are examples of this. A memorial to Ned Stringer who discovered gold at Walhalla but died soon after in an accommodation house on the Toongabbie Creek was built in Hower Street, Toongabbie. At Yallourn a memorial incorporating a bronze bust of Sir John Monash by the noted sculptor Paul Raphael Montford was erected in Monash Square. It was relocated to Morwell in the 1980s.

Memorials were also erected to remember tragedies. The memorial gates at the Hazelwood Cemetery record the names of people who died in the 1944 bushfires. Less formal, spontaneous memorials also dot the landscape. Tributes to people who died in car accidents are placed at the site of the accident and provide a site of remembrance for grieving families. Deaths on the road near Churchill have led to the 'Road as Shrine' project, a series of memorial gardens.^{ccxxviii} Sites where people gather to remember are also significant places of commemoration. The Morwell Rose Garden has emerged as a place where people gather annually to remember those who have died from asbestos-related diseases in the Latrobe Valley. In a moving ceremony, family members lay wreaths and place white crosses in the ground.

9.3 Mechanics' institutes and public halls

The mechanics' institute movement began as another form of education. It originated from a series of lectures delivered by Dr Birkbeck in Glasgow to tradesmen, artisans and factory workers – or 'mechanics' as people who worked with machines were known – and aimed to educate workers and to spread technical knowledge. The movement spread throughout Victoria after the gold rushes, encouraged by financial support from the government. Mechanics' institute that would serve as a library, hall and be a venue for lectures were built throughout the state.

As previously noted the Toongabbie mechanics' institute was built in 1883 and later extended in 1891. It housed a lending library, the Court of Petty Sessions met there and it also functioned as an agency of the Bank of Australasia.^{cxix} By the late 1980s, the building was in a dilapidated state and great determination was shown by members of the community to rescue and restore the building. The Toongabbie mechanics' institute has considerable historic, architectural and social value. It is one of the few wooden two-storey mechanics' institutes built in Victoria, reflects Toongabbie's historic connection with the goldfields at Walhalla, and is a significant community centre.^{cxl}

Toongabbie Mechanics' Institute, c.1906

[SOURCE: TOONGABBIE, P.135]



Although no longer standing, the mechanics' institutes in Morwell, (built around 1880), Moe (1885) and Traralgon (1887) were the hubs of their communities. Traralgon's building was particularly impressive. The Narracan Mechanics' Institute along with its impressive library was relocated to Old Gipps town in 1978. Although no longer on its original site it is highly significant as one of the few mechanics' institutes to retain its library collection.

In other towns, public halls were erected to serve communities, and sometimes replaced earlier mechanics' institute when they were destroyed by fire or fell into disrepair or disuse. At Tyers, a new community hall was built in 1932 by 'day labour' to replace the mechanics' institute. When the old hall was sold for demolition the library was stored in the butter factory where many books became ruined and were later discarded. In 1929 the Glengarry Mechanics' Institute was extensively re-built and incorporated a bio-box for the screening of films, reflecting the cinema boom that was happening at the time.

9.4 Cemeteries

Cemeteries provide a commentary on the local area, with insights to how people have lived and died. They provide an important record of the development of communities and are sometimes the only tangible evidence of the existence of a settlement.

Before the establishment of cemeteries, or in places remote from cemeteries, burials were in single, isolated graves in the bush or beside roads and the Gippsland region has a number of these 'lone' graves. After burying a friend on the banks of the Latrobe River near Traralgon in 1846, squatter Henry Meyrick bitterly reflected on the lack of cemeteries and cultural institutions in the newly settled region.^{cxli} He felt despair at leaving his friend in an isolated grave. Another 'lone' grave was that of Edward 'Ned' Stringer who died in September 1863 at Toongabbie and is thought to have been buried on one of the surveyed allotments on the south side of what would later become the railway reserve. The remains of a child, Edwin Cowan, were buried nearby in 1873. The remains of both were later interred in the Toongabbie cemetery.

Once cemetery trusts were formed, settlers had the solace of burying their families and friends in a designated burial area, rather than a lonely grave. One of the first cemeteries in the study area was established at Traralgon in 1869 on land that now forms part of the railway reserve

and up to 12 burials were made before the site of the present cemetery was acquired in about 1872. Land for the Hazelwood cemetery was gazetted in 1879 and served the Morwell district. The first recorded burial was for Grace Donaldson, who died as a result of a horse accident as she rode to a New Years Day picnic at the ridge.^{cxlii}

Of particular significance within the study area is the Yallourn cemetery. When Yallourn was planned in 1921, eight acres were reserved to the west of the proposed town, in a 'retired and sheltered position' where the land opened into a 'series of wooded glades'.^{cxliii} The site was in the Haunted Hills. Although the town no longer exists, the cemetery is a reminder of the people who lived, worked and died there.

