

APPENDIX B –THEMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

**CITY OF GREATER
SHEPPARTON
HERITAGE STUDY
STAGE II**

**THEMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL
HISTORY**



VOLUME 2

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**THEMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL
HISTORY**

VOLUME 2

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February 2004

This report is Volume 2 of a six-volume set, comprising:

Volume 1	Introduction and Recommendations
Volume 2	Environmental History
Volume 3	Heritage Place Datasheets: A-Mooroopna
Volume 4	Heritage Place Datasheets: Murchison –Z
Volume 5	Heritage Overlay Precincts
Volume 6	Heritage Place Datasheets: Log Structures and Scotch Kiln

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the assistance of the following people:

City of Greater Shepparton Heritage Study Steering Committee:

Kathleen McBain	<i>City of Greater Shepparton</i>
Colin Kalms	<i>City of Greater Shepparton</i>
Braydon Aitken	<i>City of Greater Shepparton</i>
Cr John Gray	<i>City of Greater Shepparton</i>
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Patrick Miller	Heritage Victoria

And also:

Barbara Twite	<i>City of Greater Shepparton</i>
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Dr Colin Holden, St Peter's, Eastern Hill.

Mr Andrew Simson, Mrs Marjorie Simson and Mrs Jack Simson

Mr Ken and Mr John Ratcliffe

Mr Arthur and Mrs Lurlene Knee

We would also like to acknowledge the countless local historians, residents, property owners and others who provided historical information and assisted in the location of certain sites, including:

Mr Peter Gill
Mr J H Standish
Mr Paul Wilkinson
Mr Arthur Willmott
Father David Austin
Father Patrick Collins
Ms Denise Mandersloot
Mr David Moloney
Mr Robert Whitehead
Mr Victor Earl
Mrs M Wilkinson
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Mrs Margaret Feldtmann
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Mr Ron Sneddon
Mr Brian Williams

CITY OF GREATER SHEPPARTON – THEMATIC HISTORY

1.0 Introduction

The City of Greater Shepparton is situated in the central north of Victoria, 180 km north-east of Melbourne. The City is bordered to the north and west by the Murray River and the Moira and Campaspe Shires, to the east by the Delatite Shire, and to the south and south-east by Strathbogie Shire (Figure 1). The landscape varies from rolling hills to the flat expanses. The City as it is now constituted, is a recent entity – formed only in November 1994 after the amalgamation of Shepparton City, with most of Rodney Shire and parts of Euroa, Goulburn, Tungamah, Violet Town and Waranga Shires. Shepparton is the centre of the municipality. To the visitor to the region, the impression of the Shire is one of vibrancy and affluence.

This thematic environmental history of the City of Greater Shepparton seeks to discuss how the landscape has evolved and how the overwhelming themes – of settlement and migration, utilising natural resources; and developing primary and secondary industries – are integral to the formation of the municipality. The settlement of the area was initially achieved through the arrival of a range of immigrants – overlanders from New South Wales and over-straiters from Van Diemen’s Land; the squatters, closer and soldier settlers and those from other colonies; and more recently by the relocation and settlement of European migrants.

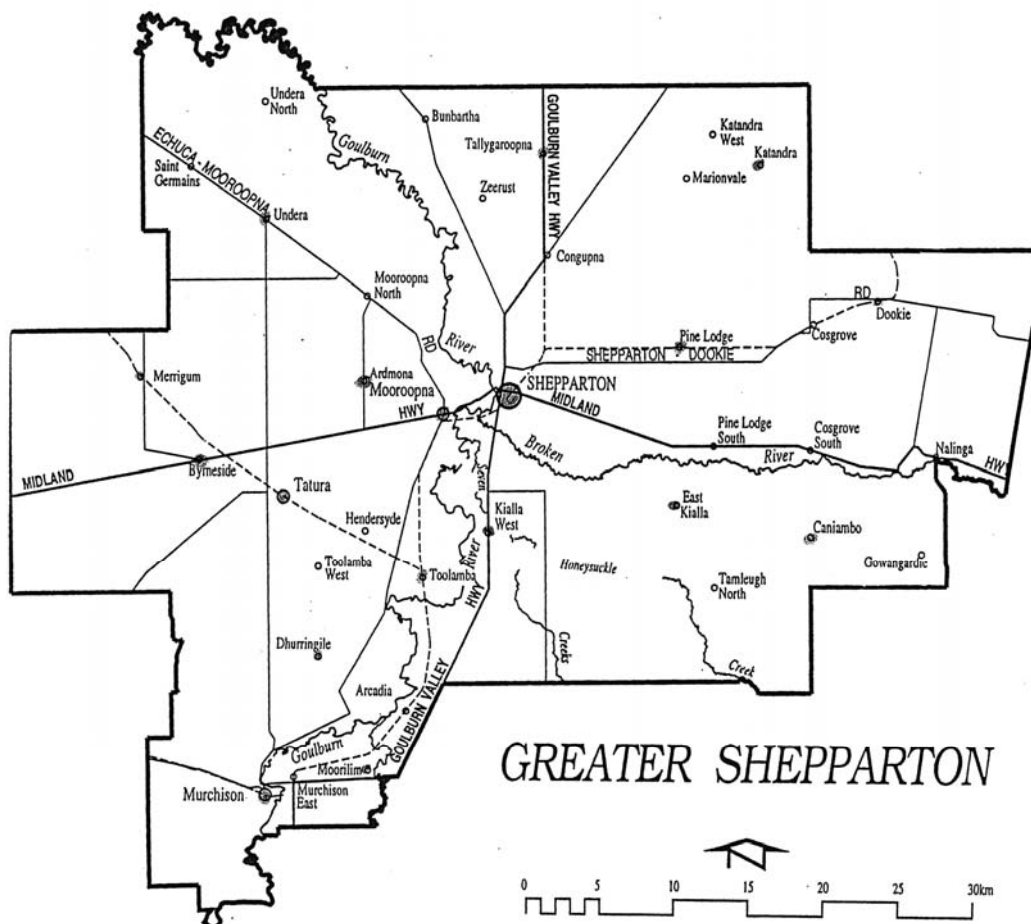


Figure 1 City of Greater Shepparton
Source: Patterns of Local Government

The importance of water and irrigation for the life of the City – through its conveyance and as an integral aspect of local farming and business, will be examined. The livelihood of the region – its primary and secondary industries, was, and continues to be, dependent upon the presence and availability of water.

This history ranges from the European discovery of the fertile grasslands of the river valley by the early explorers, Hume and Hovell; to the post-contact years of the area and the occupation by the squatters and selectors; to post-World War One soldier settlers and post-World War Two European immigrants. Relocation to the district was involuntary in the case of German and Italian prisoners of war. While the temporary internment camps are now barely visible on the landscape, their presence remains enshrined in the memorials to their inhabitants. The more recent arrival of Italian, Turkish, Albanian and other immigrants can perhaps be seen more readily, especially in their religious practice. The early history of the development of the district, its small, medium and large towns, and the growth of its population, involved the building of churches and schools, roads and railways, community, recreation and sporting facilities. Their evolution must be understood in order to make sense of the current use made by residents and industries alike of the existing fabric of the Shire.

In addition to working as a contextual history, the study will record the evidence that remains in the landscape, and the sites that document people's endeavours. Through the thematic history, the study aims to provide a background to the many sites of cultural significance located within the City of Greater Shepparton that connect its past with its present.

2.0 Contact

Descendants of the Panggerang tribe are the traditional owners of the land now incorporated into the City of Greater Shepparton. The dominant tribe of the Goulburn River Valley, the Panggerang, could be further divided into eight or ten sub-groups, scattered from the lower reaches of the Ovens and Buffalo rivers nearly to Echuca.¹ The Panggerang were located in the broad valley of the lower Goulburn west to the Murray River, and east and west of Shepparton; at Wangaratta, Benalla and Kyabram.² The rivers would have provided an important source of food for these tribes. In summer, the local fruiting shrubs would have also added to the diet.

There was undoubtedly contact between Europeans and Aboriginal people in the Goulburn River district before permanent settlement began in the 1840s. Escaped convicts and squatters from New South Wales were among those whose contact with the Panggerang tribe would have been responsible for passing on diseases, such as small-pox and syphilis, to the Aboriginal population in the first decades of the nineteenth century.

The histories of these tribes have not necessarily been recorded by them. Yet we have a number of European interpretations of their lifestyle recorded because of their displacement. Edward Micklethwaite Curr (1820-1889),³ squatter and author, whose squatting runs in the Goulburn Valley were in the tribal areas of the Panggerang, Ngooraialum and Pinpandoor, recorded his observations of the lives of these tribes. It appears from his writing that he had acquired a working knowledge of the language, and could converse with members of these tribes. He is said to have expressed 'a warm sympathy for them and a keen interest in their lives'.⁴ Extracts

1 Norman B Tindale. *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia: Their Terrain, Environmental Controls, Distribution, Limits and Proper Names*, p. 131 and p. 207.

2 Ibid.

3 Harley W Forster. 'Edward Micklethwaite Curr (1820-1889)' in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 3, p. 508.

4 Ibid.

from Curr's, *Recollections of Squatting in Victoria*, first published in 1883, have been quoted extensively in some local histories of the area.⁵

Additionally, the site of one of four Aboriginal Protectorates lies within the City of Greater Shepparton, and documentation exists to provide a record of that period of time. The Port Phillip Protectorate of Aboriginals was established in February 1839; the Chief Protector was George Augustus Robinson (1788-1866).⁶ Robinson supervised the four Protectorates set up in different geographic districts of Port Phillip. Initially, in May 1839, the Goulburn Valley Protectorate was located near Mitchellstown under James W Dredge. He quickly resigned, it is said, in protest at the appalling conditions imposed upon the Aboriginal people.⁷ Dredge was replaced one year later by William Le Souef in 1840, and the Protectorate removed to 'a square mile of country which Robinson had chosen'.⁸ The Protectorate was said to be on the site of present day Murchison.⁹ By 1841, Le Souef reported to Robinson that improvements to the Protectorate included acres of wheat, barley, oats, maize and potatoes. It also included five small and large bark buildings. The work was undertaken by those living within the Protectorate. The Goulburn Aboriginal Station North Eastern District, as it was known, closed in December 1849, and Governor La Trobe abolished the protectorate system in 1851. The site of the Protectorate was not nominated in the Stage One Heritage Study as an item of potential heritage significance, and consequently has not been investigated. Further research would be required to establish if remains of the Protectorate exist today.

Connections with the Ngoorailum tribe, however, remain in the Murchison area. Two members of the Molka tribe, a sub-set of the Ngooraialum, are buried in the Murchison Cemetery. King Charles Tattambo, 'King of the Goulburn Tribe', was buried in 1866. Tattambo left a widow, Queen Mary, 'his latest wife and Captain John, a son by his first wife'.¹⁰ Captain John Tattambo died in October 1874 and was buried next to his father. His death was followed only a few days later by his step-mother, Queen Mary. The pair of graves are enclosed by wrought iron palisades and are marked with generic timber crosses within the enclosure (see Section 14.1 (Figure 24). One fence is painted black and features spear tops with boomerang motifs and contains the graves of Queen Mary and Captain John, the other is painted brown with wagon-wheel motifs.

For the decades since European settlement, Aboriginal tribes have maintained a presence in the Goulburn Valley; for much of that time, occupying an uncomfortable physical location in a shanty town on the banks of the Goulburn River between Mooroopna and Shepparton. The creation of a new settlement, 'Rumbalara' (meaning rainbow) in 1958 by Deputy Premier, Arthur Gordon Rylah (1909-74),¹¹ improved living conditions somewhat. After some years of uncertainty and indecision about ownership, 'Rumbalara' is now totally funded by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and is a centre managed by Aboriginal people for the use of the Aboriginal community. Facilities now include a medical centre, welfare and social support. While 'Rumbalara' was not identified as a site of potential heritage significance in the Stage One Heritage Study, it is a reminder of Aboriginal occupation in the region, in the post-contact period.

5 William Henry Bossence. *Murchison: The J G Kenny Memorial History*, Chapter 3.

6 *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 2, pp. 385-7.

7 [www.mooroopna.org.au/mitchellstown to rumbalara.htm](http://www.mooroopna.org.au/mitchellstown%20to%20rumbalara.htm)

8 D M McLennan, (ed.), *History of Mooroopna, Ardmona & District*, p. 10; Bossence, *Murchison*, op.cit., p. 23.

9 McLennan, *ibid*; Bossence, *loc.cit*.

10 Bossence. *Murchison*, op. cit., p. 36.

11 B J Costar. 'Arthur Gordon Rylah (1909-74)' in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 16, pp. 163-4.

3.0 European Exploration

The Port Phillip District of the Colony of New South Wales extended south of the Murray River to the coast and westwards past Portland Bay. Exploration of the Port Phillip District occurred explicitly for economic reasons in 1834-5. Rumours of excellent grazing land buoyed exploration which occurred overland, from New South Wales, and over the Strait, from Van Diemen's Land. European settlements and permanent occupation of the region began in the 1840s with the migration from other colonies of squatters, gold miners, and later free selectors.

The first European explorers to arrive in the Goulburn Valley were Hamilton Hume (1797-1873)¹² and William Hovell (1786-1875)¹³ who crossed the Goulburn, near Cathkin, in 1824.¹⁴ Hovell named the river after Major Frederick Goulburn, the Colonial Secretary of the time.¹⁵ Hume, a native-born landholder, and Hovell, a former sea-captain, had both settled in New South Wales but wished to find new pastures for grazing their sheep in the southern part of the colony. The expedition left Hume's station, south-west of Goulburn, NSW and moved south, crossing the Murrumbidge before discovering another large river which they named the Hume. It was later renamed the Murray. After crossing the Mitta Mitta, Kiewa and Ovens Rivers their course ran roughly parallel to the present Hume Highway. The explorers crossed the Strathbogie Ranges and spent a week fighting through the hills of the Great Dividing Range east of Tallarook.¹⁶

The next explorer to travel through the area was Major Thomas Mitchell in 1836, who, on his return journey from Portland Bay, crossed the Goulburn River near the current site of Chateau Tabilk (established 1860). Within months, a further party – consisting of John Gardiner, Joseph Hawdon and John Hepburn – retraced Mitchell's steps as they headed south looking for suitable grazing land. In January 1838, Hawdon and his partner, Charles Bonney, set out from a place called the Old Crossing (near the modern township of Seymour) to overland cattle to Adelaide. Their route passed through country on the western side of the Goulburn before reaching the Murray and on to Adelaide.¹⁷

Further explorers, including William Howitt and Henry Giles Turner could not agree on the potential of the Goulburn area. To Howitt it was 'richly grassed plains ... sometimes bare of trees'; while to Turner it was 'lightly timbered'.¹⁸ Nevertheless, squatters soon began to occupy the southern region of the Colony of New South Wales, named by Mitchell, *Australia Felix*.

