



Mount Alexander Shire Community Profile February 2013

Prepared by C. Wallace and G. Menner

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1. Introduction

This community profile has been developed to assist Mount Alexander Shire Council with the development of the Council Plan 2013-2017 and the Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017. In order to plan well for the provision of infrastructure and services, Council needs to understand the needs and opportunities across the Shire. This profile presents an overview of how many people live in the Shire, how the population is distributed across different age groups and how that is projected to change. The profile also provides an indication of the opportunities residents have to engage in the economic and social life of the community.

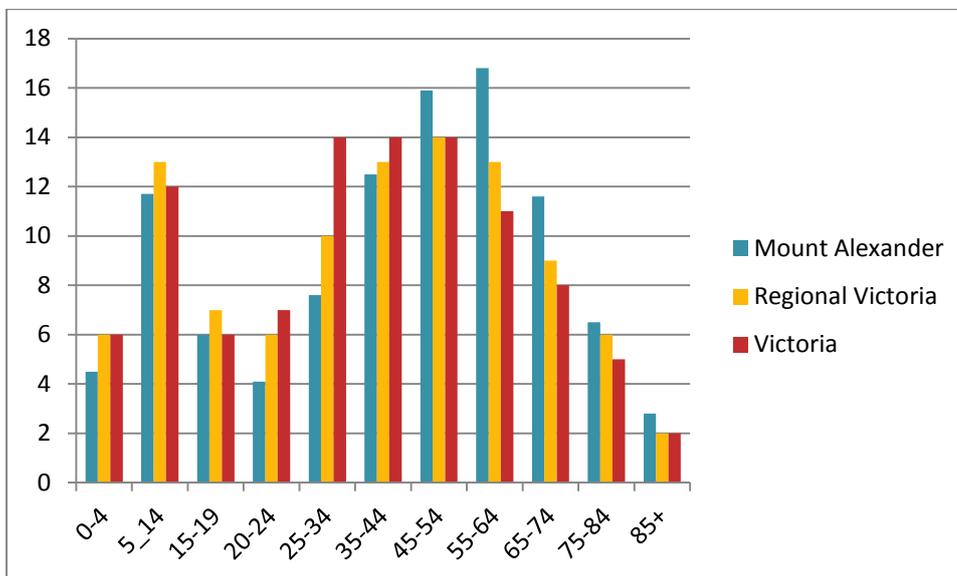
In addition to considering data from sources such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics and VicHealth, Council has undertaken a range of consultation and engagement activities which also provide valuable information that can assist with planning for the wellbeing and development of the community.

The data contained in this community profile can assist with answering the questions: where are we vulnerable and where are we strong as a community and what are the different needs across the lifespan?

2. Demographics

Mount Alexander Shire's total population is 17,591¹ with 4,665 families and 8,792 private dwellings. The median age is 47 years. Children aged 0-14 years make up 16.3% of the population and people aged 65 years and over make up 20.8% of the population. The population is estimated to increase by 25% (4,266 people) over the 20 year period between 2011 and 2031.²

The figure below compares Mount Alexander Shire's age distribution with the age distribution patterns for Regional Victoria and Victoria.



¹ ABS (2011) Census QuickStats

² Victoria in Future (VIF) 2012, DPCD April 2012.

3. Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is about having the resources and the opportunity to fully participate in the economic and social life of our society. The Australian Social Inclusion Board, on behalf of the Australian Government has published two reports now on *How Australia is Faring* according to a succinct range of social inclusion indicators. These indicators are measures of the resources, opportunities and capabilities people have to:

Learn (participate in education and training);

Work (participate in employment, paid or unpaid or voluntary work including family and carer responsibilities);

Engage (connect with people, use local services, and participate in local, cultural, civic and recreational activities); and

Have a voice (influence decisions that affect them)

The report below for Mount Alexander is based on the same indicators framework the Australian Social Inclusion Board uses.