9.5 Recreation and forming associations

*The toilers of Toongabbie
Have stripped them for the fray,
The boys of Boolarra
Are out in force today.
The messmates of Traralgon
Have mustered from afar,
With stringy-bark from Morwell
And blackbutt from Yinnar.*^{cxliv}

This is the opening verse of a poem, 'Melbourne's Not Yinnar', that describes a clash in 1905 between a visiting Melbourne football team and what could be called, in retrospect, a united 'Latrobe City' team playing at Yinnar. As the poem tells us, the Melbourne team didn't have a chance against the Gippsland players:

*They met a team from Melbourne
And brought them to their knees;
They were a combination
Expert in falling trees.
And oh! those men in Melbourne,
Like grain in Autumn dropped,
For some of them were ring-barked
And many more were chopped.*

In the poem, country domination is complete. After the match:

*They gathered up the fragments,
And washed away each stain,
With Bullock-team and jinker
They drove them to the train,
Laid out in splints and stretchers,
They tucked away each man,
And sent them back to Melbourne,
In the Casualty Van.*

Using a mixture of footy and forestry terms, the poem celebrates the atmosphere and achievements of country football that was played by young timber workers and axe-handly farmers on the tree-fringed ovals and recreation reserves throughout the region.

Sporting activities have led to recreation reserves, show grounds and racecourses being developed throughout the study area. Besides the city/country clash memorialised in 'Melbourne's Not Yinnar', district rivalries were played out in football, netball and tennis

contests. On country sporting grounds and recreation reserves, children have performed their rites of passage, playing first as juniors and later representing their district as they progress through to the seniors.

The Moe Cup is the highlight of the Moe Racing Club's calendar and well known in Victoria. Its history shows how sporting clubs and facilities have developed in the study area. In the 1880s, 120 acres of tea tree and timber were reserved for a racecourse and recreation reserve and the Moe Turf Club was formed in 1890. At its first race meeting, the crowd of 400 strong could only catch glimpses of the horses at times during the races because of the timber and scrub that remained in the centre of the course.^{cxlv} The club eventually went into recess during the 1930s depression but reformed in 1944 as the Moe Racing Club.

As the club gathered in strength in the post war years, it was obvious the reserve couldn't continue being used by the football club and the golf club, where golfers were teeing off on race days. The racing club gained exclusive use of the land in 1958 and turned its attention to transforming the track and improving the facilities. From uncertain beginnings, it has now evolved into a modern racecourse with extensive infrastructure.

By the late 1940s, the Moe Cup had gained a reputation among the racing fraternity and is now a major event in Latrobe City's calendar, attracting a strong field, large crowds and the glamour associated with special race days.

The SEC has had an impact on the development of reserves and facilities in Latrobe City. Magnificent sporting facilities were developed at Yallourn and when the town was demolished, the SEC 'replaced' many of the facilities such as ovals, netball courts and swimming pools in neighbouring towns and areas.^{cxlvi} Notable among the replacement facilities is the oval at Yallourn North, now called the George Bates oval, named after a chairman of the SEC who had also been a Yallourn and Morwell resident. Two water reserves built for power stations, the Yallourn Storage Dam (now Lake Narracan) and the Hazelwood Pondage are popular venues for water sports.

The many social and cultural associations formed by residents throughout the region have left their mark on the landscape, from scout and guide halls to RSL complexes. Scouting grew in popularity during the interwar period and troops were established throughout the study area. One of the first troops was established at Yinnar in 1923 and an Oak tree planted in about 1928 is a tangible reminder of the beginnings of this organization in the study area. The 1st Traralgon Troop was formed in June 1924. At Moe, the First Moe Troop built a Scout Hut in 1938. The imposing Masonic lodges in Moe and Morwell provide a reminder of the importance of these organizations in community life during the twentieth century.^{cxlvii}

