

14 Camperdown

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Introduction

Camperdown is an attractive rural service centre located at the foot of Mount Leura on the Princes Highway between Colac and Warrnambool. The town is situated on the world’s third largest volcanic plain and is dotted with cones and numerous lakes that have formed in volcanic craters. Between the lakes—Bullen Merri and Gnotuk—a recreation park has been established for golf, tennis, cricket, hockey, lawn bowls and equestrian events.

Camperdown emerged as a service centre for pastoral empires to the north of the town. While it has retained this role, its municipal boundaries have changed considerably. Camperdown is now part of the Shire of Corangamite, which covers 4,600 square kilometres and includes the towns of Cobden, Simpson, Timboon, Port Campbell, Princetown, Terang, Derrinallum, Skipton, Darlington, Lismore and Noorat.

Camperdown was originally selected for inclusion in the 1988 small towns study because of its government and private services base. The principal conclusions from this study were that Camperdown had:

- a very slowly declining population base, around 3,600 people
- an important role as a rural service centre to surrounding farms, including dairying activities

Figure 14.1 Location of Camperdown



Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment



- a substantial manufacturing base, including small and large firms in a diverse range of activities
- an important servicing role for local and district residents and (potentially) for visitors and passing trade
- a comprehensive range of public facilities, services and amenities to meet the requirements of residents and local businesses.

The report also noted the community faced a number of issues that might affect the town's future in terms of the delivery of government assistance, regionalisation and the relocation of public services, and that traders needed to promote Camperdown as a viable centre. Further, there was a need to

provide rural-residential allotments, attract firms to the council's new industrial estate, address the youth situation and the requirements of aged persons, and develop a strategic plan for the hospital. These key findings provided an important starting point for the 2005 study, and an opportunity to reflect on the circumstances of the town in the interim years.



Background, 1988–2005

A number of significant events that occurred between 1988 and 2005 have had lasting effects on the town. The industrial base of Camperdown was severely affected by the closure of some large plants such as the abattoirs, which was finally closed in 1991 after a major industrial dispute. And the town's major employer, Bonlac Butter Factory, was also closed two years later, putting a large number of people out of work and affecting small businesses with contracts with the factory. Attempts have been made to revive the Bonlac plant with the development of a cheese industry (Mount Emu Creek Cheese) based on sheep's milk, but this enterprise was unsuccessful despite overseas contracts. There are further plans to renovate the plant into a soft cheese factory.

When textile producer Country Road closed its doors, the town was left without a major manufacturing plant. Another significant event was the opening of a Safeway Supermarket a couple of years ago, which provided an opportunity to affect shopping patterns among residents and those living close to the town.

Development of the gas industry in the southern end of the shire has been another major economic change. The BHP Billiton gas plant development is now operational, and the TRU Energy plant has completed an upgrade and is now able to accept and process offshore gas and operate an underground storage facility. According to the 2004–05 annual report of the Corangamite Shire (2005), the adjacent Woodside plant commenced construction in the last year.

Significant changes have occurred in the state and federal public sectors during this period. In the Kennett years (1992–99) the amalgamation of Camperdown Primary School and Camperdown High School into Camperdown P-12, and the closure of at least three primary schools in and around Camperdown, saw a decline in the absolute number of teachers in the town. There were also significant changes in employment in the Department of Primary Industries: 15 staff worked at the Camperdown offices during the 1980s, there were no staff in the mid 1990s, and five staff currently work there but without administrative support.

The effects of hospital closures and amalgamations across Victoria in this period were less dramatic in Camperdown in terms of health and community services. The Camperdown Hospital is now part of South-West Health Care and has a 24-bed geriatric nursing home and an eight-bed hostel catering for acute medical and surgical care and obstetric patients. There is now also a community health centre (Manifold Community Health Centre) and the David Newman Adult Day Care Centre in Camperdown, with access to Camperdown Psychiatric Services.

At the time of this study, Camperdown was one of two small towns in the south-west being considered for a program designed to reduce greenhouse gases. The South-West Sustainability Partnership, of which Corangamite is a member, is behind the project to assess business, domestic and farm use to gauge energy output and to find ways to make savings (*Camperdown Chronicle* 2005).



