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This article is about the Australian city. For other uses, see Ballarat (disambiguation). "Ballaarat" redirects here. For the locomotive, see Ballaarat steam engine. Town in Victoria, AustraliaBallaratVictoriaAerial view of Ballarat Central with Mt. Warrenheip on the horizonBallaratCoordinates37°33′39″S 143°50′51″E / 37.56083°S 143.84750°E / -37.56083; 143.84750Coordinates: 37°33′39″S 143°50′51″E / 37.56083°S 143.84750°E / -37.56083; 143.84750Population109,553 (2020)[1] (19th) • Density318.84/km2 (825.79/sq mi)Established1838Postcode(s)3350Elevation435–630 m (1,427–2,067 ft) AHDArea343.6 km2 (132.7 sq mi)[2] (2016 census – SUA)Time zoneAEST (UTC+10) • Summer (DST)AEDT (UTC+11)Location 110 km (68 mi) NW of Melbourne 82 km (51 mi) NW of Geelong 95 km (59 mi) SW of Bendigo LGA(s)City of BallaratState electorate(s) Buninyong Ripon WendoureeFederal Division(s)Ballarat Mean max temp Mean min temp Annual rainfall 17.7 °C 64 °F 6.6 °C 44 °F 689.4 mm 27.1 in Ballarat (/ˈbæləˌræt/)[3] is a city in the Central Highlands of Victoria, Australia. In 2020, Ballarat had a population of 109,553, making it the third-largest city in Victoria.[1][4] The Traditional Owners of the lands on which Ballarat sits are the Wadawurrung people.[5] They are part of the Kulin alliance. Within months of Victoria separating from the colony of New South Wales in 1851, gold was discovered near Ballarat, sparking the Victorian gold rush. Ballarat subsequently became a thriving boomtown that for a time rivalled Melbourne, the capital of Victoria, in terms of wealth and cultural influence. In 1854, following a period of civil disobedience in Ballarat over gold licenses, local miners launched an armed uprising against government forces. Known as the Eureka Rebellion, it led to the introduction of male suffrage in Australia, and as such is interpreted as the origin of Australian democracy. The rebellion's symbol, the Eureka Flag, has become a national symbol and is held at Ballarat's Eureka Centre. Proclaimed a city in 1871, Ballarat's prosperity, unlike that of many other gold boom towns, continued until the late 19th century, as the city's fields experienced sustained high gold yields for many decades. By the turn of the century, Ballarat's importance relative to Melbourne rapidly faded with the slowing of gold extraction. It has endured as a major regional centre, and is the commercial capital and largest city of the Central Highlands, as well as a significant tourist destination. Ballarat is known for its history, culture and its well-preserved colonial-era heritage, with much of the city subject to heritage overlays. History Prehistory and European settlement The Ballarat region was first populated by the Wadawurrung people, an Indigenous Australian people.[6] The first Europeans to sight the area were an 1837 party of six mostly Scottish squatters from Geelong, led by Somerville Learmonth, who were in search of land less affected by the severe drought for their sheep to graze. The party scaled Mount Buninyong; among them were Somerville's brother Thomas Livingstone Learmonth, William Cross Yuille and Henry Anderson, all three of whom later claimed land in what is now Ballarat. The Yuille family, Scottish settlers Archibald Buchanan Yuille and his brother William Cross Yuille, arrived in 1837 and squatted a 10,000-acre (4,000 ha) sheep run. The first houses were built near Woolshed Creek by William Yuille and Anderson (Sebastopol), while Yuille erected a hut at Black Swamp (Lake Wendouree) in 1838. Outsiders originally knew of the settlement as Yuille's Station and Yuille's Swamp. Archibald Yuille named the area "Ballaarat". Some claim the name is derived from a local Wathaurong Aboriginal word for the area, balla arat. The meaning of this word is not certain; however several translations have been made and it is generally thought to mean "resting place". In some dialects, balla means "bent elbow", which is translated to mean reclining or resting and arat meaning "place".[7] Another claim is that the name derives from Yuille's native Gaelic Baile Ararat (Town of Ararat), alluding to the resting place of Noah's Ark.[citation needed] The present spelling was officially adopted by the City of Ballarat in 1996. Gold rush era Further information: Victorian gold rush Painting by Eugene von Guerard of Ballarat's tent city in the summer of 1853–54. The first publicised discovery of gold in the region was by Thomas Hiscock on 2 August 1851, in Buninyong to the south.[8] The find brought other prospectors to the area and on 19 August 1851, more gold was found at Poverty Point.[9] Within days, a gold rush began, bringing thousands of prospectors to the Yarrowee Valley, which became known as the Ballarat diggings. Yields were particularly high, with the first prospectors in the area extracting between half an ounce[10] (which was more than the average wage of the time) and up to five ounces of alluvial gold per day. As news of the Victorian gold rush reached the world, Ballarat gained an international reputation as a particularly rich goldfield. As a result, a huge influx of immigrants occurred, including many from Ireland and China, gathering in a collection of prospecting shanty towns around the creeks and hills. Within a few months, numerous alluvial runs were established, several deep mining leads began, and the population had swelled to over 1,000 people.[11] The first post office opened on 1 November 1851, the first to open in a Victorian gold-mining settlement.[12] Parts of the district were first surveyed by William Urquhart[13] as early as October 1851.[14] By 1852 his grid plan and wide streets for land sales in the new township of West Ballarat,[15] built upon a plateau of basalt, contrasted markedly with the existing narrow unplanned streets, tents, and gullies of the original East Ballarat settlement. The new town's main streets of the time were named in honour of police commissioners and gold commissioners of the time, with the main street, Sturt Street, named after Evelyn Pitfield Shirley Sturt; Dana Street named after Henry Dana; Lydiard Street after his assistant; Doveton Street after Francis Crossman Doveton, Ballarat's first gold commissioner; Armstrong after David Armstrong; and Mair Street after William Mair.