4.0 Opening up the Land

Prior to 1855, most of the lands of Port Phillip were held to be the property of the Crown, as represented by His Majesty's Government in London. Occupation of Crown Land, by purchase or free grant, was not authorised until 1833, when Acts of the Legislative Council in Sydney placed the 'squatters' under the control of Commissioners of Crown Lands.¹⁹ Further Acts in 1836 and 1838 augmented the authority of these officials and tightened up the conditions of

12 Stuart M Hume, 'Hamilton Hume (1797-1873)' in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 1, pp. 564-5.

13 T M Perry, 'William Hilton Hovell (1786-1875)' in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 1, pp. 556-7.

14 Don Garden. *Victoria: A History*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1984, pp. 19-21; The Historical Society of *Mooroopna to 1998: An account of Mooroopna and its Immediate District*, p. 24.

15 *Mooroopna*, op.cit., p. 24.

16 Garden, op.cit., pp. 20-21.

17 Kevin Kain, *The First Overlanders: Hawdon & Bonney*, pp.23-29, 71-77; Brian Packard, *Joseph Hawdon: The First Overlander*, pp.82-89.

18 W Howitt quoted in Ray West, *Those were the days*, p. 32.

19 R V Billis & A S Kenyon, *Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip*, pp. v.

occupation. An annual fee of £10 for each licensed run was imposed, the extent of the run was not taken into consideration. During this period, over-straiters from Van Diemen's Land and over-landers from Sydney, travelled to Port Phillip to squat on the rich pastoral lands.²⁰

In March 1847, Queen Victoria signed Orders-in-Council which recognised for the first time, the rights of the pastoralists, and gave them a definite standing in law. The squatter was no longer 'under the autocratic thumb' of the Commissioners of Crown Lands. He now possessed a right, outside of the areas known as Settled Districts, to a lease for fourteen years of the lands he had occupied at the time of the Australian publications of the Orders-in-Council, that was, on 7 October 1847.²¹ During the currency of the lease, no person other than the lessee could purchase any portion at not less than £1 per acre in lots of 160 acres. In the Intermediate Districts, which included the Goulburn River area, the term of the lease was eight years. Squatters acquired large tracts of land in the Goulburn Valley, and ran thousands of sheep on their vast acreages.

It was not until October 1855, when Victoria's constitution was ratified, that electoral districts for the Legislative Assembly were defined for the first time. The districts of Shepparton, Kyabram and Rodney contained most of the country referred to in this study as the City of Greater Shepparton.

4.1 Squatters

In eastern mainland Australia, the original impetus for squatting in the early 1820s was primarily an expanding Sydney meat market and secondarily an experimentation with wool production, with added impetus from 'emancipist and native-born families in search of social and economic freedom'.²² Squatting took on fresh vigour (and its actual name of squatting) in 1836 with a British wool market that strengthened pastoral diversification and drew new pastoralists from Van Diemen's Land and from Britain itself.

Squatting began in the Goulburn Valley in 1839. Edward Khull, James Cowper and Gregor McGregor occupied the first three and largest squatting runs in the district – they were known as *Tallygaroopna*, *Ardpatrick* and *Arcadia* respectively.²³

Squatting was an expensive business and not an occupation to be taken on by the feint-hearted. The squatters were generally well educated gentlemen, often immigrants from Scotland, Ireland and England. Acquiring land and sheep was expensive; a licence fee of £10 per year was payable to the government. Workers – shepherds, labourers and others – were paid around £40 per year. Shearing and transporting the wool-clip to Melbourne was time consuming; and the eventual payment for the wool from London may take up to two years.

The depression of the early 1840s did not halt the influx of potential pastoralists: newcomers either moved further afield in search of unclaimed land, attempted to squeeze in between existing runs, or purchased a station that had previously been occupied.²⁴ Life on the squatting runs was isolated and conditions often squalid. The small number of white women living on these runs were generally employed as housekeepers. Few women accompanied their husbands until suitable houses could be built to accommodate a family. Consequently, many men married later in life when they could afford the comforts of a home and the leisure to court a suitable woman to share it.

20 Ibid., pp. v-vii.

21 Ibid, p. vi.

22 David Denholm. 'Squatting', in *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, p. 610.

23 *Mooroopna*, op.cit., p. 29.

24 Tony Dingle, *Settling*, p. 24.

The *Arcadia* run originally consisted of 80,000 acres and 6,000 sheep and was taken up by Gregor McGregor in 1839. It was then broken up into a smaller run of the same name, of 48,000 acres, south of the Broken and Goulburn Rivers, and *Pine Lodge*, 34,000 acres, taken up by William Snow Clifton and Pine Lodge, 34,000 acres north of the river.

James Cowper's *Ardpatrick* run at Cooma, originally a property that took in all the land west from the Goulburn River to the St Germain and Kyabram districts, and was bounded by Wyuna to the north and Toolamba to the south. The first building was the *Ardpatrick* homestead, now demolished.

Edward Khull was the first squatter to occupy the *Tallygaroopna* run in 1841. Originally carrying 10,000 sheep, it was a 160,000 acre pastoral run and the largest in the Murray district. It was located on the right bank of the Goulburn River adjoining Shepparton on the north-east.²⁵ A slab hut (built in 1841) still exists on the property as a remnant of the early squatting days. However, Khull abandoned the run in 1843 and it was taken up by Sherbourne Sheppard, after whom Shepparton was named, and sub-divided into the *Tallygaroopna* and *Katandra* runs. Sheppard then sold the *Katandra* run to Charles Ryan and *Tallygaroopna* to Hugh Glass in 1852.²⁶ By 1855 Glass no longer owned the property. Further changes of ownership occurred to both *Tallygaroopna* and *Katandra* up until the late nineteenth century.

The homestead, 'Fairley Downs' stands as a reminder of the former *Tallygaroopna* and *Katandra* squatting runs, and their occupants. As one of the historic houses identified in the Stage One Study, 'Fairley Downs' connects the past history of the squatting and selecting eras with the current usage of the property as a wheat farm. The property contains the homestead, built 1903 and extended in 1923, an original, 1841 slab hut, a timber framed cottage, originally a World War Two prisoner of war camp building from Murchison, and three graves dating from the earliest settlement.

4.2 Selectors and Closer Settlement

The selection era, which began in the 1860s, repeated the early history of Victoria, with its phases of exploration, contemplation and finally aggregation of like-minded individuals determined to open up the land. Selectors came from distant parts of the state, or from other colonies and sometimes from other British dominions. Thus the joint themes of settlement and immigration permeate the story of selection in the Goulburn Valley district and provide the context through which this era can best be understood.

Two important events in 1851 transformed the Port Phillip District.²⁷ The first was the successful separation from New South Wales, achieved on 1 July 1851; the second was the discovery of gold at Ballarat, Sandhurst (Bendigo) and Mount Alexander (Castlemaine). It was also discovered at Waranga and Rushworth in 1953-4.

Once responsible government had been granted as a result of the separation from New South Wales, and democratic elections held, the popularly elected Legislative Assembly contained a majority in favour of land reform. The Legislative Council became the stronghold of the pastoral interests.²⁸

Both the separation from New South Wales and the discovery of gold had a direct impact on the Goulburn Valley. When gold seekers passed through the district; they purchased goods as well

25 Billis and Kenyon, *Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip*, pp. 285-6.

26 For biographical details of Hugh Glass, speculator, squatter and merchant, see June Senyard, 'Hugh Glass (1817-1871)' in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 4, pp. 254-5.

27 Dianne Reilly. 'Duties of no Ordinary Difficulty', in *Victoria 150 Years of Gold*, p. 174.

28 Dingle, op.cit., p. 61.



Figure 2 Fairley Downs Homestead

as utilising the accommodation and transport available in the area. The new land acts enabled a new generation of settler to come on to the land and open up the northern pastures.

In 1851 the new parliament passed a series of land acts: the Nicholson *Land Act* of 1860, the Duffy *Land Act* of 1862 and the first and second *Grant Acts* of 1865 and 1869. These Acts were designed to remove land from the control of the squatters and make it available for selectors. The first three Acts (1860, 1862 and 1865) failed in their aim to wrest the land from the wealthy squatters. The final Act (1869) ended the inequities and loop-holes that allowed the squatters to continue their hold over the land.²⁹ Permanent land settlement was favoured by Government and the squatters were replaced by selectors under the new legislation.³⁰

With the passing of the Grant Act in 1869, the whole colony was opened up for selection, including unsurveyed land. This resulted in settlers pouring into the northern plains. The survey Officer's Report for 1872 states:

Following the Land Act of 1869, steady and increased settlement took place which has now amounted to a rush. Under this Act, settlement is going on at an unprecedented pace. Up the Goulburn River, at Cooma, Paroopna, Toolamba and North Murchison, nearly all the land is taken up with a bona fide class of men who have good farms and implements, and who are getting repaid with fine crops.³¹

Selectors of unsurveyed land pegged out their claim and then applied for survey. A person could only select up to 320 acres (including land already selected). The Act established a system under which land was held by license for three years before it could be purchased, and if conditions regarding improvement were met, selectors could purchase the land from 10/- to £1

29 *Mooroopna*, op.cit., p. 33.

30 B A Campbell. 'History of Irrigation in the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District', n.d..

31 Survey Officer's Report quoted in J McQualter & E Brady, *Rodney Recollections*, p. 13.

per acre.³² Fencing and occupation were requirements of selection and indicative of serious intent to farm the land.

The 1884 *Land Act* transferred the emphasis from sale of land to leasing of land. This was quite a revolutionary concept. Attention was focussed on achieving settlement of marginal agricultural lands, including the eastern highlands, swamplands and other lands neglected by selectors.³³

Life for selectors often meant struggle and hardship. While the back-breaking toil remained a feature of life for the men on the land, life for the wives of the selectors, and later for those taking up the Closer Settlement schemes, must have proved a doubly difficult existence. For many women from the city or other settled country areas, the new way of life must have been isolating and at times frightening. The women were frequently left to tend the flocks of sheep when their sons and husbands worked away from the selection. This was common practice, and was often the only means by which the family could meet their financial commitments. If husbands or brothers were not working away from the selection, the women and other members of the family were still responsible for the household chores, the care of domestic and other animals, including poultry and pigs. Consequently, many women learnt the techniques of farming, milking or cheese-making – either for their own use or for sale – by talking to their women neighbours, or by reading about it in the weekly country newspapers.

Closer Settlement was based on the theory that the subdivision of large holdings previously used for pastoral purposes, and now broken up into smaller allotments, would assist the growing demand for small farms, and the need to increase agricultural production and development. The lower Goulburn Valley, from Seymour to the Murray, became a popular area for selection. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the land previously used for sheep was found to be suitable for wheat, fruit and vines.

The 1898 *Land Act*, and the later 1904 *Closer Settlement Act*, progressively opened the country for further grazing and farming opportunities. In 1905 the Closer Settlement Board reserved land suitable for British immigrants with capital, or agricultural labourers with experience.³⁴ This move was also connected with the need to pay for the expense of further irrigation, which had begun in the 1880s and 1890s, to the Goulburn Valley.

The limit of acquiring only one 320 acre block was often overcome by selectors. To get sufficient land, all the members of a family sometimes took up a selection, a loophole in the legislation which worked in the small man's favour. This role of the family in securing land and providing unpaid labour to work it, was highlighted in Steel Rudd's, *On Our Selection* and later immortalised as the radio play, *Dad and Dave*.

4.3 The Constraints of the Soldier Settlement Schemes

The devastation of the Great War, and the 'heady optimism' that followed, turned people's minds toward grandiose schemes to create a nation 'fit for heroes'.³⁵ The Soldier Settlement Scheme was a re-working of the earlier Closer Settlement schemes dating back to the 1898 *Land Act* and the 1904 *Closer Settlement Acts* which allowed the government to re-purchase land, re-survey it, and offer it for selection to promote more intensive settlement of rural lands. In 1917 the Victorian Parliament passed the *Discharged Soldier Settlement Act*, which made special

32 Peter Cabena, Heather McRae & Elizabeth Bladin. *The Lands Manual: A Finding Guide to Victorian Land Records 1836-1983*, p. 4.

33 Cabena, et.al., op.cit., p. 5.

34 Richard Broome, *Arriving*, p. 131.

35 Dingle, op.cit., p. 185.

provision for the re-settlement of returned soldiers, and was administered as part of the closer settlement program. Each settler was lent £625 to purchase stock and equipment.

The 1922 the *Empire Settlement Act* also aimed to develop agricultural land. British soldiers also took up Australian land under these schemes.³⁶ The Victorian Government had to find large areas of farmland for the ex-servicemen, and re-purchased Crown Land already held under grazing leases in order to open up rural areas such as the Goulburn Valley.³⁷ However, not all the land selected by the government was suitable for such a scheme.

Following the Great War, soldier settlement was a new version of the recurrent dream that increased population was necessary, and a healthy, rural lifestyle desirable.³⁸ It was also a means to rid the city streets of the large numbers of unemployed ex-servicemen. The existing housing problem in Melbourne had been exacerbated by the troops returning from Europe. This proved to be a further impetus to soldiers to take up the soldier settler scheme and appeared to provide the realisation of home ownership for many families. The poverty that often accompanied the young families of soldier settlers was recorded and photographed by social reformer Frederick Oswald Barnett (1883-1972).³⁹ The buildings constructed displayed remarkable ingenuity and wit. At Shepparton, Barnett recorded a hut made from petrol tins, cut with zig-zag edges which served for roofing, in addition to wall cladding (Figure 3). Another hut at Shepparton, believed to be on the riverbank between Shepparton and Mooroopna, also constructed from flat metal sheets, was surrounded by a number of outbuildings. The small allotments of often poor-quality land, insufficient agricultural training, and shortage of working capital contributed to the high failure rate among soldier settlers in Victoria.⁴⁰ Historian Marilyn Lake in, *The Limits of Hope: Soldier Settlement in Victoria 1915-38*, showed how the dream of land-ownership too often turned sour.

Conditions of the schemes imposed on the selectors and soldier settlers included residence on the land, cultivation and improvement. For many returned soldiers, lack of experience was the



Figure 3 A riverbank humpy described in the *Slum Abolition Report, 1937*
Source: F Oswald Barnett photographic collection, State Library of Victoria

36 Ibid., p. 186-9.

37 Ibid., p. 185.

38 Helen Doyle. 'Soldier settlement' in Graeme Davison, John Hirst, and Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, p. 602.

39 Norman Marshall. 'Frederick Oswald Barnett (1883-1972)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 7, pp. 181-2.

40 Doyle, op.cit., p. 602.

main hurdle to soldiers and their dream of a rural lifestyle. Yet over 10,000 returned soldiers eventually went onto the land. New technology enabled many soldier settlers to pursue dairying, intensive cropping,⁴¹ or fruit-growing in the Goulburn Valley region. The horticultural industry in Victoria had expanded into the Goulburn Valley and Northern Mallee as irrigation water became available after World War One.