Population levels and trends

Camperdown had an enumerated population of 3,130 persons at the time of the 2001 Census. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics data, the town's population has been declining very slowly over the past twenty years. It is also evident that the City of Warrnambool, the regional centre

for the south-western part of Victoria, has experienced significant population growth. Warrnambool's population was 22,637 in 1981, increasing by 5,174 people to 27,812 in 2001 (Towns in Time database).

Table 14.1 Population levels and change in Camperdown and other towns in the Shire of Corangamite, 1981–2001

	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	1981–86	1986–91	1991–96	1996–2001	1981–2001
	No.					%				
Camperdown	3,710	3,640	3,315	3,153	3,130	-1.8	-8.9	-4.9	-0.7	-15.6
Cobden	1,453	1,421	1,477	1,408	1,420	-2.2	-3.9	-4.6	-0.8	-2.3
Port Campbell	169	224	234	281	459	3.3	4.5	20	63.3	171.6
Terang	2,111	2,040	1,973	1,867	1,862	-3.4	-3.3	-5.4	-0.2	-11.8

Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment, *Towns in Time* data.

Between 1996 and 2001, the population in Corangamite North and Camperdown decreased. By contrast, the population in Corangamite South, the more coastal part of the shire, increased marginally (Corangamite Shire Council 2004). The population of Port Campbell grew from 169 in 1981 to 459 in 2001, while the populations of Camperdown and Terang have declined at a fairly similar rate and the population of Cobden by a relatively slower rate. It should be noted that the population of Camperdown decreased most sharply in the period

1986–91, with a slower decline in the period 1996–2001 (0.7 per cent). The population of Camperdown in 2001 comprised 18.8 per cent of the population of Corangamite, followed by Terang with 11.2 per cent and Cobden with 8.5 per cent (Corangamite Shire Council 2004, p. 9). Furthermore, the population by postal address in Camperdown indicates that 1,732 residents live close to the town (Corangamite Shire Council 2004, p. 9), which brings the population to 4,862 people.

The population of Camperdown is becoming older. Thus, while the town has a population age distribution not dissimilar to regional Victoria, it also has a higher proportion of its residents aged 60 years and over (25.6 per cent) compared with the Corangamite Shire (20.5 per cent), the Western District (19.4 per cent) and regional Victoria (18.8 per cent) (Corangamite Shire Council 2004, p.11).



Table 14.2 Age structure of the Camperdown population, 1981–2001

Age (years)	1981		1986		1991		1996		2001		% change 1981–2001
	No.	%									
0–4	293	8.3	256	7.4	239	7.2	256	8.1	191	6.1	–34.8
5–17	839	23.7	769	22.2	628	18.9	531	16.9	582	18.6	–30.6
18–24	315	8.9	279	8.1	283	8.5	259	8.2	206	6.6	–34.6
25–34	511	14.4	487	14.1	445	13.2	406	12.9	356	11.4	–30.3
35–49	540	15.2	582	16.8	633	19.1	625	19.8	635	20.3	17.3
50–59	335	9.4	339	9.8	320	9.6	326	10.3	361	11.5	7.6
60–74	488	13.8	497	14.4	477	14.4	445	14.1	487	15.6	0.02
75+	225	6.3	250	7.2	291	8.8	306	9.7	312	10.0	38.7
	3,710	100	3,640	100	3,315	100	3,153	100	3,130	100	

Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment, *Towns in Time* data.

Table 14.2 shows that the younger age groups (those aged 0–34 years) have dropped by about one-third over the last twenty years, while the number of older residents has increased by approximately 64 per cent, most markedly those residents aged over 75 years. Some variations to this overall pattern exist, for example, the number of children aged less than 4 years old increased in 1996 before another drop in 2001.

The numbers of school-aged children/young people and others in the 18–24 age group have been steadily declining over this period. It is also apparent that middle-aged adults (aged 35–49 years) represented the largest proportion of Camperdown's 2001 population (20.3 per cent) followed closely by school-aged children (5–17 years), representing 18.6 per cent of the population.



Labour force and employment patterns

The labour force participation rate has remained relatively stable over the last twenty years, recording an increase of about 2 per cent in this period. Unemployment rates in the 1990s appear relatively high at 14.2 per cent in 1991 and 10.3 per cent in 1996, halving to about 7.2 per cent in 2001. While much of this fluctuation can be attributed to the factory closures in the 1990s, a number of residents gained employment in the nearby town of Cobden where Bonlac expanded its activities.

