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Historic  
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**Context**

Indigo Shire covers an area of 2,019 square kilometres and is located between the major urban centres of Wangaratta and Albury-Wodonga in North East Victoria. The Shire borders the Australian Alps and fertile plains of the Murray within the Murray-Darling Basin and the catchments of the Murray, Ovens and Kiewa Rivers.

With outstanding historic towns, grape production and high altitude fruit growing areas, productive river flats and proximity to the rapidly growing Albury-Wodonga, the Shire has a rich and diverse combination of land uses, attributes and opportunities.

It is predominantly a rural shire with a population of 16,490 (Victoria In Future (VIF), 2019), with approximately 57 per cent living in urban areas and 43 per cent living in rural areas.

The Shire has experienced growth over the last three census periods and this is expected to continue with a predicted population in 2026 of 17,430 (VIF, 2019). Increased population has generally been accommodated in the townships and to a lesser extent in rural areas.

The Shire's main towns are Beechworth and Rutherglen and smaller townships of Wahgunyah, Yackandandah, Kiewa-Tangambalanga, Chiltern, and Barnawartha. The towns provide commercial and community services to their residents and surrounding areas and are important community focal points.

The Shire's growth is underpinned by its diverse lifestyle opportunities, proximity to services and employment opportunities in Albury-Wodonga and Wangaratta, the rich natural and built environment, cultural heritage, and proximity to the Hume corridor.

The economy is primarily based on agriculture beef, sheep, dairy, fruit, and viticulture, the processing of primary produce, tourism and service provision.

The Shire is well serviced with transport infrastructure including the Hume Freeway and the Melbourne – Sydney railway line; east west access along the Murray Valley Highway and the Kiewa Valley Highway which provides access to the south east.