Because of the extension of the irrigation system after 1910, and as a result of new plantings under the Soldier Settlement Scheme, the canning sector was expanded and production of canned fruit increased dramatically.⁴²

5.0 Utilising Natural Resources

Once the heady days of the gold rushes had ended in Victoria in the early 1860s, many of those people who had emigrated to Victoria to try their luck on the goldfields, had to find work. Many were able to try farming because the selection Acts of the 1860s were beginning to open up the northern regions of Victoria. Some sought out the fertile pastures of the Goulburn Valley. However, the need for a permanent supply of water flowing from the Murray River had to be addressed. A devastating drought from 1877-81 forced the Government to consider expanding its existing irrigation schemes.⁴³

Fortunately, one of the benefits to Victoria of the 1880s economic boom was the enthusiasm with which the government launched into building speculation. Confidence in the future of Victoria also attracted British investment. Melbourne ‘went mad as money became readily available for any purpose ... soundly based or speculative’.⁴⁴ This speculation included the building of irrigation systems in northern Victoria.

Alfred Deakin (1856-1919),⁴⁵ Minister of Water Supply in 1883, introduced the second *Victorian Water Conservation Act* (the first was in 1881) which provided for the formation of irrigation trusts (Figure 4). In 1884 Deakin chaired the Royal Commission on Water Supply which recommended the use of irrigated water in large areas of unproductive land, and later that year he investigated the working of irrigation in America. He produced the First Progress Report of the Royal Commission in June 1885. His report stressed the need for State control of ownership over all rivers, lakes, streams and sources of water supply. This was a radical departure from English practice and became the basis upon which Victoria’s water supply was developed. ‘Watershed trusts’ were established under the control of the Water Supply Department, and the Royal Commission recommended that important construction projects should be carried out as ‘national’ works. The *Irrigation Act* of 1886 also authorised the construction of the Goulburn Weir as a ‘national’ project.⁴⁶ A Water Conservancy Board had been established in 1880 with drinking water, for stock and people its first priority.⁴⁷ The first *Water Conservancy Act* of 1881 established the first notable irrigation trust – the United Echuca and Waranga Waterworks Trust – in 1882.⁴⁸

41 Doyle, loc.cit.

42 The Goulburn Valley Region, www.goulburnvalley.com.au

43 B A Campbell, *History of Irrigation in the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District*, p. 6.

44 Don Garden. *Victoria: A History*, p. 197.

45 R Norris, ‘Alfred Deakin (1856-1919)’, in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 8, pp. 248-56.

46 State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. *Pioneers of Victorian Irrigation*, pp. 11-12.

47 Land Conservation Council. *Historic Places*, p. 55.

48 Campbell. Op.cit., p. 7.

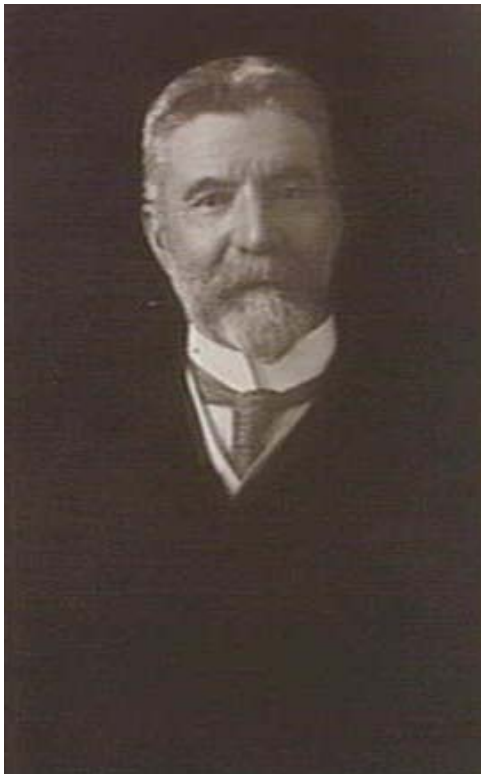


Figure 4 *Alfred Deakin, c.1910-13*
Source: State Library of Victoria Pictures Collection

Later, in 1889, a separate Rodney Irrigation Trust was gazetted.⁴⁹ The 1881 Act and its 1883 Amendment provided for the irrigation Trusts to borrow money in the open market and levy rates, but not to contract loans from the Government. The Shepparton Waterworks Trust was also established in 1882, with Stuart Murray (1837-1919) as its engineer.⁵⁰ The aim of the Trust was to irrigate the Echuca and Waranga Shires through building a weir on the Goulburn River. This weir was built in 1891. Murray, through his work as engineer to the 1884 Royal Commission, produced an important summary of reports on projected irrigation schemes.

The Rodney Water & Irrigation Trust was formed in 1890 and levied a water rate in the same year (Figure 5).⁵¹ However, selectors who had not been supplied with water refused to pay; their refusal was upheld by the courts.⁵² Many farmers did not want water for irrigation during the wet seasons from 1887 to 1892 and this affected the Trusts finances. The Trust had borrowed over one third of a million pounds, with only one thousand ratepayers it was incapable servicing such a debt.⁵³ Selectors, it seemed, saw irrigation only as an insurance policy against drought, and were reluctant to irrigate their land. The Nagambie Weir, begun in 1887 was completed in 1890 and raised the level of the river by about 45 feet. The first National storages – Goulburn Weir in 1888 and Laanecoorie in 1889 – were constructed with Murray as co-designer.

The progress of irrigation in the Rodney area was measured between 1891-95. The figures reveal that in 1891, seventy acres of fodder and fifty acres of orchard and vine were under

49 W H Bossence. *Tatura and the Shire of Rodney*, p. 44.

50 Land Conservation Council, op.cit.

51 Campbell, op.cit., p. 8.

52 Dingle, op.cit., p. 123.

53 Ibid., p. 123.

irrigation. By 1893, over one thousand acres of grain, fodder, pasture, orchard and vines were irrigated and by 1895 this number had risen to 4,900 acres.⁵⁴

The selectors were not easily persuaded that they should attempt different types of farming, and that they should begin intensive fruit, vine and vegetable cultivation. However, the government offered incentives and bonuses for acreages planted with vines and citrus fruit and there were subsidies for fruit and vegetable processing factories.

George Swinburne (1861-1928),⁵⁵ as Minister for Water Supply (1904-8) was largely responsible for the drafting and passage of the *Water Act* of 1905. This was the next major step in the development of state's irrigation scheme. Swinburne was convinced that water should become a rateable commodity for every person to whom water was available. This income, combined with a notion of a fixed water right, he argued, should make it possible to ensure the raising of revenue required to run the water trusts. The *Water Act* also established the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission which placed all rivers and streams outside metropolitan Melbourne under its control. The first major project of the Commission was the construction of the Eastern Canal to bring irrigation to Shepparton. By 1910 the project was substantially complete and by 1912 irrigation water was being provided to the closer settlement properties that had been subdivided from former farming properties.

With the gradual opening up of northern Victoria to selectors by the turn of the century, and farmers beginning to irrigate their land, the landscape changed rapidly. Historian Tony Dingle proposes that it was in the irrigation districts that the countryside was most altered. 'Fence lines, roads and water channels, often banked by levees above the level of the surrounding land', squared off small packages of land 'with mathematical precision'.⁵⁶ Instead of the fields of wheat or sheep, with irrigation, lush growth and the 'varied colouring of fruit trees or vines' overwhelmed the 'customary summer browning' of the landscape in stark contrast to the subdued tones and skeletal shapes of the gum trees. The former Rodney Irrigation & Water Supply Trust building at 49 Hogan Street, Tatura, is of local historical significance of its association with the early operations of the Trust, and the establishment and management of local water supply. It is currently the home of the Tatura Irrigation and War Camps Museum.

5.1 Irrigation

The township of Ardmona is the oldest irrigation and fruit growing area in Victoria. It was not initiated as part of a government-sponsored irrigation settlement, but by a group of 'far-sighted men who had faith in irrigation'.⁵⁷ In 1886 a syndicate of farmers and wine growers purchased 730 acres of the 'Ardmona' property belonging to the McDonald family. The syndicate was made up of Michael Kavanagh, Fred Young, Martin Cussen, John West and A D Patterson. The land was later subdivided. As early as 1884, about 250 acres of land was under vines; the harvest was sent to Melbourne as dried fruit. When Young subdivided the land he had bought before the syndicate was formed, West bought 22 acres and began planting in 1887. He soon acquired a reputation as an expert in irrigation and fruit-growing, before travelling to California to study the techniques in developing irrigation areas.⁵⁸ Members of the syndicate and their families continued to plant fruit and vines on the 'Ardmona' estate, and it was in 1892 that Mrs Michael Kavanagh, under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture, delivered lectures on fruit-preserving, bottling and canning.

54 Campbell, op.cit., pp. 7-8.

55 Alison Patrick. 'George Swinburne (1861-1928)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 12, pp. 150-2.

56 Dingle, op.cit., p. 131.

57 Bossence, *Tatura*, op.cit., p. 50.

58 Ibid, p. 51.

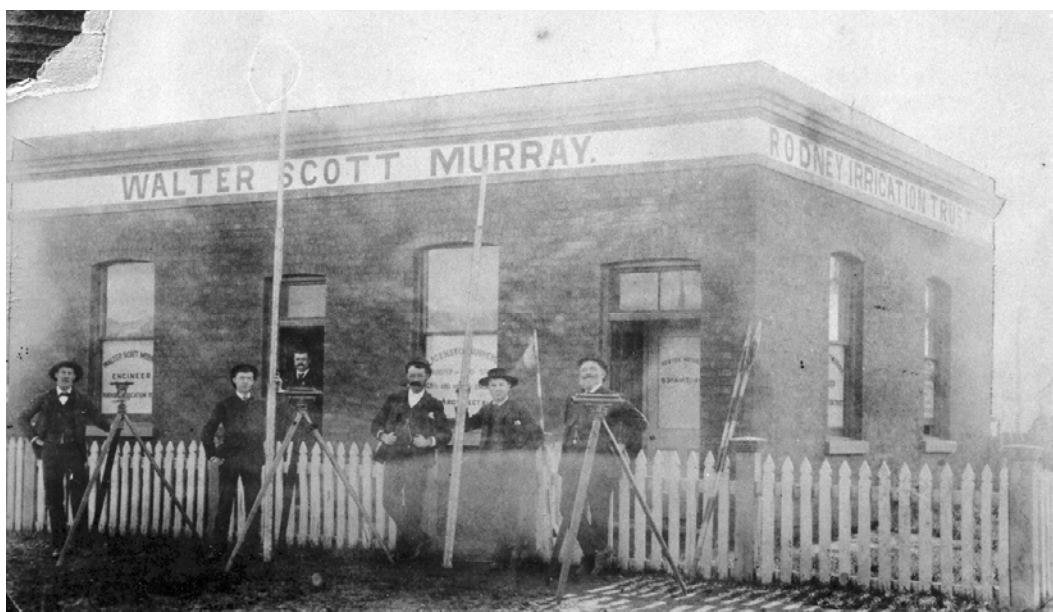


Figure 5 *Rodney Irrigation Trust Building, c.1890, with surveyors posing outside.*
Source: *Tatura Historical Society*

By 1893 irrigation was used widely throughout the area; the land had been subdivided into fruit blocks and sold for £16 per acre. By this time there were said to be over 700 acres of fruit and vines within a five-mile radius of Kyabram. Kavanagh and West were two of the original members of the Rodney Irrigation Trust – as commissioner and secretary respectively. West is emembered as ‘perhaps the greatest of the pioneers of the Goulburn Valley fruit-growing industry’.⁵⁹

The horticultural industry in the Goulburn Valley district expanded as irrigation water became available after World War One. The canning sector was also becoming established in the post-War period and production of canned fruit dramatically increased as a result of new plantings under the Soldier Settlement scheme.

5.2 Irrigation Canals

Reminders of the early days of irrigation and the pattern of settlement can still be seen, and include the East Goulburn Channel, the Stuart Murray Canal (Figure 6), the Cattannah Canal and the Waranga Canal.

5.3 Reticulated Water in the Townships

Selection and the opening up of larger tracts of farming land in the Shepparton, Mooroopna, Tatura, meant that services and facilities were required to meet the needs of the growing population. From its earliest days, the Goulburn River was the source of water for town use.

Mooroopna was the first town in the Goulburn Valley to be supplied with reticulated water. This occurred in 1876 when a private company pumped water from the Goulburn to a large tank on top of the local O’Farrell’s brewery. In 1880 the same company constructed a 10,000 gallon tank on a timber stand adjacent to the river bank.

The drought of late 1877 to early 1884 proved devastating for farmers and town residents alike. Indeed, this drought prompted the 1884 Royal Commission on Water Supply. The Shepparton Waterworks Trust had been established in 1882, and was responsible for the water supply of its

59 *Ibid.*, p. 52.



Figure 6 Stuart Murray Canal



Figure 7 Mooroopna Water Tower

town and outlying areas. The Mooroopna Waterworks Trust was constituted on 12 October 1885 and constructed their first water tank and tower, which is still standing at the corner of McLennan and O'Brien Streets that same year (Figure 7).

The *Water Act* 1905 had constituted the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission; this body became the principal water supply authority in rural areas. Demand for water continued to grow with three major industries operating in town. These included the Ardmona cannery, McLennan's flour mill and the Mooroopna Base Hospital. The present tank was erected in 1927.

6.0 Transport & Communication

Settlement of the remoter parts of the state could only be achieved once the availability of a transport system was established. The *Roads Act* 1853 resulted in a series of District Roads Boards being set up. These Boards were empowered to make and maintain roads, and to raise revenue by rates, tolls or Government grants. The Waranga Roads District was created in June 1863 – the area was created a Shire on 7 November 1865.⁶⁰

6.1 Roads and Bridges

Stage One of this Heritage Study identified three bridges as items of potential heritage significance within the City of Greater Shepparton. The bridges remind us that rivers – and crossing them – were the impetus for further exploration of new grazing pastures, especially in the early squatting period of Victoria's history. The Bridge over the Stuart Murray Canal, on the Rushworth-Murchison Road, also emphasises the importance of the irrigation system to the local farmers (Figure 6). The bridge over the Stuart Murray Canal was built in c.1888-90 as part of the Murchison to Rushworth railway line.

The current bridge over the Goulburn River at Murchison was erected between November 1935 and March 1937 (Figure 8). The works were prompted by the deteriorating condition of the previous timber structure, which also had a limited 5-ton load capacity. The original bridge superseded the punt service, and had been built in 1870, albeit 'seriously hampered by the biggest flood in the history of the Goulburn River'.⁶¹ It was built as a 15 span bridge, 375 feet in length and opened on 27 December 1871. Despite the expression of displeasure by the local residents at the toll imposed on bridge users, it was used by travellers and livestock alike. At one stage in 1873 'The largest drove of cattle that ever crossed the Murchison bridge' numbered 1230 'bovine species'.⁶² However, throughout its existence, the bridge remained a bone of contention to the Shires of Goulburn and Waranga. When a portion of the Goulburn Shire was excised in 1870 and Waranga imposed the toll on the bridge, Goulburn claimed that as they received nothing from the toll they would contribute nothing to the bridge's maintenance. This situation continued until the bridge fell into disrepair and was eventually replaced, fifty seven years later.