Employment by industry sector

Table 14.4 shows that most Camperdown residents now work in three key industries—retail trade, manufacturing, and health and community services—accounting for nearly half (48.6 per cent) of the town's workforce. Table 14.5 indicates that these patterns have changed over time, despite the relative stability of labour force participation rates and the ageing of the population. The growth in health and community services has replaced some of the jobs lost in the manufacturing sector.

Table 14.3 Labour force status of the Camperdown resident labour force, 1981–2001

	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
Employed (number)	1,272	1,252	1,156	1,188	1,252
Unemployed (number)	78	101	191	136	98
Unemployment rate (%)	5.8	7.5	14.2	10.3	7.2
Labour force participation rate (%)	52.3	51.8	52.3	53.5	54.5

Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment, Towns in Time data.

Table 14.4 Major employment categories of Camperdown residents, 2001

	Number employed 2001	% of employed 2001
Retail trade	249	19.9
Manufacturing	191	15.3
Health & community services	167	13.4
Construction	96	7.7
Education	78	6.2
Agriculture	74	5.9
Personal & other services	67	5.3
Property & business services	66	5.2
Government administration	61	4.9
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	57	4.5
Wholesale trade	39	3.1
Transport & storage	30	2.4

Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment, Towns in Time data.



An examination of the three most important employment sectors indicates some changes between 1981 and 2001, but it should be noted that retail trade remained Camperdown's most important employment sector. Despite fluctuations, manufacturing is still the second most important industry. Manufacturing activities were important in Camperdown, particularly in 1986, with 37.4 per cent of the

labour force engaged in manufacturing. The major employers at this time were Camperdown Meat Exporters (234 jobs), the Bonlac dairy factory (210 jobs) and Country Road (50 jobs) (Henshall Hansen & Associates 1988). By 2001, however, this figure had dropped to 15.3 per cent, just above the regional average of 13.7 per cent (Corangamite Shire Council 2004). Another change concerns the relationship between education and

the health and community sector. There were 108 people working in education in 1988 and this dropped to 78 in 2001, representing a net loss of 26.4 per cent. But there has been a greater loss in terms of government jobs (31.5 per cent), from 89 in 1981 to 61 in 2001.

Table 14.5 Employment of Camperdown residents in industries, 1981–2001

Industry	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	% change
						1981-2001
					No.	
Retail trade	248	217	200	246	249	nc*
Manufacturing	237	252	241	218	191	-5.2
Health & community services	72	99	123	128	167	132.0
Construction	81	90	74	50	96	18.5
Education	106	97	85	88	78	-26.4
Agriculture	70	55	47	87	74	5.0
Personal & other services	34	26	38	59	67	97.1
Property & business services	42	32	38	36	66	57.1
Government administration	89	88	72	52	61	-31.5
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	39	41	41	39	57	46.2
Wholesale trade	64	73	41	53	39	-39.1
Transport & storage	57	50	34	22	30	-47.4
Electricity, gas & water supply	46	47	35	16	16	-65.2
Communication	41	40	31	38	11	-73.1
Cultural & recreational services	6	6	9	19	26	333.0

Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment, Towns in Time data.
*nc =no change.



Even though Camperdown has experienced considerable job losses in government administration, education and manufacturing, there is evidence of significant areas of growth in sectors such as cultural and recreational services, personal and other services, property and business services, and health and community services.

Employment issues

While the Towns in Time database does not provide a gendered perspective in terms of employment, it is safe to assume that most women are employed in the same industries in Camperdown as elsewhere, particularly in retailing, clerical, and health and community services. The recent opening of Safeway would have provided more job opportunities for women and young people in Camperdown, if generally on a part time basis. And the growth in community services would mark new employment prospects for women.

The availability of child care is an issue in this context. The community house has recently ceased to offer occasional child care, and while a privately run childcare centre has recently opened, the cost of this service becomes an issue for families. Interestingly, the Camperdown campus of South-West Health Care is the only hospital in regional Victoria to have an on site family and community services childcare centre. This centre is run by the Children's Services Unit of the Corangamite Shire Council, which aims to maintain a skilled hospital staff. It is also noteworthy that the number of children at shire school holiday programs has dropped significantly, from 2,596 in 2000–01 to 642 in

2004–05 (Corangamite Shire, 2004–05 annual report), which predictably poses difficulties for women in terms of their paid work.

