

Surf Coast Shire Profile

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The Creation of the Surf Coast Shire

From 1993 the Victorian Kennett Government embarked on a process of local government amalgamations that saw Victoria's 210 municipalities reduced to 79.

The City of Greater Geelong was created by Act of Parliament on 18 May 1993, out of the former councils of:

- Corio Shire,
- Bellarine Rural City,
- the cities of Geelong, Geelong West, Newtown, and South Barwon, and
- parts of the Shires of Bannockburn, and Barrabool.

As part of this same process, the Surf Coast Shire was created on 9 March 1994. It was created from most of the former Shires of Winchelsea and the Barrabool. Notably Torquay, which had been briefly part of the new City of Greater Geelong, was included in the Surf Coast Shire. This was done to give greater viability to the Surf Coast, and to meet the goal of creating 'communities of interest'.

The Borough of Queenscliffe was created on 12 May 1863. This borough has not changed its boundaries despite recommendations made by the original Board of Enquiry in 1993 which proposed Queenscliffe become part of the City of Greater Geelong. Due to a strong protest by the community the amalgamation never took place.

Our western neighbours, Colac Otway and Golden Plains Shires, were created soon after Surf Coast.

Location

As one of the fastest growing regional municipalities in Victoria, Surf Coast Shire is experiencing significant growth and change. Residents and visitors alike enjoy the dramatic coastal scenery and superb lifestyle.

The Shire is located in southwest Victoria, 20 minutes from Geelong and 90 minutes from Melbourne. It has an area of 1556 square kilometres with some 55 kilometres of coastline and the start of the fabulous Great Ocean Road defining its southern boundary.

Physical



The Surf Coast Shire is strongly influenced by physical and topographical features, which impact on urban development and land use management. It is characterised by a diverse range of environments including rugged coastline, dense native forests and rolling, rural plains. In the course of time these features have contributed to creating distinctive communities with quite different expectations about how their areas should develop.

The Shire's coastline is characterised by a line of settlements hugging the Great Ocean Road - including Torquay, Anglesea, Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven and Lorne. Save for Torquay, these towns are sited on the coastal edge of the Otway Ranges and are surrounded by substantial tracts of forested public land, restricting the development of roads and infrastructure.

North of the Otways is a large and distinctive rural community including the townships of Winchelsea, Deans Marsh and Moriac. The area is traversed by the Princes Highway and the main Melbourne to Warrnambool railway line.



Located at the eastern end of the Shire, Torquay is the largest town and the main administrative centre. The strong association with the surfing industry together with proximity to Geelong and Melbourne make Torquay an increasingly attractive proposition to combine lifestyle and working commitments.

Employment & Industries

- Tourism and related industries, notably the surfing industry.
- Dining and accommodation venues.
- Service industries
- Traditional mixed and newer intensive agriculture.
- Alcoa Anglesea Power Plant.



Population



Surf Coast Shire is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria. For the 15 years from 1986 to 2001 the permanent population of the Surf Coast Shire grew from 13,456 to 19,629 – an increase of 6,163 people or 45.87%. In 2006 the estimated permanent resident population was 24,124.

Change in Resident Population

1986	1991	1996	2001	2006
13,456	15,613	16,713	19,629	24,124

Source: ABS Census material.

Part Time and Permanent



Nearly half of our property owners do not live here permanently. Many are metropolitan residents with a second home on the Surf Coast. They live here part time, holiday here or own the property as an investment, perhaps with a view to retirement on the coast. (Indicators: 41% of private dwellings unoccupied at the 2001 census and 48% of rate notices sent to addresses outside the Shire.)

Visitor Numbers and Patterns

The impact of holidaymakers in the coastal towns from Torquay to Lorne means peak overnight populations of over 68,000 (2006). Substantial numbers of day visitors and over 2 million travellers along the Great Ocean Road each year add a further dimension.