Funding of £11,250 for the 1935-7 bridge was provided by the Federal government. The work was undertaken by Johns and Waygood for the Country Roads Board. The main bridge span was fabricated in their workshop before being reassembled and riveted on site, and the steelwork for the approach span was welded together after erection. The old bridge was closed on 20 March 1937; the new bridge was officially opened by the Governor of Victoria, Lord Huntingfield, on 1 April 1937.

60 Jim McQualter and Elsie Brady, *Rodney Recollections: 1866-1986*, pp. 14-5.

61 Bossence, *Murchison*, op.cit., pp. 89-92.

62 Ibid., p. 91.

Agitation for a bridge over the Goulburn River at Toolamba had begun in 1888.⁶³ The Shire of Rodney Council, in conjunction with the Shire of Euroa, sent many deputations to government departments for financial assistance to construct the bridge, and negotiations continued for several years. In 1890 the estimated cost of the bridge was £7,500; however it was not until 1898 that tenders were called for the construction of the bridge. The cost was to be shared by the Public Works Department and the Shires of Rodney and Euroa.⁶⁴ It was not until 1900 that the bridge was finally completed and opened.

6.2 River Transport

The township of Shepparton came into existence because of its proximity to the Goulburn River. Patrick (Paddy) McGuire, considered by some to be 'a monopolist and rascal', operated a punt across the river from 1853, and an inn to accommodate travellers once they reached the other side.⁶⁵ A punt operated across the river until the railway arrived in 1880. The township was first known as McGuire's Punt, but was changed to Shepparton in 1855.⁶⁶

Paddle steamers operated on the Murray River from around 1853, and by the 1860s and 1870s trade was extended further along the rivers to Echuca and Shepparton. Seymour was also accessible along the inland river system.

However, it was not until the arrival of the Chaffey brothers, the American agriculturalists who began the irrigation scheme in Mildura in 1887, that steamers worked the river system more extensively. There were few bridges at the time, and during floods the steamer provided the only means to access the larger commercial centres, such as Shepparton.



Figure 8 Bridge over the Goulburn River, Murchison

63 McQualter and Brady, op.cit., p. 26.

64 Ibid., p. 26.

65 Ron Michael, *On McGuire's Punt: A Profile of Shepparton from Squatting to Solar City 1838-1988*, p. 6.

66 Les Blake, *Place Names of Victoria*, p. 239.

6.3 Railways

The development of colonial Australia can be traced through the development of its rail system. Railways ‘harnessed the energy of steam and the smoothness of iron rails’ to speed the carriage of people and goods across inland Australia.⁶⁷ They influenced the fortunes of towns and regions; became the colonies’ largest employers; transformed the relationship between town and country; and introduced new conceptions of distance, time and comfort.⁶⁸ From the first they were primarily agents of development rather than profit-making ventures. As historian Graeme Davison notes, ‘Railway policy, including decisions on where new lines should be built, how much should be borrowed to build them, and who employed to run them, became political questions, subject to the vagaries of factional alliances and the pressures of local lobby groups’.⁶⁹ Missing out on a railway could turn a flourishing centre into a ghost-town; but so could getting one, if local industries could not meet the competition of city-based manufacturers.

In Victoria, the first railways and proposals for lines were initiated by private enterprise. Andrew Ward proposes this occurred ‘shortly after the first settlement of Melbourne on the river Yarra’s banks in 1835’.⁷⁰ The pastoral industry that was quickly established in the Port



Figure 9 Loading fruit at the Mooroopna railway station, 1905
Source: reproduced from The Victoria Market

67 Graeme Davison ‘Railways’ in *Oxford Companion to Australian History*, op.cit., p. 547.

68 Davison, loc.cit.

69 Ibid, p. 548.

70 Andrew C Ward & Associates, *Study of Historic Railway Buildings and Structures for V/Line*, p. 10.

Phillip District provided the initial impetus for transport and communication systems. In March 1847, when Queen Victoria signed Orders-in-Council it also set down the terms on which Her Majesty's Government would grant land for railway construction purposes. This occurred, despite the fact that there was no provision for Government involvement in railway building. By 1850, private shareholders subscribed to a company established to build a line from Melbourne to Geelong. Separation from New South Wales on 1 July 1851 and the discovery of gold at Clunes and Warrandyte in August 1851, then Buninyong later in the year, had one major impact. These events ensured that the new colony of Victoria would now be opened up not only to pastoral and agricultural settlement, but to goldfield settlement, thereby connecting the goldfields with the seaboard. The birth of the railway system played a major role in this development.

During 1852-3 eight Victorian railway schemes were floated by private companies but only three of these received government approval. The Melbourne and Hobsons Bay Railway Company was the first railway in Australia. The railway system flourished in many parts of Melbourne and Victoria in the nineteenth century. In 1864, when a trial survey for a railway line to Albury was undertaken, proposals for a railway connection to the Goulburn Valley were mooted. At that time the only line servicing northern Victoria was the Melbourne-Echuca line. It was not until 1878 that the Legislative Assembly passed a Bill for the construction of a railway line which would connect Mangalore, Murchison East and Shepparton. The Shepparton Railway Station, on the Shepparton to Mooroopna line, was opened in January 1880. The Mooroopna Railway Station was opened in 1880; a goods shed and gatekeeper's cottage were erected in 1882. The first Shepparton Railway Station (1880) was destroyed by fire in 1908 and a new building completed in 1910. The extension of the line from Shepparton to Numurkah was opened in September 1881 and was eventually extended over the Murray



Figure 10 Murchison East Railway Station

River to Tocumwal. The Shepparton to Dookie line was commissioned in 1884 and opened to traffic in October 1888. It closed to passenger traffic in 1953. The arrival of rail to Mooroopna and Shepparton greatly enhanced the growth of the canneries in the Goulburn Valley. They also meant greater ease and reliability of transporting fruit and other produce to the Melbourne markets. The Murchison East Railway Station (1880), is of local historical significance as one of the few remaining structures associated with the Murchison East railway complex. It provides evidence of the expansion of the railway into the Goulburn Valley region in the late nineteenth century.

7.0 Developing Primary Industries – Grazing and Agriculture

The Goulburn Valley is sometimes referred to as the ‘Food Bowl of Australia’ as around twenty-five per cent of the total value of Victoria’s agricultural production is generated in this area (Figure 11).⁷¹ Originally the area was settled for grazing cattle, and the large pastoral runs, *Ardpatrick*, *Arcadia* and *Tallygaroopna*, were established for this reason.

When the selectors began opening up the land, they cleared the fertile ground and began growing wheat. The cultivation of wheat in turn meant the establishment of flour mills, scattered across the Goulburn Valley.

Initially, however

The selectors’ wheat crops were the raw materials for the flour mills, thus agriculture and industry for the first time joined forces to hold the communities together.⁷²

The improved and expanded irrigation scheme after 1910 turned the Goulburn Valley into land with far wider agricultural potential.⁷³ Fruit growing, vines, dairying and market gardens eventually replaced the wheat fields, and many of the mills were replaced with butter factories and fruit canning works.

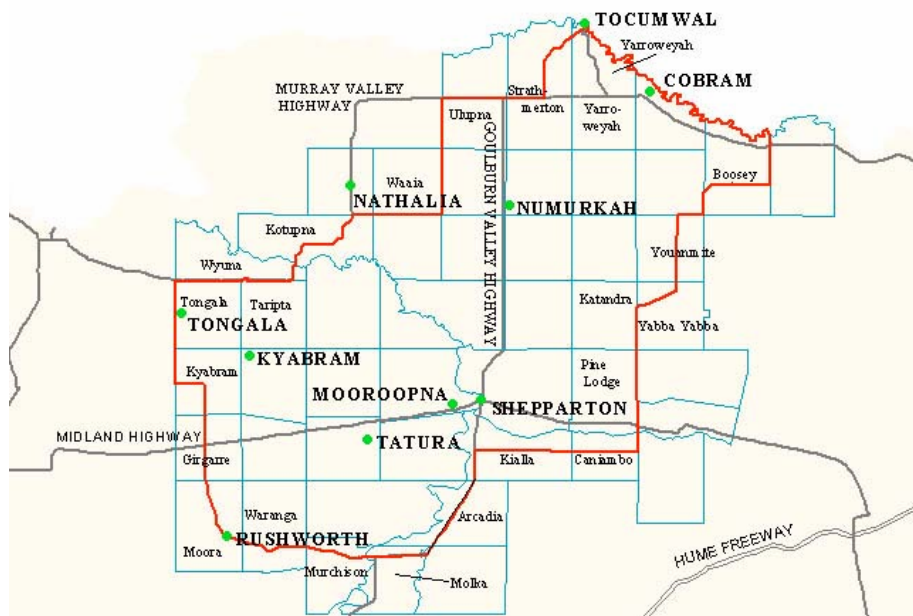


Figure 11 Goulburn Valley Agricultural Area
Source: www.nre.vic.gov.au

71 City of Greater Shepparton, www.shepparton.vic.gov.au

72 Myrtle L Ford. *Flour Mills and Millers of the Goulburn Valley 1858-1980*.

73 Lewis & Peggy Jones. *The Flour Mills of Victoria 1840-1990*, p. 190.

7.1 Wheat and Flour Mills

Once the selectors' arrived and cleared the fertile land of the Goulburn Valley and sowed their first crops, the rich soil was capable of producing high quality wheat, so the millers were soon finding demand for their product 'locally, in capital cities, and for export to Britain'.⁷⁴ With the arrival of the railways in Murchison, Mooroopna and Shepparton in 1880, transporting the grain from mills was easier and more efficient than long days of carting with bullock-drays. During the second half of the nineteenth century, many small flour mills existed and were scattered throughout the Goulburn Valley; however, the physical fabric of the many small flour mills has now disappeared from the landscape.

However, two mills in particular stand out in the district as remnants of the early industry. Perhaps the most well known mill to have survived is Day's Mill, also known as Noorilim Flour Mills. It is now owned by Parks Victoria and is listed on the *Victorian Heritage Register*. The mill was built in 1865 by William Day and is sometimes confused with the Murchison Flour Mill built in the town of Murchison by the Reilly Brothers in 1874. Day's Mill is significant to the City of Greater Shepparton because it is a rare example of nineteenth century steam powered technology. The mill employed six men, and the stables housed three six-horse teams to deliver flour, cleaned wheat, crushed oats, bran, pollard and chaff throughout the district (Figure 12).⁷⁵

Silos, used to store the milled wheat, are still visible in the municipality, and although only one silo was identified in the Stage One Study, many others exist – particularly in Dookie. The majestic presence of the silo building connects the past, nineteenth century industry, with the present technological age. Mooroopna's mill, established in 1872 by prominent local citizen, Elias Ralph, has the distinction of being the longest operating secondary industry in that town (Figure 13). Ralph constructed a brick building in 1872-73 on the site of the present silos.



Figure 12 *Flour Mill, Murchison*
Source: *Heritage Victoria*

74 Ford, op.cit., p. 4.

75 Jones, op.cit., p. 192.



Figure 13 Mooroopna Silos

In 1881 the mill was leased to William Frederick Ford, and in 1886 D M McLennan, Robert McBride and H M Sutherland, purchased the mill from Ralph for £1,500. Within a few years, McLennan had bought out his partners' interests and the business became a family affair involving sons, D M Junior, William and Rueben. The mill was converted from a stone grinder to a roller mill in 1889. It became one of the first mills to adopt the new technology in the Goulburn Valley, and business boomed as high quality flour was produced.

The new mill, which remains today, was constructed alongside the original building in 1904. A private railway siding within the property was established in 1920 and the company prospered throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In 1944 a landmark concrete silo, with a capacity of 90,000 bushels was constructed. The post-War boom, lasting up until the mid-1960s was the mill's busiest period. A stock-feed plant had been established in 1956, however a decline in flour trade has meant that the subsequent owners, Ridley Agriproducts, now specialise in stockfeed rather than flour milling.

7.2 Grazing

The dairy industry is the largest industry across the region, and has grown substantially during the last decade.

Before 1870, the produce of Victorian dairymen was restricted in its market outlets. Export was not feasible. The local market was subject to severe seasonal price fluctuations resulting from variations in supply.⁷⁶ Spring prices for butter were 'often below 6d per pound, and the

⁷⁶ Arnold, op.cit., p. 316.

autumn-winter prices were as high as 2s 6d per pound'.⁷⁷ These conditions did little to encourage the development of land for dairying, particularly as most of the best country for the purpose was the heavily timbered and inaccessible country of western Gippsland. The 1869 *Grant Act*, followed by the 1884 *Land Act* encouraged early free selectors to settle in the Goulburn Valley from the 1870s through until the early 1880s.

Early settlement in this area was based on cattle and sheep grazing. However, dairy farming brought quick returns for money, and only small portions of the selection was required to graze at least a few head of cattle until the remainder of the land was cleared.

Dairies were initially unhygienic places, and it was not until the 1880s and 1890s when three major technological breakthroughs occurred, that the quality of butter and cheese production became more consistent and therefore reliable. The cream separator was introduced in 1891, and local farmers soon found that the best method was to separate milk on their farm then send the cream only to the factory to be made into butter.⁷⁸ Refrigeration also played a major role in the advancement of butter and cheese production. Additionally, when the Victorian Government appointed its first dairy expert in the late 1880s, it also set up the Vegetable Products Commission to collect information and to make recommendations on several industries, including dairying.⁷⁹

Dairying was well established by the late nineteenth century, and in 1894 a factory calling itself the 'Shepparton and District Co-Operative Butter and Cheese and Ice Factory Ltd, was built.⁸⁰ It became a limited company and capital was subscribed by suppliers and local residents. A steam creamery operated at Pine Lodge, separating cream from the whole milk. The cream was retained for transport to the butter factory and the skim milk kept for the supplier. The Tatura Butter Factory was founded in 1907; it was officially opened in 1908. The Factory was the first business in Tatura to generate electricity for the production of its butter. After World War One, an influx of dairymen from Gippsland arrived in the Goulburn Valley, and their experience enhanced the butter production in their adopted area.



Figure 14 Tatura Butter Factory
Source: State Library of Victoria Pictures Collection

77 Arnodl, loc.cit.

78 *Land of the Lyrebird*, op.cit., p. 243.

79 Arnold, op.cit., p. 316.

80 V E Vibert, 'Dairying', *Shepparton Past and Present*, n.p.

7.3 Abattoirs

The early settlement of Victoria was prompted by pastoral ambition, and by 1836 there were 41,000 sheep and a growing number of squatters settling the then Port Phillip District. The fertile pastures of the Goulburn Valley attracted squatters from New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land in the 1840s. Sheep were grown for their wool and meat, and cattle were grown for meat and milk.