9.6 Writers and artists

The natural and cultural landscape of the Latrobe Valley has provided inspiration for writers and artists since the time of first settlement. In the 1920s and 1930s, Australian artists were especially drawn by the technology, structure and form of the industrial development of Yallourn, in a similar way that they were drawn to depict the technical brilliance of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Printmaker Jessie Traill captured structure and geometry in her etching of the power station, 'Meccano House' (1923). Her watercolour, 'The Works Yallourn' (1924), shows the power station rearing from the bush. In 1933, artist Ethel Spowers produced her coloured linocut of 'The Works Yallourn', emphasising shapes and lines. 'Dredging Yallourn' (1933) by Robert Curtis is a dramatic depiction of the Yallourn open cut. Some of these works were featured in a 1992 exhibition, *Gippsland Excursions 1846-1979*, which was mounted by the Latrobe Valley Arts Centre (now the Latrobe Regional Gallery).^{cxlviii} Selected from collections around Australia, the exhibition showed how artists had represented Gippsland over nearly 140 years, including landscapes, vegetation, hardship of rural life, sense of place.^{cxlix}

The Latrobe Valley Arts Centre at Morwell was opened by then Premier Sir Henry Bolte in 1971, almost 10 years after the project was first mooted by Morwell Shire. The motivation for the establishment of the Gallery was the Morwell Art Group, which was established after the

Second World War. During the 1950s Arthur and Yvonne Boyd, who were regular visitors to Morwell, encouraged the activities of the Group and other local artists. The Group also had the support of Eric Westbrook (Then Director of the National Gallery of Victoria) and local Campbell Hughston who would go on to become the founding Director of the Gallery.^{ci} The opening of the Gallery was followed by the establishment of the Art School at the Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education at Churchill in the early 1970s, the establishment of the Yinnar Art Resources Collective at the former butter factory in Yinnar in the mid-1970s and the introduction of the Latrobe Regional Commission's art network from the mid-1980s.^{cii}

As a result Latrobe City is a regional centre of the arts in Gippsland and many notable artists are resident in the study area. The art and design school at Monash University and its predecessor GIAE has attracted teachers and students who have produced many works inspired by the region, focusing on landscapes, people and industry. The Yinnar Arts Resource Collective provides another venue for artists. Internationally known glass artist, Tony Hanning, who grew up in the area and studied at GIAE, has a studio at Yinnar.^{ciii} Industrial life was a constant inspiration for artist Noel Counihan who was commissioned by the Latrobe Regional Gallery in the 1970s to paint in the Morwell area. Of note were his paintings of briquette baggers at the Morwell briquette factory, the men who worked at the briquette loading hopper. Unlike the earlier artists, he painted people and work instead of structures.^{ciiii}

Local writers who have written on the area include Joice Nankivell and Mary Grant Bruce. Joice Nankivell grew up on a dairy farm at Boolarra. Her book, *The Solitary Pedestrian* (1918), contains short stories based on her childhood, including unromanticised images of Gippsland hill farm life.^{cv} Mary Grant Bruce is best known for her series of Billabong books, novels about the Linton family who lived on a station in Victoria. Born in Sale, and spending much of her adult life in England and Ireland, Bruce also spent eight years in Traralgon after the First World War, where her parents and relatives (the Whittakers family at Fernhill) also lived. These were very prolific years as she wrote 13 books during her time there and was one of Australia's most widely read authors at the time.^{cvi} As well as the Billabong books, Bruce wrote novels that were set in the Strzeleckis, writing about life on struggling hill farms, surviving bushfires and the delights of the local country show. *Robin* (1926) is a notable example of her 'Strzelecki' novels.

Jean Galbraith's *Garden in a Valley* was first published in 1939, at a time when war was threatening. The book was a compilation of articles she had written for *The Garden Lover* about the garden she and her parents had been developing at their Tyers' home, 'Dunedin', since 1914. By the time the book was republished in 1985, Galbraith was a renowned botanist who had written field guides to Australian wildflowers and contributed significantly to nature conservation, as well as being a regular garden writer in *The Age*.^{cvi} Living most of her life at 'Dunedin', Jean Galbraith's garden writing has inspired people throughout Australia. Although her readers may not have visited Tyers, they knew her garden intimately. The rustic gate that led into her magical 'garden in a valley' still stands on the road into Tyers.