It is generally acknowledged that 'young people leave in droves' to seek employment and education opportunities elsewhere. There are added concerns that unlike other rural towns, Camperdown does not experience the return of young adults and their families. The introduction of VET (vocational education and training) and VCAL (the Victorian Certificate of applied learning) at Camperdown P-12 is important not only in terms of improving retention rates at the college but also because they offer young people the option of either embarking on a part time traineeship or on a pathway from education to employment. Forty-four students are currently participating in this program.

WestVic Work Force—a not for profit community based group training company—opened an office 18 months ago to coordinate trainees and apprenticeships. Twenty-five young people have begun work placements as apprentices (13) and trainees (12) since July 2004 in the Camperdown area. Because the dairy industry struggles to attract qualified employees, the WestVic representative noted that if a young person came through his doors saying they wanted to go into the dairy industry he would 'grab them in a headlock and steer them to the nearest dairy farm'. The industry seems to have a poor image among young people, but there are also practical difficulties in terms of transport to the farm and split shifts for young people without a driver's license and a car. The tradition

of jackarooing or jillarooing has probably also largely disappeared. Other young people with a desire to remain in the town have embarked on retailing and service ventures, often with the financial backing of their families, and run successful businesses in the town's main street.

The Corangamite Shire's regional marketing project was launched in May 2005 in line with *Make it happen in provincial Victoria*, the State Government's campaign to encourage people to live, work and invest in the shire. According to the real estate industry, a significant constraint in Camperdown is the lack of available housing and industrial land, despite a 29-lot subdivision being approved this year (with some conditions). This is a major inhibitor for retirement and industrial growth in the town.

The farm sector

The 1988 study predicted that the outlook for farm enterprises around Camperdown was one of improvement for at least a few years after recent difficult times, which included a downturn in commodity prices and the droughts of 1982–83. At the time though, most farmers were able to offset some of these effects on farm incomes through improved productivity and considerable amalgamation of farms into larger units with fewer farmers, resulting in a smaller rural population. It was observed that farms to the south of Camperdown were mainly dairy farms but with specialist fat lamb producers, while mixed farming dominated to the north of the town, including wool and beef production and crops



such as lucerne and oilseeds. Recent figures suggest that while agriculture continues to be vital to the economic success of Corangamite, the number of people working in farming has declined from 3,080 in 1986 to 2,672 in 2001, representing a loss of 408 jobs (Corangamite Shire Council 2004).

While the dairy industry has faced significant adjustments (a result of policy commitments requiring deregulation of the industry) leading to lower milk prices (Herreria, Magpantay & Aslin 2004, p. 2), its prospects over the next few years are extremely good according to *Dairy Australia's Dairy 2005: situation and outlook report*.⁶ According to this report, the south-west of Victoria is the 'fastest growing milk production region in the national industry and has significant manufacturing capacity and infrastructure' (p. 68). Major problems for the region include labour shortages in the growing beef and sheep industries, increased employment opportunities in the Warrnambool, Colac and Mt Gambier regional centres, increasing land values due to competition from other uses such as sheep, beef and timber, and increasing interest in dairy farms from overseas investors (pp. 68–9).

Two interrelated labour force issues acting as inhibitors to growth are:

1. access to a better pool of skilled farm workers and limited opportunities for people to manage staff through business growth
2. a lack of competitiveness in labour rates for dairy workers and less attractive/easier options in the region across a number of industries (p. 69).

These issues were high on the agenda of a number of interviewees who indicated that research and training were lacking in the south-west. All interviewees stated this was exacerbated by Melbourne University ceasing to provide agricultural VET courses at Glenormiston College. Programs will now be provided by the new National Centre for Dairy Education, but it seems unclear as to how these programs will be delivered (*The Standard*, 27 October 2005). Furthermore, the announcement of the establishment of a Fonterra research facility in Melbourne (employing 150 people) was questioned by locals, who asked why the State Government did not support such an investment in the fastest growing area in Australia. According to one of the farmers we interviewed, the Demo Dairy Farm Co-operative acts as a 'poor man's' research facility for the south-west.