In the early days of the industry, killing houses were built on their properties, and farmers slaughtered their own meat. The first saleyards were erected by one of the earliest butchers in Shepparton, at the corner of Wyndham and Vaughan Streets in the 1870s. In the 1890s the Shire Council financed the building of the Shepparton Municipal Saleyards, though this was later closed. The first freezing works were not established until 1914, and lambs were frozen for export.⁸¹ The Shepparton Freezing Works was burnt down in 1919 and rebuilt later in 1920. The operation closed in 1922 but was reopened in 1928 when the new owner, Mrs Marie Dalley, began canning rabbits for export and making ice. An abattoir had existed in Tatura since the 19XXs, and by 1959 had handled 27,592 head of cattle.⁸² After taking a poll of ratepayers' wishes, the Shire Council built an abattoir adjacent to its new saleyards in the new Dookie Road in 1935, and the district was proclaimed a meat killing area.⁸³ Stock slaughtered during 1936-37 were – oxen 2,432; cattle – 617; sheep – 13,767 and pigs – 1,169.⁸⁴

The new Shepparton Abattoir was built in 1966 because of the need to extend and improve the service and facilities; and because of the establishment and operation of the Campbell's Soups factory at Lemnos. Campbell's had been assured that local killing facilities would be available to assist them with their demands for fresh meat. The abattoir became a financial burden for the Council, who soon sought financial assistance from the State government. Following years of maintaining unmanageable debt, and a number of Bills, Acts and Amendments to the constitution of the abattoir, the abattoir was sold to the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission in 1971 who then sold it to Consolidated Meat Holdings who operated the abattoir under the trading name of Goval Meat Holdings. In 1971 the company slaughtered 750 cattle and 8,500 lambs per week; by 1977 they employed 620 people, making it one of the largest employers in the Goulburn Valley. ...

7.4 The Wine Industry

The arrival in Victoria of Charles Joseph La Trobe, encouraged many Swiss, French and German winemakers to travel to the Colony in search of suitable land to grow vines. La Trobe had married Sophie de Montmollin, daughter of the Swiss nobleman, Frédéric Auguste de Montmollin, in 1835. In the 1840s Swiss settlers first established small vineyards, mainly near Geelong. The German immigrants influenced grape-growing in the north-east of Victoria, especially on the Murray River at Albury. However, it was the French winemaker, Ludovic Marie, whose Chateau Tabilk vineyard at Nagambie, is the oldest surviving vineyard in what is now known as the Goulburn Valley Winery district.

Originally publican of the Punt Hotel in Murchison, Marie operated the first punt across the Goulburn River from 1855. His aim was to capture the passing gold trade from diggers trekking between the Ovens Valley and the Golden Triangle. He sold the hotel in 1860 to manage the Goulburn Vineyard Proprietary Company, later known as The Tahbilk Vineyard and Chateau Tahbilk. This is indeed the oldest winery in Victoria, and is known for its large

81 Sue Wallace. *Shepparton Shire Reflections*, p. 74.

82 Bossence. *Tatura*, op.cit., p. 46.

83 Wallace, op.cit., p. 74.

84 Ibid.

underground cellar, huge timber vats and bell-tower. Though Tahbilk lies just outside the study area, it is significant for its historic association with Marie and Murchison.

The Longleat Estate, situated on the west bank of the Goulburn River at Murchison, is a relatively new vineyard, established in the late 1970s. It produces shiraz and cabernet sauvignon grapes for premium red wines, and Semillon and Riesling grapes for white wines.

One further reminder of the early winemaking associated with the City of Greater Shepparton, is 'The Chateau' at Dookie. Constructed in 1886 for John Curtain, MLA for North Melbourne in 1871-1877, it was built by local builders Alexander and Torgrimson. Curtain had purchased the Dookie Vineyard Company in 1885, subsequently undertaking an expansion of the vineyard by purchasing adjacent land and replanting most of the vines. At its peak of production, the estate comprised over 2,000 acres, and for a number of years during the 1890s it laid claim to being the largest vineyard in Australia. The vineyard was known as 'the Chateau' and soon the house was also referred to as 'the Chateau'. The house incorporated special features in response to hot climatic conditions – these included verandahs along all four sides, and a connection taking water pumped from a well to a spray on the roof. The tower access gained from a timber staircase, and was reputedly used by Curtain to watch over his employees in the vineyards below. At the rear of the building there was a courtyard with kitchen, pantry, bathroom, servants quarters and stables. The house was furnished with fine furniture including carpets from Brussels, fine oil paintings, stained glass, and cut glass door knobs. To finance his expansion of the vineyard, Curtain had borrowed from the Bank of Victoria, however, the depression of the 1890s left him in heavily in debt. He was unable to repay the loan and the estate was subsequently taken over by the Bank of Victoria in 1892-3. It then became the residence of the successive winery managers, Francois de Castella and W C Bayliss until the vineyard's closure in 1909. It has remained a family residence since that time.⁸⁵

8.0 Developing Secondary Industries

8.1 Shepparton's first industry – the famous Furphy

The word 'furphy' entered the Australian lexicon during the First World War. Water carts, designed by John Hare Furphy of Shepparton and bearing his name, were used to take water to soldiers on the front at Gallipoli and France. The cart drivers, who were reputedly gossips who often spread wild stories – hence the term 'furphy' came to be understood to mean a rumour or falsehood. Furphy had moved to Shepparton during the 1870s and set up a blacksmithing work and foundry. In the pre-irrigation days, Furphy devised a method of carting water, and designed the portable tank in two sizes – 180 and 250 gallon capacities. Because the tanks were to be transported by horse, the 180 gallon tank became the most popular because, when it was filled, it weighted about a ton which was 'a fair load for a good horse'.⁸⁶

By 1888, Furphy & Sons employed thirty-eight men and boys in their foundry works and it had become the most extensive business of its kind in northern Victoria. In 1906 the business moved from Wyndham Street to a site opposite the railway station – the plant was modernised and electricity installed. The company relocated to New Dookie Road in 1978. Project engineering and fabrication remain the business's core activity, although it is now working on developing skills and infrastructure for stainless steel, aluminium and mild steel fabrication.

Furphy is described as a 'pious' man who enjoyed a long association with the Methodist Church in Shepparton. This strict Methodist work ethic may have guided his business principles and those of his sons and grandsons who took over from him. The business has remained a family one, retaining the core values attributed to the founder, John Furphy.

85 *Dookie: the years to 1988*, pp. 43-8.

86 www.furphys.com.au/wcinfo.html

8.2 Fruit Preserving

By 1915, fruit production in the Goulburn Valley had grown to such an extent because of the availability of water through the use of irrigation that it now posed a dilemma for the growers – what to do with the excess produce that they could not sell at the markets in Melbourne and elsewhere. The solution to preserve it led to the formation of the Shepparton Fruit Preserving Company (SPC) in 1918. After initially recording a loss, mainly due to the use of primitive canning methods, SPC (as it became known), Chairman, Andrew Fairley, began improving the factory and its processes. The first year of the factory had produced 432,000 cans of product – but by the late 1930s, it was producing 10.7 million cans per year.⁸⁷ The company continued to prosper, increasing its product range, turnover and staff, until the economic recession of the late 1980s saw SPC, like many other Australian companies, facing large financial losses. The Ardmona cannery at Mooroopna had begun operation in the 1920s and continued to operate for the next eighty years.

The economic health and livelihood of the district may have been seriously effected if the SPC cannery had closed, and it is perhaps because of this that staff and community support ensured its continued existence. In January 2002, SPC and Ardmona joined forces to become known as SPC Ardmona Limited, one of the largest canneries in Australia.

In 1962, following extensive research into the best location for such a production facility, Campbell's Soups opened a plant at Lemnos, further reinforcing the image of the Goulburn Valley as a viable location for the food industry. The new plant offered employment opportunities for locals, as did the building of the channels and pipelines to supply water to the plant. It proved to be one of the biggest single operations undertaken by the Shepparton Water Trust and the Shepparton Sewage Authority.⁸⁸

There are currently almost 1,000 hectares of new orchard plantings in the region, and the net total of fruit trees in the Goulburn Valley has risen to 4.6 million trees. Other areas of agriculture to have shown major growth are the viticulture and tomato industries.⁸⁹

8.3 Manufacturing, Construction and Other Industries

In recent years, the road transport industry has become one of the largest industries and employers in Greater Shepparton. Its annual turnover in the local economy accounts for approximately \$500 million per annum and is responsible for over 1,050 direct jobs. Shepparton is country Victoria's largest truck sales and service centre and is often referred to as the 'transport hub' of regional Australia. The movement of freight from the area is massive, with some 12,000 containers each year being handled through the Mooroopna freight hub.⁹⁰

Employment and industry within the City of Greater Shepparton can be divided into six major categories, including Manufacturing, Construction, the Retail Trade, Property and Business, Education, Health and Community Services. In some sectors, such as the Manufacturing industry, statistics for Greater Shepparton reveal that in this region a greater percentage of the workforce (16.5%) is engaged in manufacturing than the Victorian average (15.7%). On the other hand, Greater Shepparton (6.8%) is substantially below the Victorian average for those working in the Property and Business services (11.1%). This may also be a reflection of the high level of primary and secondary industries established in the area.

87 'SPC preserved despite troubles' in *Our Century*, op.cit., p. 66.

88 'Irrigation aids development' in *Our Century*, ibid., p. 68.

89 www.shepparton.vic.gov.au/issues/profile.htm

90 Ibid.

9.0 Educating

9.1 Primary & Secondary Education

Preliminary attempts were made to establish schools in the newly settled Goulburn Valley from as early as 1842. The government concluded that elementary education was necessary to create a literate, numerate, and orderly citizenry; the first schools were both privately run and denominational.⁹¹ By the 1850s, it became clear that these attempts were insufficient, and the government began to fund the building and staffing of elementary schools, and established bureaucracies to supervise them.

The 1862 *Common Schools Act* provided state aid to schools, but the minimum requirement of sixty students prevented the establishment of remoter rural schools. By the 1870s, wearying of the conflict between the churches and the intractability of the disputes over religious instruction, governments withdrew state aid from church schools and religious instruction from the curriculum in government schools.⁹² The *Education Act* of 1872 decreed that all schools would henceforth become ‘free, compulsory and secular’.⁹³

Prior to the *Education Act* 1872, seven common and three private schools existed in the whole Goulburn Region. Only one of these, a Presbyterian school at Murchison, was located within the boundaries of the present City of Greater Shepparton. Land selection, railways, irrigation, and later closer settlement caused a great land rush which coincided with the *Act*, and by 1883, one hundred and twenty eight new State schools had opened in the northern Victorian region. The Murchison Primary School had been established in 1859, and when it was proposed a new site be selected for the school, land in Impey Street was acquired for this purpose in 1901. A new school was built and was officially opened by the Director of Education, Frank Tate in 1906.

The first formal education in Mooroopna was given by William Crimp, a selector, in 1873 in his hut, located a few kilometres west of the present school. In 1874 two acres (0.81 hectares) of land were donated by local businessman, William Archer, and a small timber building was erected. Within two years, however, this proved unsatisfactory and a three-classroom brick building with slate roof was constructed by John Mills. It opened in 1877 as Mooroopna State School No 1432 (Figure 15).

9.2 Higher Education

The City of Greater Shepparton became a ‘university city’ in the 1990s when two major Victorian universities – La Trobe campus and GOTAFE and The University of Melbourne’s Rural Health course – relocated teaching facilities to Shepparton. The Dookie Agricultural College had already become part of the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Horticulture, University of Melbourne.

With three campuses located within the Shire, it has become an education precinct, attracting students to the rural setting and hoping to minimise the departure of university students to Melbourne, other regions of the State or interstate.⁹⁴ The industry currently employs approximately 6.1%⁹⁵ of labour within the City of Greater Shepparton.

91 L J Blake, (ed.), *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria*, Volume 1.

92 R J W Selleck, ‘Education’, in *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, pp. 207-8.

93 Blake, op.cit., Volume 1, pp. 195-207.

94 Strategic Plan for Shepparton’s Development as a University City, n.d., p. 8.

95 This is a median figure, calculated from Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 employment figures Greater Shepparton, Part A, Part B, and Part C. Part A, Education Industry, 6.8%; Part B, 7%. Part C, 4.6%.



Figure 15 Mooroopna Primary School No. 1432



Figure 16 Murchison Primary School

9.2.1 Dookie Agricultural College

In 1875, as a result of the efforts of the Secretary of Agriculture, Alexander Robert Wallis, an area of Crown Land in the Parish of Dookie was reserved for an experimental farm.⁹⁶ This became known as the Cashel Experimental Farm and originally consisted of 1,938 hectares. Dookie Agricultural College commenced its operation on 4 October 1886, under the auspices of the Council of Agricultural Education, following the implementation of the *Agricultural Education Act*, 1884. The College offered a two year course for students over the age of 14 years who had completed a satisfactory State School education. The two year course continued from 1886 to 1910. The three year Diploma of Education was introduced with the intake of students in 1911; it continued as a Diploma course until 1966.

⁹⁶ *Dookie: the Years to 1988*, op.cit., p. 32.



Figure 17 Dookie Agricultural College, 1886
Source: University of Melbourne

In 1945, control of the Victorian Agricultural Colleges passed from the Council of Agricultural Education to the newly created Division of Agricultural Education within the Department of Agriculture.⁹⁷ The three year Diploma of Agricultural Science (Dip. Agr. Sc.), introduced in 1966, replaced the Diploma of Agriculture (D.D.A.). The change of name to the Diploma of Agricultural Science meant a further elevation of entrance requirements to 16 years and passes in five Leaving Certificate subjects. Studentships, which had existed from the 1940s, were no longer restricted to males. In 1973 the first female students were admitted to the Diploma course – from the mid-1990s they have made up one quarter of the total student population.

From 1983 until 1985 Dookie was a campus of the Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture. The University of Melbourne and the College signed a formal agreement in 1989 to seek affiliation. The amalgamation took place in July 1992 and in 1995 it became a campus of the Faculty of Agriculture Forestry and Horticulture, The University of Melbourne. The campus is part of the 2,240 hectares of farm which includes broad-acre cropping, lamb and beef enterprises, dairying and an intensive piggery as well as 20 hectares of orchards and vineyards. Staff and students are accommodated either on the campus or in the town of Dookie and add to the life of that small town.

9.2.2 Department of Rural Health and Rural Clinical School

The Shepparton campus of The University of Melbourne's Department of Rural Health and the Rural Clinical School offers under-graduate and post-graduate courses, and this year was open to medical students. The campus is located at Graham Street, Shepparton.

9.2.3 Goulburn Ovens College of TAFE

The Goulburn Ovens College of TAFE was officially formed in October 1996 through the amalgamation of the Goulburn Valley and Wangaratta Institutes of TAFE. The institute's primary focus is directly related to the livelihood of the area; courses in agriculture, horticulture, building studies, pruning and waste management are taught. It aims 'to assist in the economic development of the north east Goulburn region through education and training'.⁹⁸

The TAFE operates two campuses, one in Fryers Street, Shepparton, the other is located at the 120 hectare property Wanganui Homestead, Shepparton (Figure 18). This site is named the William Orr Campus. Wanganui Homestead was the home of the mining entrepreneur and politician William Orr (1843-1929).⁹⁹ Born in Ayrshire, Scotland, the son of William Orr,

97 dookwww.landfood.unimelb.edu.au, 15/08/02.

98 www.gotafe.vic.edu.au., 15/08/02.

