

LANDMARK POSTCODE

3717



Trawool Valley near Yea
Picture courtesy of Tourism Victoria. Photographer Rob Blackburn

LOCATION: Yea
1½ hours north-east
of Melbourne

POPULATION: 2,600

INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, tourism

CLIMATE: Temperate
Summer 29.3°C – 11.2°C
Winter 11.7°C – 2.5°C
Rainfall 704.7mm

Yea is one of those rare country towns that offers authentic rural living within commuting distance of Melbourne’s CBD.

In the last five years, Yea’s popularity as a tree-change destination has surged as increasing numbers of people trade city life for the ease of country living.

And they are not disappointed. The historic township is in one of Victoria’s most picturesque regions where lakes, mountains, rivers and forests provide every opportunity for outdoor recreation. Yea owes the grandeur of its architecture to the gold rush era. But its contemporary appeal is the result of farming prosperity and a multi-million dollar tourism sector.

The pace of change started a decade ago when farmers began carving up their blocks into 50 acre parcels. These days the smallest rural lots are 100 acres but the market hasn’t slowed. Yea is equally appealing to people looking for a permanent lifestyle change as it is to Melbourne residents wanting a country property for weekends.

The town was recently identified as one of the state’s emerging hot spots - that is, an attractive provincial town offering a high quality life. Yea promotes itself as a perfect place to raise children. It has a high school, two primary schools, hospital, nursing home and good sports facilities. There is also a vibrant cultural sector and highly regarded food and hospitality industry.

Yea sits on the junction of the Melba and Goulburn Valley Highways and is surrounded by vast areas of national and state park. It is a perfect daytrip from Melbourne and has spectacular touring routes.

More than a million people visit the region every year.

From Melbourne, it is half way to Mt Bulla, the state’s most popular ski field. Throughout winter more than 20 food retailers do brisk trade feeding hungry skiers.

Year round the 515-kilometre shoreline of nearby Lake Eildon is a magnet for lovers of water sports, fishing and boating.

Explorers Hamilton Hume and William Hovell described the region in glowing terms when they crossed the Goulburn River on their expedition south in 1824. Once European settlers arrived, the region became established cattle country. But as Melbourne’s outer suburbs grow closer, land values around Yea have sky-rocketed. Landmark’s Stuart Oddy says farmers are being priced out of the market.

Large rural properties are being bought by city investors or, in some cases, superannuation schemes.

“They’ll run cattle on the property but they’re basically buying for the investment value,” says Stuart.

Intensive industries are on the increase including wine, stone fruit, berries and turf production. The region produces most of Australia’s strawberry runner stock and an expanding aquaculture industry supplies about 80 per cent of Australia’s trout.

But there is good value in the Yea housing market. This appeals to retirees as well as families.

“They sell up in Melbourne, buy a place in Yea and still have reserves in the bank,” says Stuart.

Two housing estates are being developed and an eight unit residential complex has just been completed next to the hospital.

“You really can enjoy the good life in Yea,” says Stuart.

“The only thing to miss about living in a big city is peak hour traffic!”

Contact:

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PROPERTY GUIDE:

Residential: Average home \$230,000 to \$270,000

10 acre blocks from \$250,000

Lifestyle: 50 acres with house \$600,000

Larger farms: River flat country up to \$10,000

Grazing country \$3,000 to \$5,000 an acre