While yet another concern was the lack of integration in the region in terms of vocational education and training on the one hand and research on the other, the following indicators show that the dairy industry's bright outlook over the next few years will have a positive impact on local towns like Camperdown:

- The projected outlook for the region in 2005–06 is for a production increase of 3–4 per cent on 2004–05.
- More than 75 per cent of farms are likely to be in the dairy industry within three years, up slightly on 2004.
- Sixty per cent of production was from farms where the intention is to be producing more milk in three years.

- There is a low level of gearing on farms, with farmers assessing that they were carrying debt at about 13 per cent of farm values across the region.
- Twenty-two per cent of people working on farms were non-family labour units.
- Positive attitude has been restored to the region, with 68 per cent of people being positive compared with less than 40 per cent in 2004.
- Eleven per cent of farms intended to increase labour use in 2005–06.

The South-West Dairy Industry project has also achieved several outcomes over the past 12 months, including farm gate access subsidies and design standards having been agreed. Transport and logistics continue to progress with greater use of B-Doubles under consideration.

One significant development in farm technology is occurring through an industry located on the edge of Camperdown. Total Livestock Genetics supplies a range of products and services to a global market, primarily semen and embryo transplantation programs to Argentina and Chile. There is also strong Chinese interest in locally-bred dairy heifers because of their good genetics and disease-free status.

⁶ www.dairyaustralia.com.au, accessed 31 October 2005.



The industry adds to the town's economy by bringing international visitors to the production plant, buying products from the town and using veterinarian services. More importantly, the activities of the facility place Camperdown on the world map. A Chinese delegation from Jinchen in the Province of Shan Xi recently visited Total Livestock Genetics, for example, to see how semen and embryo transplantation is carried out. Exports of frozen semen and embryos and livestock to China are significant.⁷

Government services inventory

At the time of the original study, 15 per cent of jobs located in Camperdown were in local, state or federal governments. During the next decade, however, many government services were privatised; together with government downsizing, this led to the loss of infrastructure and jobs in regional Victoria. Camperdown suffered some loss of infrastructure in services such as electricity, transport and telecommunications. Table 14.5 shows the impact of changes in three significant categories—electricity, gas and water supply; transport and storage; and communication.

There have also been some significant changes in education over the period 1987–2005, with the primary and secondary schools being amalgamated into a P-12 college. In line with statewide and national trends, enrolment patterns in local schools have shifted from public to private education, that is, from the state college to the local Catholic regional college. There are currently 30 children in the three-year-old kindergarten group and about 70

four-year-olds attend the kindergarten. These figures have been relatively stable over recent years with only small fluctuations in the four-year-olds group. The difference in attendance is largely due to the greater costs associated with attending the younger age kindergarten group.

There are three schools in the town, Camperdown P-12 (a public school) and two non-government schools (St Patricks Primary School and Mercy College). Since the amalgamations of the 1990s, Camperdown P-12 has operated on two campuses, impeding the integration of the school community.

Camperdown P-12 is recognised as having a strong environmental focus. Other notable strengths are its music and equestrian programs and the VET and VCAL programs for students with an interest in entering trades after leaving school. The greatest challenge facing the school is maintaining a critical mass to offer a diverse curriculum. Student numbers have declined from about 500 to 150 students. This decline is partly due to fewer children and young people of school age living in the area, but also because of growing enrolments at Mercy College, which have increased from 315 students in 2002 to an expected enrolment of about 400 in 2006.

The hospital has been amalgamated into South-West Health Care, which has its major base hospital in Warrnambool. This has meant that specialist services are delivered by visiting practitioners from Warrnambool, Geelong or Colac. Plans for a new hospital building in Camperdown have been discussed for a number of years but no firm

commitments have been made other than the promise of new land for development.

With greater emphasis on primary health care, Camperdown now has a community health centre. The centre provides a range of educational programs on sex, drugs and mental health education, parenting advice, women's health, and other community health issues. Allied health services such as youth counselling, family, personal and support counselling, and financial and gambling counselling are also provided.