Social Inclusion Indicators Mount Alexander

RESOURCES	
Material/economic	Median household income \$838 (\$1,216 for Victoria) Welfare dependant and other low income families with children: 11.1% of all families (9% for Victoria) ³
Health and disability	79% report satisfaction with their wellbeing (77.5% for Victoria) ⁴ Disability support pension recipients: 9.4 % (3% Victoria)
Education and skills	46.6% over 15 have completed Yr 12 or equivalent (58.2% Victoria) 27 % have university, graduate of post-grad qual (31.1% Victoria) ⁵
Social resources	93.7% can get help from friends, family or neighbours when needed (91% Victoria) ⁶ 87% have access to the internet at home (88.8% Victoria) ⁷
Community institutions and resources	28.1% experience transport limitations in last 12 months (23.7% Victoria) ⁸ Rate of GP services per 100,000: 380,436 for males (457,269 Victoria); 550,386 for females (619,754 Victoria) ⁹
Housing	6.7% households experience rental stress (9.1% Victoria) 8.4% households experience mortgage stress (10.1% Victoria) ¹⁰
Personal safety	99.3 % feel safe walking alone in the day (97%Victoria) ¹¹ 83% feel safe walking alone at night (70.3% Victoria) ¹²

³ CVHA (2012) *Summary of the CVHA Health and Wellbeing Community Profile for Mount Alexander Shire 2012*, p. 32.

⁴ VicHealth Indicators Survey, 2011

⁵ ABS, 2011 Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profiles.

⁶ VicHealth Indicators Survey, 20

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ CVHA (2012) op.cit p. 18

¹⁰ ABS, 2011 Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profiles.

¹¹ VicHealth Indicators Survey, 20

¹² Ibid

PARTICIPATION	
Work	65.7% in the labour force (71% Victoria) 5.4% Newstart recipients (4.2% Victoria)
Learn	30% of people attend an educational institution ¹³ 56.6% 15-19 year olds fully engaged in work or study (71.9% Victoria) 26.6% 15-19 year olds disengaged work and study (15.4% Victoria)
Engage	22.4% lack time for friends and family (27.4% Victoria) ¹⁴ 47.4% volunteer more than monthly (34.3% Victoria) ¹⁵
Have a voice	73.3% participated in citizen engagement in past 12 months (50.5% Victoria) ¹⁶
Arts and culture	69.1% of people participated in at least one artistic and cultural activity in the previous month (63.6% Victoria) ¹⁷ .

4. Local Economy

Mount Alexander has a history as a centre for manufacturing and retains some key regional manufacturing businesses. However, it has a very active community which has changed the nature of economic development strategies and is influential in promoting sustainability as a fundamental requirement, in addition to conventional growth measures (such as jobs and investment).

The major employing industries in Mount Alexander Shire are, in order:

- Health care and social assistance (hospitals and general practice medical services are the biggest sectors in this industry). This sector became the largest employing sector in the Shire for the first time in 2011, after growing at an average annual rate of 4.4% in the five years 2006 to 2011.
- Manufacturing (food processing is by far the largest sector within manufacturing)
- Retail trade (supermarkets is the largest sector)
- Education and training (led by primary and secondary education)
- Construction (house construction being the dominant sector).

All of these industry sectors are growing, except manufacturing. However, the most rapidly increasing industries (in terms of jobs) in the Shire are "Professional, Scientific and Technical Services" and "Information, Media and Communications".

The industry sectors with the largest number of business establishments in the Shire are, in order:

- Agriculture
- Construction
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Retail trade
- Rental, hiring and real estate.¹⁸