99 Geoff Browne. 'William Orr (1843-1929)' in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 11,

farmer, the family had migrated to Victoria in 1852, and spent the next ten years on the Castlemaine and Daylesford goldfields. Following a brief sojourn to Queensland with his father, Orr joined the Beechworth stock and station agents, J H Gray & Co., and when they opened a Wangaratta branch, Orr moved there and became active in local affairs. Elected to the Wangaratta Borough Council in 1875, he served as mayor in 1878-9; and was secretary of the Ovens and Murray Agricultural Society for seven years.¹⁰⁰

Orr's interest in mining led him further afield; he tried his luck with the silver mines at Broken Hill, becoming an original shareholder in Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd. and by 1888 was 'riding on the boom' there. He took up 15,000 shares in the newly formed Mount Lyell Mining Co and became a director of that firm. However, Orr retained his links with north-east Victoria and in 1895 purchased a grain and sheep farm near Shepparton. He built the homestead and coach house around 1900, using local bricks. It is unclear why the homestead was named Wanganui, though it is possible he travelled to New Zealand during his extensive world tour in 1895.

In 1901 he was elected unopposed to the Victorian Legislative Council at a by-election for North-Eastern Province but did not seek re-election in 1904. He died at his home in Toorak in February 1929; his wife had predeceased him and his estate was largely bequeathed to relatives and friends.¹⁰¹



Figure 18 Wanganui Homestead, now home of the Goulburn Ovens College of TAFE

pp. 97-8.

100 Browne, *ibid.*, p. 98.

101 Browne, *loc.cit.*

10.0 Worshipping

Religious practice was integral to the lives of the first pioneers and colonists. To the squatters, selectors and other settlers of the Australia colonies, religion provided a framework for their life and work. Churches were one of the first buildings to be erected as soon as any township began to be formed. Land was set aside for the major denominations to build churches when the parishes were first surveyed. It is not surprising then, to find that Stage One of this Thematic Environmental History identified twenty-five churches within the City of Greater Shepparton as items of potential heritage significance.

10.1 Protestants, Catholics and non-Christians

Most of the main denominational churches had been established in the City of Greater Shepparton by the late nineteenth century, and churches were evident in small and large towns alike. The Church of England provided religious services from 1875; the Presbyterian Church was active from 1878; the Baptist Church held services in Ardmona and North Mooroopna; and the Salvation Army opened a place of worship in Tatura in 1889. Tatura, according to its historian, believes that, more than any other town in the region, has a reputation as a ‘Catholic town’.¹⁰² The Catholic Church has erected impressive buildings in Tatura on both sides of Hogan Street.

According to the *Register of the National Estate*, the Sacred Heart Church is ‘an integral part of the complex and the community as a whole’ (Figure 19).¹⁰³ St Mary’s Church, the Convent of



Figure 19 Sacred Heart Church, Tatura

102 Bossence, *Tatura*, op.cit., p. 208.

103 Sacred Heart Church, Tatura, Register of the National Estate, Database Number 004473; File Number 2/7/220/0001.

Mercy, the Sacred Heart School and St Mary's College provide a strong focus for a large cross-section of the community.

Greater Shepparton's spiritual growth has not been confined to Christianity. The long tradition of immigration to the Goulburn Valley has resulted in the establishment of two Muslim mosques in the past forty years.

These, however, were not identified as sites of potential significance in Stage One of this Study. The first mosque was built in Shepparton in 1960. The local Albanian Muslim community was responsible for building this mosque, making Shepparton one of the few Victorian country cities with a place of worship for Muslims.¹⁰⁴ The mosque is attended by Turkish, Egyptian and Pakistani worshippers. The second mosque, in Mooroopna, was established in 1987 and also caters to Turkish speaking Muslims.

The Murchison Masonic Lodge, originally established in 1872, continued to meet until 1885 in its original location at the Bridge Hotel. The present Masonic Temple was dedicated in 1935 (Figure 20).

The major religious denominations across the region remain the Protestant and Catholic faiths. Their influence on the physical fabric of the study area is perhaps easier to determine than on the overall philosophic or moral character of the region. Suffice to say that the larger and smaller towns appear to exhibit a strong work ethic, as well as very frequently, tight-knit communities, often, perhaps joined by the traditions of their religious practice.



Figure 20 Murchison Masonic Lodge

104 'Islam makes its mark', in *Our Century: The Growth of a Community*, in Shepparton News, 19 October 1999, p. 62.

11.0 Recreation and Leisure

Whatever the circumstances of their lives – whether they were the early pioneers and settlers of the region, those who migrated from different parts of Victoria or other colonies, or the later immigrants from other lands, the residents of the City of Greater Shepparton have always enjoyed many forms of casual and competitive sporting activities, as well as different forms of culture and the arts. Parkland reserves, former parcels of Crown Land, allocated for the recreation and amusement of residents, were set aside in the nineteenth century, and some still exist within the municipality. Bowling and croquet greens, hockey and tennis courts, football and cricket, water skiing and golf – have been and continue to be enjoyed as part of the lifestyle of this region.

11.1 Eating, Drinking and More: the role of the country ‘pub’

Pubs and hotels have played a major role in the creation of an Australian culture and have, at the same time, been the centres of neighbourhood social activity.¹⁰⁵ The three distinctive types of public houses that originated in England – the ‘inn’ which provided accommodation; the ‘tavern’ providing wine and spirits; and the ‘alehouse’ selling only beer¹⁰⁶ – have been combined in the Australian setting to become a new institution often known and referred to as the local pub. The pub has also been shaped, in part, by patterns of work and leisure, in part by the breweries which, through ownership or contract, bound pubs to sell their products. Pubs have also spearheaded settlement into previously un-colonised parts of the continent.¹⁰⁷

Stage One of this Heritage Study has identified ten hotels as items of potential heritage significance within the City of Greater Shepparton. This link between the past and the present illustrates two important aspects of the development of the district. It reminds us firstly that rivers – and crossing them – were the impetus for further exploration of new grazing pastures, especially in the early squatting period of Victoria’s history. It also demonstrates that country pubs and hotels have served many purposes, and with many of them located on riverbanks, they remain as testimony to their multi-faceted existence. Rivers and waterfronts were key factors in the siting of hotels.¹⁰⁸ From 1840, publicans often owned and operated punts at river fords. On the banks of the Goulburn River, from 1853, Patrick (Paddy) McGuire operated a punt on one side, and on the other a hotel to accommodate those who had crossed. Pubs proliferated in the new colony and in the new townships. Many of the earliest pubs were family businesses, sometimes run by a woman alone, either as a pub or as a sly-grog shop – often combined with a type of general store. Under whichever guise, they offered food, refreshments and accommodation to the traveller – and employment to many women where it may not otherwise have been available.

Gregory’s Bridge Hotel in Murchison, located on the banks of the Goulburn River, (Figure 21) was built between 1865-8. It was not the earliest hotel in Murchison, the first thought to have been Punt Hotel (opened in 1854).¹⁰⁹ Originally known as Thorne’s Bridge Hotel and Store it became Gregory’s Bridge Hotel after its ownership had been transferred to E J Gregory by the 1890s.¹¹⁰ This country hotel comprises a large general store as part of the building, with stables at the rear and remnants of the garden – including the vast specimen of a London Plane tree (*Platanus x acerifolia*), planted in 1913 which stands between the hotel and the road. Gregory’s was extended in 1894 and 1905, the 1905 works including the addition of an upper

105 Diane Kirkby, ‘Hotels’, in *Oxford Companion to Australian History*, op.cit., pp. 539-40.

106 Ibid., p. 539.

107 Ibid., p. 539.

108 Chris McConville and Associates, *Hotels in Victoria Thematic typology*, p. vii.

109 Heritage Victoria, VHR Number H963.

110 Ibid.



Figure 21 Gregory's Bridge Hotel

level to the rear of the building. The hotel was the focus of local events in the district and is also patronised by tourists to the area, commercial travellers and the locals. Memorable events at the hotel include a special luncheon for the Governor of Victoria, Lord Huntingfield, held while he was visiting Murchison in Easter 1937 to open the new Goulburn River bridge. It remains an historic symbol of the importance of hotels in the late nineteenth century Australia.¹¹¹

11.2 Casual and Competitive Sport

Cricket and football, both popular games across Victoria, were played in Greater Shepparton as much as in any other locality around the State. The grandstand at the Mooroopna Recreation Reserve reminds us of the continuing participation of local families and sporting clubs in both of these enduring Australian sporting activities.

11.3 Culture and the Arts

The Shepparton Art Gallery was established in 1936 with the help of Sir John Longstaff, 'a fashionable portrait painter who spent his youth in the region'.¹¹² Longstaff had grown up in Toolamba where his father was a storekeeper. The gallery is said to hold one of the largest public collections of historical and contemporary ceramics in Australia.

12.0 Migration and Immigration

Immigration, whether independent, assisted, or refugee, has profoundly shaped, and continues to shape, Australian society.¹¹³ The earliest European arrivals were not migrants, of course; rather, they were reluctant exiles, convicts and their warders. The first free persons who accompanied the convicts and stayed on, or who migrated in the 1820s and 1830s to take advantage of free

111 Ibid.

112 http://amol.org.au/art_trails/Shepparton/

113 John Lack, 'Immigration', in *Oxford Companion to Australian History*, op.cit., pp. 340-1.

land and labour, thought of themselves as ‘colonists’ or ‘settlers’. By 1850 there were 187,000 free migrants in Australia, most had their passage paid from the proceeds of the colonial land sales.¹¹⁴ From 32,879 in 1846, the population of Port Phillip jumped to 77,345 in 1851.¹¹⁵ This was mainly due to assisted British migration to the new colony. This form of assisted passage continued for 150 years and had a profound influence on the attitude of the growing country to migrants from other parts of the world.

The gold rushes of 1851 onwards saw substantial numbers of other European and non-European migrants arriving in the colony and rushing to the goldfields in Bendigo, Ballarat and Rushworth. Chinese immigrants, made up 4.58% of non-European immigrants and became the largest group of migrants to the goldfields.¹¹⁶ However, this was at a time when their presence generated resentment among the Europeans and native-born Australian miners who were suspicious of the Chinese, especially for their unfamiliar dress and habits. They suffered attacks and violence and were forced to pay an annual residential tax of £1 as well as an entry tax or, as it was known, a poll tax, of £10. Anti-Chinese sentiment continued unabated through until the late nineteenth century by which time the Chinese community mounted a legal challenge to the government’s actions. Their initial win was overturned, ‘recognising the colonies’ rights to control immigration’.¹¹⁷ Opposition to the Chinese immigrants was one manifestation of the racism then present in the Australian culture. Many of the early Chinese gold-seekers would have passed through Shepparton on their way to the goldfields; some became market-gardeners in the Tatura area.

12.1 Pre- and Post-War Immigration

Opportunities for a new life have continued to bring migrants from many parts of the world to the City of Greater Shepparton. As well as British and German migrants, by 1913 immigrants were arriving from Palestine, and Jews were seeking refuge from Russia. In addition to these, a number of Albanian and Greek settlers arrived in Shepparton in the 1930s. They contributed greatly to the district’s fruit and canning industries by establishing orchards.¹¹⁸ Shepparton’s first Muslim Mosque was built in 1960.

Immigrants from Italy and Yugoslavia were the next to arrive in large numbers into the Goulburn Valley region during and following the Second World War. They were followed in the late 1940s by Lithuanians, Latvian, Estonian and Macedonian immigrants ‘eager to start new lives’ away from war-torn Europe. As historian Ron Michael explains, in the main they gravitated to the land where orchards, market gardens and wineries ‘formed a link with the lifestyle of their homelands’.¹¹⁹ A number of these migrants built up their agricultural pursuits, increasing the number of orchards and developing a strong tomato production industry. In later years they also excelled in dairying.

Dutch, Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipino and Turkish immigrants have continued to arrive and settle in the City of Shepparton. The 1990s saw the mix change in response to the changing locations of conflict around the world. In 1999 Shepparton agreed to take a large number of refugees from Iraq and Bosnia, Kosovar and East Timor. This decision is thought to have greatly enhanced the lives of the remainder of the community.

114 Lack, *ibid.*, p. 340.

115 Garden, *op.cit.*, p. 41.

116 *Ibid.*, p. 80.

117 *Ibid.*, p. 254.

118 ‘Migrants Arrive’ in ‘Our Century: The Growth of a Community’, *Shepparton News*, 19 October 1999.

119 Ron Michael. *On McGuire’s Punt*, p. 128.

13.0 Internment

The availability of plentiful supplies of food and water in Northern Victoria during the Second World War may in part explain the choice of the Goulburn Valley for the creation of the Prisoner of War and Internment camps in Murchison and Tatura. By an agreement between the United Kingdom and Australian governments, Murchison was chosen for a camp to hold 4,000 German and Italian prisoners of war, captured in North Africa and the Middle East. The Tatura group of camps held approximately 12,000 – 13,000 men, women and children of twenty-three nationalities, both prisoners and internees. Upon their arrival, for accommodation purposes, they were often housed according to their nationality.

The inmates of the different camps, whether Italian Prisoners of War, or men, women or children interned as enemy aliens for the duration of hostilities, had to find meaningful activities to occupy their days. Camp leaders were appointed to direct activities; domestic work – such as cleaning and cooking – was assigned to groups. Gardening, clothes making, building furniture, and making toys for children, were some of the daily activities undertaken by the prisoners.

To a certain extent, the prisoners lived for four or five years in a secluded world. Whilst letters from home were rare, many did manage to get through eventually. The prisoners, most of whom were German, northern European or Italian, had to amuse themselves while detained. Many studied through correspondence courses and gained an education. Sport became a large part of many prisoners' lives, and especially for children – games such as football, soccer, gymnastics, athletics, tennis and golf – were all played on a regular basis.

Although there were attempted break-outs – some of them successful – it would appear that the conditions the prisoners lived under were not unduly severe. Many of the Italian prisoners were released into the community to work on farms in the area – and indeed some former Prisoners of War returned to Australia as migrants after their release. Little remains today of the physical fabric of these prisoner of war and internment camps. The Museum at Tatura, however, documents through photographs, clothing, and other artefacts, the lifestyle endured by the many thousands of prisoners. The German war cemetery at Tatura and the Italian mausoleum, Ossario, at Murchison, remain as tangible links with the war experience

13.1 Murchison – Prisoner of War Camps No. 1 and 13

From May 1941, Camp No. 13 was developed, with Dhurringile as its annexe.¹²⁰ The historic homestead, Dhurringile, became the home of German army officers and their batmen. Little remains of the former Camp No. 13 in Murchison. The high security camp consisted of an octagonal shaped plan, divided into four compounds. The entrance is marked by a stone gateway; nearby the remains of a single storey sentry box can still be seen.

Compound A, Camp No. 1 was established in 1940 on land owned by John B Noonan near the Waranga Basin Inlet. Sixty three German internees were transferred 5km from 'Dhurringile' to the camp containing 14 huts, two mess halls, and open wash house, shower room and latrine. One hut was used as an orderly room and another, the temporary camp hospital. By 1943 sanitation was connected and the camp became the Australian Army Administration Camp and Hospital. Later additions and amenities were established, including lush stone-terraced gardens. The Germans were also joined there by Italians. Compound B was later established to the east when 640 local German internees were transferred from across Australia. Following Germany's surrender in 1945, the camps were decommissioned and by 1948 all buildings had been removed.