While state and federal offices retreated from Camperdown between 1988 and 2005, the town became the centre of the new Corangamite Shire and maintained some important local government infrastructure, including:

- the Corangamite Shire council depot, which has recently been upgraded
- the Camperdown regional livestock saleyards, selling 58,000 livestock last year
- the Camperdown Theatre Royal
- the Camperdown swimming pool
- the Corangamite regional library service, including two community meeting rooms.

There is also now a notable presence of not for profit organisations in Camperdown, particularly Sunnyside House, the Corangamite District Adult Learning Centre, the Neighbourhood House, the various co-located services at Manifold Place, and St Vincent de Paul and the Salvation Army.

⁷ www.corangamite.vic.gov.au, accessed 18 November 2005.



Recreation and culture

Sport plays a significant part in the lives of the town's people, as is evident in their ability and willingness to raise a substantial amount of money for the new basketball stadium. There is a strong equestrian interest in the town with an indoor equestrian facility nearby and a high quality cross-country events course in Camperdown.

Camperdown is also known for its fishing opportunities. It is one of the best locations for land-based anglers because most of the area is accessible by vehicle and can be fished in a variety of wind directions. Water-skiing, speedboat racing, windsurfing, sailing and snorkeling are also undertaken at the lake and the town has a good golf course and swimming pool. Other sports include cricket, tennis, hockey, indoor and outdoor bowling, and basketball. A skate park is on the drawing board, with the Corangamite Shire Council allocating \$50,000 to its construction.

The council's primary event for young people is the annual COREFEST, a drug- and alcohol-free music event with 'big names' playing at the Theatre Royal. The Corangamite Youth Committee has been operating for eight years and draws together a floating population of young people aged between 13 and 22 years old to organise smaller events during the year. Other entertainment in the town includes a weekly new release movie night and occasional performances by

touring theatre and arts companies. There are also some opportunities in terms of visual arts; the postcard competition—I have a volcano in my backyard—drew 400 entries.

Churches and religion

Camperdown is home to a number of churches and a Benedictine monastery. The 2001 Census indicates that only 0.1 per cent of residents in Camperdown are non-Christian while 13.2 per cent indicated no religion. Most are Catholic (31.4 per cent), Uniting (18.9 per cent) and Anglican (17.5 per cent). St Mark's Abbey in Camperdown is an Anglican Benedictine monastic community of monks and nuns.

Community services and organisations

Camperdown residents belong to a wide range of community organisations, although fewer organisations are currently listed in the Corangamite Shire Community directory than was the case in 1987. There is also considerable overlap in membership across a broad range of community organisations. These organisations provide opportunities and services to residents and a sense of belonging among members of the local community. They rely on volunteers and are therefore at risk if significant population changes occur or if key members of the community

leave or retire from community engagement. The partial listing for 1987 indicated the existence of about 80 community organisations and services in Camperdown. The 2005 Camperdown Trade Guide for community services, clubs and associations contained about 50 entries covering a broad spectrum of clubs and organisations, sporting, arts, special interests and service clubs. The latest community directory for the Corangamite Shire lists 19, not including sporting clubs listed elsewhere.

Advance Camperdown was formed in the early 1990s to 'promote business, cultural and tourism interests in the town and area'. It also assists other clubs and organisations in the town and liaises with the local shire council on community issues. In recent years, the group has convened meetings with similar organisations in the Corangamite Shire (the Derrinallum Progress Association, the Lismore Progress Association, the Skipton Progress Association, the Terang and District Progress Association, and Timboon Action Inc) to better coordinate tourism opportunities.



Current key issues

Issues and challenges raised during discussions with the people of Camperdown fall into four general categories:

1. town development
2. governance issues
3. social issues
4. community issues.

Town development

Three major themes emerged as significant for development in the town of Camperdown. Firstly, gas was seen as a potential driver of growth for the town. Development of the gas fields off the coast has already produced some major spin-offs for trades people in the town at the different gas-related sites in the southern part of the shire. The possibility of connecting gas to the town could also potentially lead to the redevelopment of the old Bonlac site into a new cheese factory, with the concomitant gain in jobs. Some interviewees were also hopeful that the availability of gas might attract other industries to the town. For others, its availability would reduce costs and make it more viable to expand services. It was also pointed out that the availability of industrial and residential allotments was a concern in terms of future development in the town.