¹³ ABS (2011) QuickStats

¹⁴ VicHealth Indicators Survey, 20

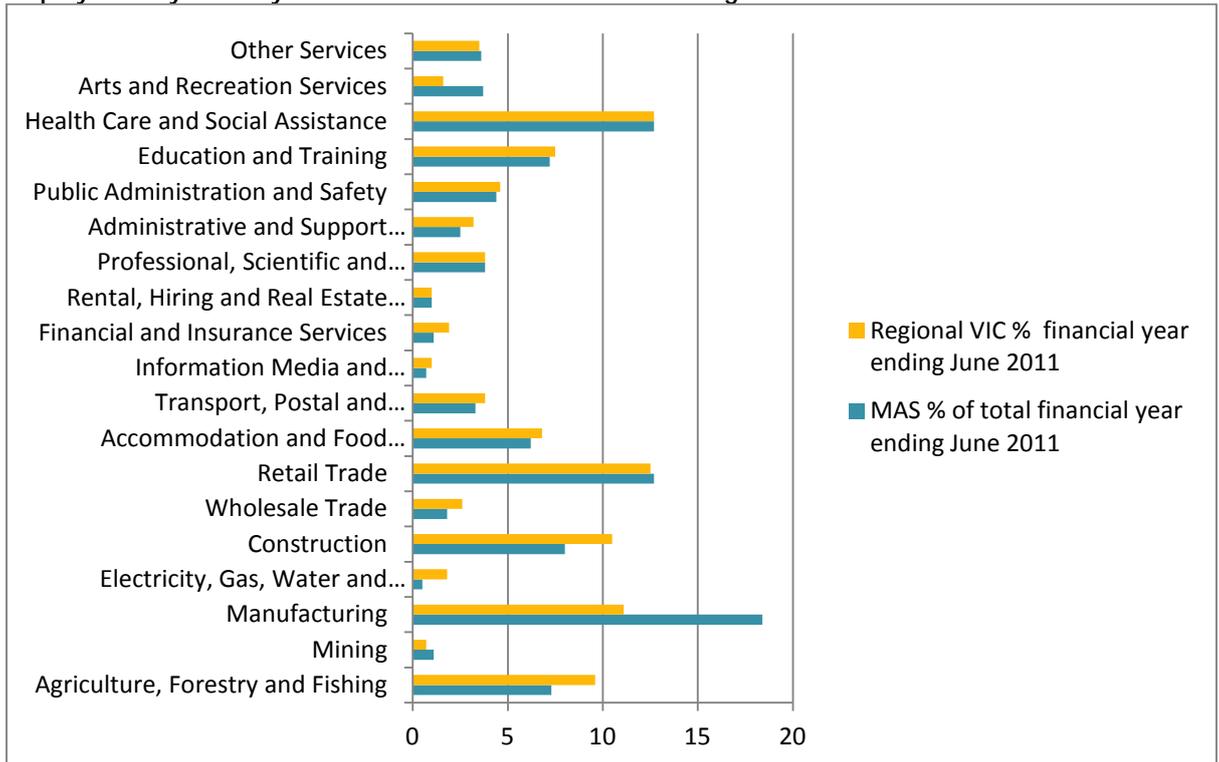
¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Street Ryan (2012) *Briefing and Issues Paper on Council's Economic Development Strategy Project*

Employment by Industry Sector Mount Alexander Shire and Regional Victoria 2011¹⁹



Council is currently preparing an Economic Development Strategy. The research and consultation phase of this process has identified seven groups of issues/opportunities related to economic development. These are:

- Creative and passionate communities
- Understanding the era of lifestyle and sustainability
- Building a diverse and robust economy
- The planning and industrial development dilemma
- Demographic outlook (high proportion of over 65)
- The shire as a place to visit
- Potential collaboration with other councils in the region

5. Consultation summary

This section is a summary of some of the recent research or consultation activities undertaken by Council and some of the main findings.

Transport
As part of the Transport Connections Project, Council conducted six workshops across the Shire in 2011.
The key findings were that public bus services in particular did not meet community needs for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrequent services (or no services on weekends) • Not commuter friendly for workers or students • Poor timetabling and connections with train services • Don't travel to places where people need to go • Poorly promoted and lack of adequate signage and timetables

¹⁹ Economy.id(2013) Mount Alexander Shire Economic Profile

Arts
In order to develop the Arts Strategy, Council conducted interviews, surveys and workshops in 2010.
Some of the main points raised were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facilities such as Phee Broadway are excellent but underutilised. • Strong support for a public gallery to exhibit contemporary art practice. • Need for a community arts centre accessible to a wide range of community groups and individuals. • Majority surveyed believed that cultural and arts activities currently contribute to social and community wellbeing. • Majority surveyed believed that cultural and arts activities currently contribute to the Shire's identity. • Majority surveyed believed that cultural and arts activities currently contribute to the economic viability of the Shire.