HERITAGE

Some examples of places associated with the theme of *Community and cultural life* include:

Creating places for worship

St Francis De Sales Catholic Church, 27 Tarwin Street, Boolarra
St John's Church of England, 3-5 Railway Avenue, Glengarry
St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 34 Fowler Street, Moe
Former St Mary's Anglican Church, Chapel Street, Morwell
St David's Church of England, 10 Victoria Street, Toongabbie
St Michael's Catholic Church, 57 Church Street, Traralgon
Middle Creek Church, 320 Middle Creek Road, Yinnar South

Memorials and remembering

War memorials at Boolarra, Glengarry, Moe, Morwell, Newborough, Traralgon and Yinnar
 APM Memorial Gates, Maryvale Road, Maryvale
 Glengarry Avenue of Honour, Cairnbrook Road
 Sir John Monash Memorial, Ridge Road, Morwell

Mechanics' institutes and public halls

Toongabbie Mechanics' Institute, King Street, Toongabbie
 Tyers Community Hall and H.J. Saunders Hall, 3 Mount Hope Road, Tyers
 Glengarry Mechanics' Institute and Public Hall, 1 Railway Avenue, Glengarry

Glengarry Mechanics' Institute & Public Hall

[SOURCE: CONTEXT, 2005]



Cemeteries

Hazelwood cemetery, Brobribb Road, Hazelwood
 George Bolton Eagle grave site, Traralgon
 Infant Smythe grave site, Traralgon
 Traralgon Old Cemetery, Cemetery Lane, Traralgon
 Yallourn Cemetery, Haunted Hills Road, Yallourn

Yallourn Cemetery Gates

[SOURCE: GRAEME CORNELL, 2008]



Recreation and forming associations

Former Moe Masonic Hall, 4 High Street, Moe
 First Moe Troop Scout Hall
 Morwell Masonic Hall, 12 Hazelwood Road, Morwell
 Yinnar Scout association memorial Oak, Main Street, Yinnar

Writers and artists

Latrobe Regional Gallery, Commercial Road, Morwell
 'Dunedin' (Former Jean Galbraith garden), Main Road, Tyers

GLOSSARY

Cultural significance	<p><i>Cultural significance</i> means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.</p> <p>Cultural significance is embodied in the <i>place</i> itself, its <i>fabric</i>, <i>setting</i>, <i>use associations</i>, <i>meanings</i>, <i>records</i>, <i>related places</i> and <i>related objects</i>.</p>
Conservation	<p><i>Conservation</i> means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its <i>cultural significance</i>.</p>
Burra Charter	<p>The <i>Burra Charter</i> is the short name given to the <i>Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance</i>, which was developed by Australia ICOMOS at a meeting in 1979 in the historic South Australian mining town of Burra. It is now widely accepted as the basis for cultural heritage management in Australia.</p> <p>The Burra Charter may be applied to a wide range of places - an archaeological site, a town, building or landscape and defines various terms and identifies principles and procedures that must be observed in conservation work.</p> <p>Although the Burra Charter was drafted by heritage professionals, anyone involved in the care of heritage items and places may use it to guide conservation policy and practice.</p>
ICOMOS	<p><i>ICOMOS</i> (International Council on Monuments and Sites) is a non-governmental professional organisation formed in 1965. ICOMOS is primarily concerned with the philosophy, terminology, methodology and techniques of cultural heritage conservation and is closely linked to UNESCO.</p>
LHD	<p>Latrobe Heritage Database.</p>
Place	<p><i>Place</i> means site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of building or other work, and may include components, contents, spaces and views.</p>
Post contact	<p><i>Post-contact</i> means the period after first contact between indigenous and non-indigenous (sometimes referred to as 'European') individuals or communities.</p>
RNE criteria	<p>The <i>Register of the National Estate (RNE) criteria</i> are used to assess whether a place has significant cultural heritage values. A list is provided in Appendix D of Volume 2.</p>

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ See map: Sketch Map of Gippsland Showing the Position of the Clans of the Kurnai Tribe, drawn by A.W. Howitt.
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- ⁱⁱⁱ See T.G.H. Strehlow, 'Geography and the Totemic Landscape in Central Australia: a Functional Study', in *Australian Aboriginal Anthropology* ed by R.M. Berndt, University of Western Australia Press, 1970, pp 92-140 and Coral Dow, 'Tatungalung Country: an Environmental History of the Gippsland Lakes', PhD Thesis, Monash University, 2004, pp 14-18 for a discussion in the Gippsland context..
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- ^v 'Tatungalung Country', p.41
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- ^{vii} Debney and George, 'Archaeological and Cultural Survey'
- ^{viii} Dingle, Tony, *The Victorians. Settling*, 1984, pp. 28, 68
- ^{ix} Details on runs summarised from *Latrobe Valley Heritage Study*, pp. 5-8
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- ^{xxix} *Toongabbie*, p.40
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- ^{xxxiii} *Latrobe Valley Heritage Study*, p.23
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- ^{xxxviii} *Traralgon Heritage Study Review*, p.10
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