Secondly, there was a strong feeling among some people that the tourism potential of Camperdown and its 'lakes and craters' has not been sufficiently exploited, given that it is within easy

reach of the Ballarat gold fields, the national parks in the Otways and the Grampians, the Twelve Apostles and the Great Ocean Road, the Warrnambool Whale Nursery, and the Shipwreck Coast. A number of people pointed out that there seems to be little need to promote the Great Ocean Road given its international reputation, advocating instead for innovative promotional strategies to attract tourists and visitors with an interest in the unique natural assets and historical features in and around Camperdown.

Students, residents and the shire itself have made significant contributions towards environmental initiatives around Camperdown. At the Heritage Weekend held on 29–30 October 2005, 72 new sites were added to the heritage listing for Camperdown. Other significant features of the countryside around Camperdown include the dry stone walls.

Thirdly, the reinvention of the town as a boutique shopping precinct was envisaged by some as a marketing tool that would not only attract shoppers but also new businesses into the town. A number of new shops have recently been opened by younger business people who grew up in the town, and the recent Corangamite Business Awards indicate that Camperdown had achieved a high level of customer service in its retail sector. The recent opening of Safeway may also play a significant part in influencing shopping patterns with potential spin-offs for the smaller

and more specialised shops in the main street.

There is, however, an issue with itinerant professional workers. Closely associated with these developments is the need to attract more professionals to reside locally. Many interviewees commented that maintenance of infrastructure does not necessarily equate to maintenance of professional jobs. One reason given for non-relocation of professionals and their families into the town is the nature of short term contracts. Another reason was the perceived lack of quality services such as education and health for families. The result is that skills are lost to the local community, a concern raised particularly in terms of community capacity building.

Governance issues

Local government amalgamations in the 1990s created a larger municipality with greater economies of scale. This meant not only the displacement of the local council but also the displacement of the culture of local leadership in the town. Residents of Camperdown now have to deal with a local government concerned with the strategic issues of a much larger municipality.

While councillors once represented local interests they now have to take the interests of the whole shire into consideration. Council support for activities such as arts, recreation, and tourism is now spread across the whole municipality, so many in Camperdown felt that they were only getting part of



the attention of council. Furthermore, the new boundaries drawn up in 2004 exacerbated the distancing of council from the community. Community identity continues for the smaller areas such as the towns of the old municipalities. Others suggested that people did not have the time to volunteer their services for local government especially when the electorates were now so large.

Local government also has a problem with cost shifting. Local governments are loath to take federal and state money to create new facilities and services because they then have to pick up the cost of maintaining them. This causes resentment in communities who want to develop facilities and services but find local government unwilling or unable to support their projects.

Social issues

While the people we interviewed were fairly optimistic about the future of their town, it is also evident that some people are experiencing difficulties in Camperdown and in the Corangamite Shire. Data provided in *Healthy communities: a profile of Corangamite, Moyne and Warrnambool* (2002) shows that approximately 33 per cent of families within the three municipalities appear to be living on or below the poverty line as defined in Australian poverty, then and now, a 1988 update of

the 1975 Henderson Royal Commission into Poverty. In addition, women in the region are at least three times more likely than men to be in receipt of government income support. The recent closure of occasional child care at the neighbourhood house has also added to the problems of lower income families in the area. While a private childcare facility now exists in the town, the costs are prohibitive for many low income families.

Fluctuations occur over time in terms of the number of people in the rental market in Camperdown. There were 79 people in public rental accommodation in 1981 and 78 in 2001, and those numbers increased markedly in the late 1980s (124) and in 1991 (125). At the same time, the crisis and support accommodation worker servicing Terang and Camperdown noted that 120 clients, excluding children, had been supported in the last year. Only 5 per cent are from the Corangamite Shire, with most 'coming down the train line' from Geelong, Colac and Camperdown before relocating to Warrnambool.

Community issues

Camperdown has an impressive record in terms of fund raising for Sunnyside House and the new basketball stadium, but it was often felt that different skills are now required in terms of the responsibilities on committees of management (governance, accountability and liability) and in securing funding for community building projects and initiatives. There were also concerns about the ageing of volunteers in the town, with comments about young people needing to embrace the culture of volunteerism. It was also clear that some young people in the town have already played a significant role in environmental projects, receiving national recognition for those initiatives.



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