Youth Engagement
Council was funded to develop a youth engagement charter. As part of this project young people were surveyed and attended focus groups. 36 young people completed the young people's engagement questionnaire.
Results from the questionnaire found that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81% of the respondents had been involved in or attended a Council activity • The majority felt they had been listened to by Council staff. • 64% felt that feedback and follow up was not provided regarding the final outcome. • 58% felt that young people do not have enough opportunity for their voices to be heard. • Most popular areas of interest were: sport and recreation; employment; public spaces; and transport.

Youth Forum
The Youth Advisory Group which developed the youth engagement charter for Council conducted a youth forum in October 2012, attended by 90 young people in years 10 and 11.
Some of the main points raised were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong need for an indoor sports complex • More netball courts • Need better pool and gym facilities • Need better communication and advertising of sports and events • Renewable energy- important for school and Council to use this • Litter and pollution are main environmental issues • Lack of public transport out of business hours and on weekends, price of taxis prohibitive • School bus is good service • Transport issues relate to employment issues • Need more business opportunities for young people

Proposed Indoor Aquatic and Leisure Centre
Council conducted a shire wide phone survey of 400 people.
When asked about current participation in physical activity, it was found that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 86 % go walking • 53% take part in water based activities • 37% go cycling • 28% play sport for an organised team

Local community planning

Council has been assisting several small townships to develop community plans. The first three almost complete are for Newstead, Harcourt and Taradale.

The main areas for action identified by the Taradale community are:

- Communications – promote what is happening in town to residents and visitors
- Arts and crafts – support existing and promote new events and activities
- Sustainability and skills – improve and protect local landscapes
- Facilities and services – future of primary school, access to recreation reserves
- Beautification – street tree planting, tracks and trails

The main themes arising in Newstead are:

- Open spaces - the river, walking trails, bush, parks and reserves, street and town trees
- Built environment - public spaces, council and community infrastructure, parks and reserves, playgrounds;
- Dollars and cents/economy - farming and land use, arts, energy and businesses.
- Community access/services - technology, transport, accessibility, personal needs, health
- Community life - leadership and mentoring, social groups, volunteers, how we live and work together.

Older adults

COTA Victoria conducted consultations across Victoria in February-April 2012 on proposed aged care reforms. Council assisted with a forum to be held in Castlemaine which was attended by 40 people.

The report published by COTA found the most common issues were:

- Common and consistent access to information on the entire aged care system and its services
- More comprehensive client needs focused home help
- Improved transport options
- Better residential care facilities

Disability

Council has adopted a Disability Action Plan. During the development of this there was widespread consultation.

Some of the main points raised were:

- Built environment – improve access to existing and new buildings, audit and improve footpaths and kerb ramps at road crossings
- Services and information – provide information about accessible tourism and inclusive activities, develop mobility maps, improve public transport
- Training to Council staff in disability awareness

Community Wellbeing and Happiness

To assist with preparation of the social and economic impact of the Maryborough Highland Society's gaming proposal, Council conducted a Shire wide phone survey on community attitudes. 400 people were surveyed.

The survey found that:

- 90% were happy living in the Shire (39% happy, 51% very happy)
- 77% rated their sense of wellbeing living in Mount Alexander Shire as high or very high (34% very high, 45% high)

6. References

ABS (2011) Quick Stats

http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/LGA25430

COTA Victoria *Aged Care Reform Consultations Summary Report*, June 2012

CVHA (2012) *Summary of the CVHA Health and Wellbeing Community Profile for Mount Alexander Shire 2012*

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Street Ryan (2012) *Council Briefing and Issues Paper on Council's Economic Development Strategy Project*

VicHealth (2011) *Community Indicators Survey, Mount Alexander LGA Profile*.

Victoria In Future (2012), DPCD, April 2012