120 Michael, op.cit., p. 61.

13.2 Dhurringile

This mansion was built by James Winter in the early 1870s, after the great Goulburn flood of 1870 washed away Winter's original homestead. It was completed in 1877 and cost £30,000. It had sixty-five rooms planned in suites and a huge entrance hall which could accommodate one hundred dancers.¹²¹ There are four underground rooms at the east of the house where the Winters planned to retire on hot days. The home included extensive outbuildings, stabling and a woolshed as a memorial to the days when the estate supported 50,000 head of sheep. The house remained in the family until the Second World War when it was acquired by the Commonwealth Government as accommodation for German prisoners of war. It housed German officers and their batmen.

The house was surrounded by barbed-wire to retain the German internees. There are reports of escape tunnels constructed by prisoners. After the War, in 1947, the Presbyterian church purchased the property for use as a home for immigrant boys and in 1965 the State government purchased the building and 116 acres of land for a minimum security prison (Figure 22).

14.0 Commemorating the Dead – Cemeteries and Memorials

There is, however, no doubt that as Australians develop their interest in the history of their country and of their families, ... cemeteries are becoming increasingly popular and appreciated more than ever before. ... Cemeteries not only help us to understand our past, but also provide for us a sense of continuity and identity.¹²²

The practice of burying and commemorating deceased loved ones has existed in Australia since the first days of settlement. In Australia, as in Britain, the first Christian burials were predominantly within churchyards. Permanent cemeteries, following the British tradition, were laid out according to denomination. Early pioneers, influential residents, war heroes and others remain memorialised within the landscape in order to connect the past with the present

Because of the devastating losses on Gallipoli from 25 April 1915, the ANZACs have become enshrined in Australian history.¹²³ With the outpouring of grief following the Gallipoli landing, and the subsequent major loss of life, it is not surprising that memorials to the war dead of any district were quickly subscribed to. Physical memorials, often in the form of an obelisk, and also avenues of honour, were erected in nearly every town across Victoria; indeed they exist throughout the Australian landscape.

Of particular significance to the City of Greater Shepparton, is the diversity of memorials found in this municipality. Stage One of this Heritage Study identified six memorial sites. Not only do the physical symbols and memorials commemorate Aboriginal and European settlement of the land, they directly connect the landscape with the Italian and Germans who came to Australia and died here as Prisoners of War or internees. These two groups leave behind the physical manifestation of their own heritage in the form of two memorials to their war dead. Indeed, of only three war memorials erected in Australia to commemorate overseas soldiers and war dead, two are located within the City of Greater Shepparton – the other, the memorial to Japanese war dead, is located at Cowra in New South Wales. The cemeteries and memorials therefore connect with the indigenous past, the early exploration and settlement of the district, the local war dead and overseas prisoners of war.

121 Heritage Victoria citation, number H1554.

122 Celestina Sagazio (ed.), *Cemeteries: Our Heritage*, p. 1.

123 Craig Wilcox, 'World War 1', *Oxford Companion to Australian History*, op.cit., p. 693-5.



Figure 22 Dhurringile
Source: Heritage Victoria File H1554

Indigenous Graves

One striking aspect of the diversity of memorials still visible in the Murchison area, are the graves of members of a sub-set of the Ngorrailum tribe (Figure 24). William Bossence, in his history, *Murchison*, writes of the demise of King Charles of Tattambo, ‘King of the Goulburn Tribe’, buried in the Murchison cemetery in 1866, and of the subsequent deaths of the remainder of his family.¹²⁴ His wife, Queen Mary and his son, Captain John, aged 47 or 48, died within days of each other in October 1874 and were also buried in the Murchison cemetery. The significance of the graves, and the telling of their story in the local press at the time, is the recognition that these individuals were the last of their tribe. Members of the tribe had become residents of the Aboriginal Protectorate when it was established in 1839; it was within a short space of time that the whole tribe had been wiped out. Perhaps the majestic title was applied to the elders as a form of respect for the tribe. Alternatively, the title may have been applied because the ‘King’ had adopted European habits and lifestyle, as it appears the ‘Tattambo King’ had worked for the squatter, Mr Fryer, of the Molka Station, and was well known in the area.¹²⁵ The pair of graves, enclosed by wrought iron palisades, made by the local landowner, Mr Barratt, are marked with generic timber crosses within the enclosure.

14.1 Commemorating Pioneers

The first white child to be born in the district was Charles William Wilson. His life and work is commemorated by a monument in Tatura. Wilson was born in 1855 in Whroo, and moved to Tatura in 1879 to open a branch of J W Mason’s butchery. In 1881 he married, and for twenty years, tirelessly served the community of Tatura. He died in 1901. Wilson held office in most community organisations. He was a member of the Rodney Shire Council from 1887 to 1891; between 1894 and 1901 he served twice as President. He served on the Rodney Irrigation Trust

¹²⁴ Bossence. *Murchison*, op. cit., p. 36.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

from 1889 until 1901 and was chairman in 1894. He was also a president of the Mooroopna Hospital, trustee of the racecourse, Mechanic's Institute, public gardens and recreation reserve, Australian Native's Association, Fire Brigade, Band, Presbyterian Church and Secretary of the Cemetery Trust. To perpetuate his memory, the Shire of Rodney Council contributed to a memorial, constructed in the Tatura Gardens in 1901.

The Tatura Cemetery was one of the first public amenities to be established in that township; the Trustees of the Cemetery were gazetted in March 1876 (Figure 23) and the town's prominent residents, businessmen and local identities are buried there.

14.2 Tributes to the War Dead

War heroes are remembered throughout the City of Greater Shepparton. The recently relocated Shepparton cenotaph and the new Mateship sculpture commemorate the City of Shepparton's soldiers who fought in the Boer War, First and Second World Wars, Korean and Vietnam Wars. One memorial that is visible to all travellers to and from Shepparton, is the Calder Woodburn Memorial. This memorial consists of four rows of eucalyptus species, planted along 19.7 km of the Goulburn Valley Highway. They were planted by Fen Woodburn between 1945 and 1949, to commemorate his son, Calder, who died in France in 1942. The length of the avenue and the type of tree used are in direct contrast to other avenues of honour found in Australian country towns (Figure 25). Although the memorial was originally planned as a tribute to his son, the Calder Woodburn Memorial soon commemorated all those from the district who had died in War service during the Second World War.

Three War Memorials at Mooroopna (Figure 26) commemorate the war dead, and each with a distinctive style. The traditional obelisk in Merrigum was erected to commemorate the ten local men who died during World War One. It was first erected on a site in the south-east corner of the Recreation Reserve and was officially unveiled on 29 May 1921. In 1965 it was removed to its present place in the Merrigum Hall Reserve.



Figure 23 Tatura Cemetery



Figure 24 King Billy & Queen Mary Graves



Figure 25 Calder Woodburn Memorial Avenue



Figure 26 Two of Mooroopna's War Memorials

14.4 Memorials to Citizens from other Lands

Located within the City of Greater Shepparton are two significant war memorials to citizens from other lands – Germany and Italy – who died on Australian soil. By an agreement with the British government, Australia was chosen as the site to locate British prisoners of war, and many thousands were shipped to Victoria from 1941. Murchison and Tatura were two sites within the municipality chosen for prisoner of war camps, and the stories of the prisoners, including failed and successful escapes, have been told elsewhere.

The first foreign war cemetery to be built in Australia was the German War Cemetery at Tatura. It is a memorial to the German nationals who were interned and died in the prisoner of war camps near Tatura, and in other camps across Australia. It was established within a few years of the end of Second World War. The burials include 191 internees of World War One, 48 internees and 11 prisoners of war from World War Two, with re interred remains relocated to the site from across the country. The land on which the Cemetery stands was excised from the Presbyterian section of the Tatura Cemetery and fenced by the Australian War Graves Commission. The World War Two section was officially inaugurated on 16 November 1958 by the West German Ambassador, Dr Hans Mahlenfeld.

A memorial to Italians who died whilst in Australia as prisoners of war are commemorated in the Ossario built in Murchison (Figure 27). The names of 130 Italian POWs and internees are recorded on two metal tablets. Following the post-War immigration to Australia by Italians, the Murchison cemetery became a place of pilgrimage, and Luigi Gigliotti of Kyabram proposed that all the bodies of Italians be brought to one burial ground. The Ossario was consecrated by the Under Secretary for Migration, the Hon. Ferdinando Storchi, on 10 September 1961. Every year on Remembrance Sunday, Mass is celebrated at the Ossario.¹²⁶

126 Bossence. *Murchison*, op. cit., pp. 181-3.



Figure 27 Ossario, Murchison



Figure 28 Tatura German Memorial

15.0 The Regional Centre – Shepparton

Shepparton is a thriving regional city – it is the fourth largest provincial centre in Victoria and has a well developed economy due to its strong agricultural and irrigation base.¹²⁷ Twenty-five per cent of Victoria’s agricultural production is generated in this area – the recent display of cows in the ‘Mooving Art’ exhibition, emphasise their importance to the district. Major secondary industries in the greater Shepparton area are mainly related to food processing, manufacturing and transport.¹²⁸ Shepparton also maintains a focus on education and has recently become a ‘university precinct’ – this decision has, in its own way, highlighted one of the major themes that have emerged through this study – that of immigration. By hosting three university campuses, the City encourages immigration to the region rather than away from it. The cultural diversity of Greater Shepparton is also evident, with almost ten per cent of residents being born overseas. Large numbers of residents have their origins in Italy, Turkey, Macedonia, Greece and Albania. More recently, large numbers of people have migrated from the Middle East, principally from Iraq. At the same time, around 3.0 – 4.0% of the population identify as being of Indigenous origin.¹²⁹

15.1 Medium Size Towns

Mooroopna, Murchison and Tatura are medium sized towns of the district. The balance of the population resides in the rural areas and surrounding smaller towns of Murchison, Dookie, Merrigum, Congupna, Toolamba, Katandra and Tallygaroopna.

15.1.1 Mooroopna

The township of Mooroopna, with its current population of around 7,000, is located 4 km west of Shepparton and divided by the Goulburn River. Mooroopna was initially larger than Shepparton, and in 1876 boasted twenty hotels.¹³⁰ The number is said to have decreased with the arrival of the motor car – though the Commercial Hotel and Royal Mail Hotel are still

127 www.shepparton.vic.gov.au

128 Ibid.

129 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 240052831 Gr. Shepparton Pt A, Pt B and Pt C.

130 ‘Hotels dominate town’, *Our Century: The Growth of a Community*, p. 36.

trading. Originally part of the Shire of Rodney, since the redistribution of local councils in 1994, it has been included in the City of Greater Shepparton.

The settlements of Shepparton and Mooroopna were initially isolated by the flood plain that separated them; now they are joined by a causeway and it is possible to walk on a shared walking/cycling path from one township to the other. The earliest settler in Mooroopna was James Cowper who squatted on the first *Ardpatrick* run, of 75,240 acres, in 1841.¹³¹ Other settlers followed Cowper, including William Archer, who with his wife Elizabeth, built and operated the first punt, hotel, bank and general store. William Morrell followed the Archer's and sub-divided the land which formed the beginnings of the town.¹³²

By the end of the nineteenth century, Mooroopna was a thriving township – it had established a regional hospital in 1876 (Figure 30), the railway line to Melbourne was opened in 1880, the Waterworks Trust was constituted in 1885 and electricity supplied local business by 1914.¹³³ Facilities to provide services to the growing rural community – its early squatters, later selectors and still later soldier settlers, as well as small businesses and local farmers – were in place before the First World War.

Irrigation and immigration have played major roles in the development and expansion of Mooroopna. Beginning in the 1880s, irrigation ensured that local farmers and fruit growers were able to utilise the vast acreage of relatively flat land to its best advantage. Local produce included deciduous fruit; the first orchards were planted at Ardmona in 1886 and the first cannery opened in 1887 – canned fruit products were exported to the United Kingdom. However, it was not until 1921 that the Ardmona Fruit Products Co-operative began operations in Mooroopna; during the Second World War it played a major role in Australia's home production efforts.¹³⁴ Today it is a thriving tourist attraction to the township, with product sales as well as catering facilities open seven days per week. As well as fruit and dairy production, local farming today includes a substantial number of stud farms.

During and after the Second World War, Mooroopna became the site of large numbers of immigrants from Europe. Early immigrants included Italians whose contribution to the expansion of the Ardmona cannery cannot be underestimated. Enthusiastic growers of tomatoes, many Italian families bought or leased land and produced excellent tomatoes for canning or bottling.

Migration to the district, either local or international, has remained a constant part of Mooroopna's history. The first immigrants were Jewish refugees from Russia in the years preceding the First World War. Following the arrival and integration into the community of the large Italian population in the 1940s, further trends of immigration have occurred. During the 1950s and 1960s, Eastern Europeans – including Turks, Greeks and Albanians settled in Mooroopna and the Goulburn Valley.

During the 1970s, the trend of immigration included a large Indian and South East Asian contingent and into the 1980s a small number of immigrants from the Philippines moved into the area. The expansion and relocation of established businesses in Mooroopna has also meant a steady increase in intra-state migration.

Mooroopna may best be characterised as a township that has flourished through the continuing phases of settlement, immigration and industry – themes that recur throughout the Shire.

131 Billis & Kenyan, op.cit., p. 167.

132 'A brief history of Mooroopna', www.mooroopna.org.au/history, 14 August 2002.

133 Ibid.

134 Ibid.

15.1.2 Murchison

Murchison, like Mooroopna, is a recent addition to the City of Greater Shepparton. Residents voted in favour of amalgamation so that Murchison and Murchison East are now part of the City of Greater Shepparton. The boundary of the township is the river, giving the town an 'edge complex'.¹³⁵ Originally Murchison East was part of the Shire of Goulburn, while Murchison West (the township) belonged to the Waranga Shire. The township now extends to both sides of the Goulburn River and is a picturesque medium-sized town. Murchison's history includes its time as an Aboriginal Protectorate, and it remains the site of a wide diversity of graves and memorials, including that of the last of the Aboriginal tribe of King Charles Tattambo, 'King of the Goulburn Tribe', his wife, Queen Mary and son Captain John. It is also the site of the German and Italian War Memorials.

As the historian of Murchison notes, 'Murchison has three very characteristic' features of a country town – 'a Mechanics' Institute, a granite war memorial and a couple of pseudo-gothic churches'.¹³⁶ In fact, the three churches – Christ Anglican Church (1884), the former Presbyterian, now Uniting Church (1878) and the former Methodist, now Uniting Church (1877) are built in the Gothic Revival style. They remind us of the strength of faith, practiced and expressed by the early pioneers of the district.

