

LANDMARK POSTCODE

3714



Houseboating on Lake Eildon
Image courtesy of Tourism Victoria

LOCATION: Alexandra
2 hours north of Melbourne

POPULATION: 2,500

INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, timber processing, tourism, retail and community services.

CLIMATE: Seasonal.
Summer 11.2C – 29.3C.
Winter 2.5C – 11.7C.
Annual rainfall 703.3mm.

With Victoria's high country on its doorstep, Alexandra is a scenic playground for nature lovers and adventure seekers. Fishing, skiing, house boating and bushwalking are all within easy reach of this quaint and pretty country town.

But, it's the comfortable drive to Melbourne that is really shaping its future.

Just two hours from the CBD and in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range, Alexandra is the ultimate city escape and has become a popular tree-change destination.

It is a bush haven for couples wanting to give their families a country childhood, semi-retirees looking for a base close to their old life in the city and hobby farmers enjoying the best of both worlds.

Landmark's Branch Manager Belinda Hocking says the trend started about eight years ago and in that time Alexandra has been transformed into a vibrant and cosmopolitan rural retreat.

"When prices started to rise along the coast, people turned their attention inland and Alexandra has reaped the rewards."

What was traditional cattle country has been carved up into smaller blocks for horses, olives and grape growing. Established industries include stone fruit orchards, a timber processing plant and a large aquaculture sector. Eighty per cent of Australia's trout is grown in the region.

Alexandra has two primary schools, a high school, district hospital, adult education, aged care facilities and regional government agencies.

"The outskirts of Melbourne are a little over an hour's drive so it's possible to live here and work in the city but a lot of people work locally or within the region."

Tourism is a major industry and bed and breakfast accommodation has become an important niche market.

Alexandra is the gateway to Lake Eildon, one of the state's most popular resorts. This vast waterway has six times the capacity of Sydney Harbour and is surrounded by national park. The lake's long quiet reaches and deep waters attract fishing enthusiasts, water skiers and house boaters. Hundreds of craft are moored on public and private harbours.

Two of the Victoria's most popular alpine resorts are within an hour's drive of Alexandra and scenic stretches of the Goulburn and Acheron Rivers are a magnet for nature lovers.

"We are over the Dividing Range so get much better weather than the city. When Melbourne is cloudy, Alex is sunny," says Belinda.

The town is proud of its gold-mining heritage and celebrates its past as a timber town in the Timber and Tramway Museum. A regular schedule of festivals and events includes the annual Truck,

Ute and Rod show which attracts 10,000 people every Queen's Birthday long weekend.

Belinda says grazing land is getting harder to find close to town and good cattle country can fetch up to \$10,000 per acre with irrigation rights.

"Large rural holdings are in high demand but there's not a lot available," she says.

"Inquiry for lifestyle properties is keeping us very busy. There's still plenty of opportunity."

"There are very few places in the state that can boast the range of attractions we can."

Contact:

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PROPERTY GUIDE:

Residential: good three bedroom home \$300,000.

Lifestyle: 20 acres with house from \$450,000 to \$550,000.

Larger acreage: undulating country \$3,000 per acre.

River flats from \$5,000 to \$7,000 per acre.