More than this, Murchison is representative of most phases of development of the municipality – evident by its major structures, including a nineteenth century flour mill, a number of hotels, shops, Masonic lodge, railway station, bridges and canals. These historic structures remain visible in the landscape and remind us of the past while still operating as every-day aspects of the current fabric of the district.

15.1.2 Tatura

Stage One of the Heritage Study identified eighteen sites as significant to the cultural heritage of the township of Tatura. Like Murchison, Tatura demonstrates a richness of social, cultural and civic life. The Mechanics' Institute and Victory Hall, the Rodney Irrigation Trust Building that now houses the Irrigation and War Camps Museum, and the Wilson Memorial are illustrative of the town's historic and continuing emphasis on community work and the welfare of the town and its people.

15.1.3 Ardmona

Ardmona was the first irrigation district in Victoria and has become famous for its fruit and grape growing and Ardmona cannery (now SPC Ardmona Limited). Stage One of the Heritage Study identified four buildings – the Primary School, Holy Trinity Anglican Church, the former Scots Presbyterian Church, a house on Simson Road and the pine trees on Lenne Road, as sites of cultural significance to the township. Though not a representative group of buildings, easily able to illustrate the patterns of settlement of the 'Ardmona Estate', they remind us of the immediate need for schools and churches. Holy Trinity Church dates from 1914 and the land was the gift of a local farmer. The former Scots Presbyterian Church was built in 1930 but had ceased to operate as a church by 1985 – possibly a reflection of the current dwindling numbers of church-goers in Australia.

Ardmona, as well as becoming one of the best known stone-fruit growing districts in Victoria, was also the site of two early vineyards in the district, the 'St James' and the 'Lake Eyrie', on the northern outskirts of Ardmona. Irrigation assisted the aspiring orchadists and vignerons,

135 Personal Communication, Mr Warwick Finlay, 22 August 2002.

136 Bossence, *Murchison*, p. 190.

and in the late nineteenth century, when production was increasing, fruit and wine growers formed associations to protect their own interests.

15.2 Small Townships and Localities

The smaller towns located within the City of Greater Shepparton include Dookie, Toolamba, Undera, Tallygaroopna, Byrneside, Caniambo and Pine Lodge. Dookie, established in 1859, is a mostly flat, unirrigated wheat growing district. It is perhaps best known for its agricultural college, now a campus of The University of Melbourne. During the 1870s, farm selections were taken up, and a township site at the foot of Mount Major was surveyed. It was named Dookie South, later Cashel. The National Bank of Australasia first opened a branch in Dookie South in 1873, and the former bank building (1876 – see Data Sheet 08) has long been converted into a family residence located within this small agricultural town.

Tallygaroopna, the name given to the first pastoral run occupied by Edward Khull in 1841, remains a small town, and is located 15 km north of Shepparton. One important remnant of the early squatters and selectors is the property 'Fairley Downs'. This site retains the earliest buildings on the property, and includes the remains of an 1841 slab, a late nineteenth century building, the elegant homestead constructed in 1906, and a former World War Two prisoner of war camp building, currently used as a milking shed. It forms a direct connection to the pastoral history of the area.

16.0 Public Buildings

Stage One of this Heritage Study identified twelve buildings, apart from churches and schools, that trace the physical development of the community that grew within the Shire, and later City of Greater Shepparton. These buildings include community and public halls, Mechanics' Institutes, Court Houses and Post Offices. However, only one hospital, Mooroopna, has existed in the study area since the time of the earliest settlers, and its significance to the district will be discussed.

Three Post Offices or former Post Offices have been identified, and no study of this region would be complete without mentioning the demolished nineteenth century Post Office.

Postal Services and the Shepparton Post Office

The earliest postal services had been operated by the owners of the punt services – McGuire's at Shepparton and Marie at Murchison. Successive owners of the punt service handled the mail, sometimes in the form of a bag that was left in a particular location and collected by arrangement. The first postal office was opened in May 1858 in a small store owned by E P Knight. By 1879 the post office was officially recognised as an entity, and Mr F St Leger was appointed the first postmaster. The office was enlarged and moved from the store to rented premises, where a telegraph service and post office savings bank were opened. Locals began to agitate for a larger post office, and a corner block was found. The foundation stone was laid in 1883 and the Post Office erected for a cost of £5,557. It was designed by local architect, John Augustus Kenny Clarke; many of his grand homes still exist in Shepparton today. The Post Office 'served the community' until 1975 when it was demolished to make way for a modern building.¹³⁷ This demolition, regretted by many, appears to have occurred at a time when the incumbent Council viewed their decision as progressive, and many other similar buildings were demolished to make way for newer, more modern architecture.

137 Sue Wallace. *Shepparton Reflections*, op.cit., 38.

16.1 Mechanics' Institutes

The Mechanics' Institutes movement flourished in Victoria from 1839 to 1950. It was based on a British model, established in the 1820s, to educate and enlighten the working classes. At that time 'mechanic' meant an artisan, craftsman or working man.¹³⁸ The early institutes built in Victoria included a reading room, library and lecture room. Prior to the 1872 *Education Act* which declared that education in Victoria be 'free, compulsory and secular', the Institutes are considered to have contributed significantly to the public education system.¹³⁹ After this time, many Mechanics' Institutes provided a venue for schools until new schools could be built. However, the Mechanics' Institutes had to satisfy many needs. As well as providing the venue and facilities for public education (in the form of books, lectures, newspapers and journals) they also enhanced local entertainment and community endeavours. The Institute 'often provided an important rallying point for the community in times of distress or celebrations'.¹⁴⁰

In Victoria during the 1850s, approximately forty Mechanics' Institutes were established. By 1900 there were over four hundred Institutes.¹⁴¹ They were seen as a great achievement for a local community, and the unity of the township was often reflected in the type of functions held within its walls. Mechanics halls were sometimes used by religious denominations before their churches were built.

The Tatura Mechanics' Institute was built in 1885, and served as a focus for the social life of that community (Figure 29).¹⁴² In 1887, great efforts were made to build a library and reading room on the west side of the hall; further additions occurred in 1893. In the late 1880s, a dispute concerning the suitability of reading material arose when the Reverend A Chambers urged the discontinuance of subscribing to the journal, the *Sydney Bulletin*, and the removal of all copies from the library. The journal was described as 'disloyal, disgusting and filthy'.¹⁴³ The journal was removed and the morals of the members of the Mechanics Institute were protected; in 1891 a motion that the *Sydney Bulletin* be 'placed once more upon the reading table' was once again defeated. Further renovations were undertaken to enlarge, remodel and beautify the building and a grand re-opening took place in September 1893. After a fire in 1897, the Trustees decided to offer the land and building for sale, but this was held in abeyance until a new site was chosen. Another suitable site could not be chosen, so the Mechanics' Institute remained where it was.

While the location remained the same, community troubles were exacerbated. The Trustees and committee members decided to resign *en masse* in 1902 in response to claims that they were not representative and because they felt the community lacked the financial, and other support necessary to provide for additions and improvements. New Trustees and a new committee were elected. In 1909-10 billiard rooms were opened, however, a subscription to the *Sydney Bulletin* was once again defeated.

Within two weeks of the declaration of the Great War, the Mechanics' Institute was used to convene a patriotic meeting. Soon after the end of the War, the township proposed building a War Memorial Hall. By 1925, £2,500 had been raised and the remaining £2,500 required, was raised by overdraft. The foundation stone for the Victory Hall, which would accommodate 700 people, was laid on 14 September 1925 and the building was opened on 9 March 1926. The Governor-General, Lord Stonehaven, opened the new Victory Hall (Figure 29). It was the first

138 Pam Baragwanath & Janette Hodgson, *An Inventory of Mechanics' Institutes in Victoria, Volume One*, pp. iii-vi.

139 Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, Volume 1, op.cit., pp. 195-207.

140 Baragwanath & Hodgson, op.cit., p. iii.

141 Ibid., p. iv.

142 Bossence, op.cit., pp. 144-5.

143 Ibid, p. 145.

time a Governor-General had ever visited the Goulburn Valley.¹⁴⁴ The Mechanics' Institute and Victory Hall mark the years of continuous use by the local community.

16.2 Memorial and Community Halls

The Byrneside Public Hall demonstrates the importance of community activity in outlying rural districts. Byrneside, notes Bossence in his history of Tatura, in its heyday was distinguished for its 'football team, an annual gymkhana and a brothel'.¹⁴⁵ However, it was the Public Hall at Byrneside that was the pride and joy of the local inhabitants. The foundation stone for the Byrneside Public Hall was laid in 1894 and was opened with a special three-day bazaar in May 1894. In 1918 its original proprietors intended to dispose of the Hall, a suggestion that caused the local community to rally together and form a committee to purchase the building. On 14 March 1919, the *Free Press* reported that the Hall had been purchased by the local residents for the sum of £200. Electricity was connected in 1940 and the lights were turned on by the Honourable John McEwen.

Community halls were also erected for other purposes. The Independent Order of Rechabites was a men's secret fraternal order founded in the United States of America in 1842. The Rechabites were a total abstinence secret society who organised 'lodges' in many Victorian towns in the mid- to late nineteenth century. They established a branch in Cooma in 1906. After an extensive campaign of fundraising, they were able to finance the construction of their own Hall in 1913, and laid the foundation stone in August of that year. The Hall became the venue of numerous community gatherings and was used by the Red Cross and local Methodists, after the latter sold their church in 1920. In nearby Harston, proposals to erect a hall were first made in 1937, but it was not until after World War Two that an acre of land was donated for the purpose. It was fitting therefore that, in the post-war era, the hall building was a former internment camp hut from Camp No. 1 at Murchison.

However, it is the former Forester's Hall in Welsford Street, Shepparton, that is the oldest surviving building in region. Built in 1873 and overlooking McGuire's Punt, the first Roman Catholic mass in the area was held in this brick building. Up until 1875 there was no court in

144 Ibid., p. 197.

145 Bossence, *Tatura*, op.cit., p. 58.



Figure 29 Tatura Mechanics Institute and Victoria Hall

Shepparton, and the building, located opposite the Police Station, also served as a temporary court house. Additionally, it has been used as a public hall, dance theatre and venue for other entertainments. It was also used for other purposes, including time as a newspaper office, factory and lodge room. The second paper printed in Shepparton, the *Farmer's Gazette*, was at one stage printed here when the building was owned by a Mr Pettett. The building was acquired by the Ancient Order of Foresters in 1933. In 1972 the building became the home of the Shepparton & Goulburn Valley Historical Society. It is appropriate therefore that today it houses the Historical Society and Heritage Centre as a reminder of the many uses public halls have enjoyed since the earliest days of settlement.

16.3 Mooroopna Hospital

The first hospital in Shepparton was a small wooden hut built on the bank of the Goulburn River – it contained two beds which quickly became inadequate. When plans were drawn up to construct a larger hospital, land was donated by local businessman and pioneer settler, William Simmonds Archer. In March 1876 a public meeting was held to elect a committee for a hospital, and local resident, Elias Ralph became the first president. When the railway arrived in Mooroopna in 1880, further pressures were felt to accommodate the growing number of residents from the Goulburn Valley requiring the services of the hospital. By 1884, patient numbers had increased to more than 400. The hospital continued to grow, and although a refractory ward and operating theatre were built in 1886, new wards and additions were made in 1893, 1901, 1917, 1936, 1948 and 1974.

The importance of the hospital to the area cannot be underestimated. It was classified as a base hospital and was one of the group of eight base hospitals scattered around country Victoria. Others included Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Hamilton, Horsham, Mildura, Sale and Warnambool. The hospital's name was changed to the Mooroopna and District Base Hospital in 1943 (Figure 30). As well as providing the essential medical services to the Goulburn Valley, the Mooroopna Hospital also provided employment in the area. Mooroopna closed as a general hospital in 1974, and the majority of the services offered were transferred to the Goulburn

Valley Base Hospital in Shepparton. The buildings were renamed the Mooroopna Extended Care Centre in 1988. Amongst other tenants, the Mooroopna Historical Society now occupies one room of the former Base Hospital.



Figure 30 *Mooroopna Hospital, c.1940*
Source: State Library of Victoria Pictures Collection

17.0 The Environment – Acts of God

17.1 Floods

Serious flooding of the Goulburn Valley and the City of Greater Shepparton has occurred a number of times in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On each occasion, extensive damage to roads and stock has occurred. More recently flooding in the Goulburn Valley 1939, 1950-51 and 1974 and photographic evidence confirms the devastation caused.



Figure 31 *Looking across bay 4 of pears from horse paddock, during flood April 1939*
Source: Tatura Historical Society



Figure 32 Young apricot trees in flood, 1974
Source: Tatura Historical Society

17.2 The Murchison Meteorite – 1969

On 28 September 1969 there was a spectacular meteor storm over the town of Murchison. Locals saw bright flashes of light and heard loud sonic booms as a disintegrating meteor entered the earth's atmosphere above the district. The following day people began finding small pieces of black rock which had a strange smell reminiscent of methylated spirits.

Professor John Lovering of the Geology Department at the University of Melbourne recognised the specimens as belonging to a small, rare class of meteorites known as carbonaceous chondrites. While most meteorites are stony or metallic in composition, as the Murchison meteorite contained substantial amounts of carbon derived organic chemicals, hence its strange smell. Further analysis revealed the presence of specific substances including amino acids, complex chemicals essential for the development of life on earth. In the context of the wider scientific debate about the origins of life, the Murchison meteorite was thus of great significance for demonstrating that the chemicals necessary to trigger the process can literally fall out of the sky.¹⁴⁶

A display has been created in the centre of Murchison to commemorate the meteor fall, this chance cosmic event having given the town a degree of international fame.

18.0 Statement of Significance

The City of Greater Shepparton has a richly layered history which dates back to some of the very earliest European activity in Northern Victoria. The environment of the region has much evidence of this history, located in the towns and settlements, and in the agricultural landscapes. It is also notable for the great diversity and variety of local heritage places, and the sometimes subtle remains of past uses and activities.

146 Paul Davies, *The Fifth Miracle*, p. 187.

The principal historical themes of the Shire are equally varied, and the overwhelming themes – of settlement and migration, utilisation of natural resources and developing primary and secondary industries – are integral to the municipality as it exists today. Immigrants to the region, the squatters, closer and soldier settlers, and those from other colonies, were vigorous in their development of agricultural and pastoral industries. The post-World War Two settlement by European migrants greatly enhanced these industries.

The oldest irrigation and agricultural pursuits in the State were attempted in the Ardmona district. The subsequent history of farming, including dairying, fruit and vine production, is also strongly evident, with the latter a particularly distinctive feature of the Mooroopna, Murchison, Tatura and Dookie landscapes.

However, unlike any other locality, the City of Greater Shepparton is the site of an unusual diversity of memorials to the dead. These include the graves of the last of an Aboriginal tribe; the early pioneers; and the war dead. As the districts of Tatura and Murchison were the site of World War Two internment and prisoner of war camps, memorials to the foreign war dead are also especially significant to the area.

Less unique to the area, but still distinctively local, is the heritage associated with religious practice, transport and communication, and the establishment of education.

All of these themes and places combine to give the City of Greater Shepparton its individual character and unique place in the Victorian environment.