[16] These officials were based at the government encampment (after which nearby Camp Street was named), which was strategically positioned on an escarpment with an optimal view over the district's diggings. The first newspaper, The Banner, published on 11 September 1853, was one of many to be distributed during the gold-rush period. Print media played a large role in the early history of the settlement.[17] Ballarat attracted a sizable number of miners from the Californian 1848 gold rush, and some were known as Ballafornians.[18] Troopers storm the rebels' stockade during the 1854 Eureka Rebellion. Civil disobedience in Ballarat led to an armed civil uprising, the Eureka Rebellion (colloquially referred to as the "Eureka Stockade") which took place in Ballarat on 3 December 1854. The event, in which 22 miners were killed, is considered to be a defining moment in Australian history. The city earned the nickname "The Golden City" in the 1850s.[19] The gold rush population peaked at almost 60,000, mostly male diggers, by 1858.[20] However the early population was largely itinerant. As quickly as the alluvial deposits drew prospectors to Ballarat, the rate of gold extraction fluctuated and, as they were rapidly worked dry, many quickly moved to rush other fields as new findings were announced, particularly Mount Alexander in 1852, Fiery Creek[21] in 1855, and Ararat in 1857. By 1859, a smaller number of permanent settlers numbering around 23,000,[22] many of whom had built personal wealth in gold, established a prosperous economy based around a shift to deep underground gold mining. Confidence of the city's early citizens in the enduring future of their city is evident in the sheer scale of many of the early public buildings, generous public recreational spaces, and opulence of many of its commercial establishments and private housing. A local steam locomotive industry developed from 1854 with the Phoenix Foundry operating until 1906.[23] The railway came to the town with the opening of the Geelong–Ballarat line in 1862 and Ballarat developed as a major railway town.[24] As the city grew the region's original indigenous inhabitants were quickly expelled to the fringe and by 1867 few remained.[6] Post gold rush The intersection of Lydiard and Sturt streets, c. 1905, shows a bustling city of trams, horses and pedestrians. From the late 1860s to the early 20th century, Ballarat made a successful transition from a gold rush town to an industrial-age city. The ramshackle tents and timber buildings gradually made way for permanent buildings, many impressive structures of solid stone and brick mainly built from wealth generated by early mining. Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh visited between 9 and 13 December 1867 and as the first royal visit, the occasion was met with great fanfare.[25] The Prince Room was prepared at Craigs Royal Hotel for his stay.[26] The city's first civic centre—Prince Alfred Hall—erected over the Yarrowee between the two municipalities, was named in his honour during his visit. The later attempt by Ballaratian Henry James O'Farrell to assassinate the Prince was met with shock and great horror from locals.[25] Ballarat was proclaimed a city in 1871. Gong Gong dam was built in 1877 to alleviate flooding and to provide a permanent water supply. A direct railway to Melbourne was completed in December 1889.[27] Many industries and workshops had been established as a result of manufacturing and servicing for the deep lead mining industry. 20th century Development of the Ballarat North Workshops was a major initiative to capitalise on the city's burgeoning role as a railway town and transition from a declining gold mining industry. Local boosterists at the start of the 20th century adopted the nickname "Athens of Australia", first used to describe Ballarat by the jurist and politician Sir John Madden.[28][29][30][31] The first electricity supply was completed in 1901, and that year a bluestone power station was built at the corner of Ripon Street and Wendouree Parade with the main aim of electrifying the city's tramway network.[32] Despite such advancements, mining activity slowed at this time and Ballarat's growth all but stopped, leading to a decades-long period of decline. The Sunshine rail disaster in 1908 resulted in the death of dozens of Ballarat residents,[33] and in August 1909, a great storm lashed the city, resulting in the death of one person and the injury of seven others, as well as the destruction of numerous homes.[34][35] Ballarat's significant representation in World War I resulted in heavy human loss. Around this time, it was overtaken in population by the port city of Geelong, further diminishing its provincial status.[36] In response, local lobbyists continually pushed the Victorian government for decentralisation, the greatest success being the Victorian Railways opening the Ballarat North Workshops in April 1917.[37] The Great Depression proved a further setback for Ballarat, with the closure of many institutions and causing the worst unemployment in the city's history, with over a thousand people in the dole queue.[25]:38 The city's two municipalities, Ballarat East and West Town Councils, finally amalgamated in 1921 to form the City of Ballarat.[25]:32 While deep, the depression was also brief. The interwar period proved a period of recovery for Ballarat with a number of major infrastructure projects well underway including a new sewerage system. In 1930, Ballarat Airport was established. By 1931, Ballarat's economy and population was recovering strongly with further diversification of industry, although in 1936 Geelong displaced it as the state's second largest city.[38] During World War II an expanded Ballarat airport was the base of the RAAF Wireless Air Gunners' School as well as the base for USAAF Liberator bomber squadrons. In 1942, Ballarat became connected to the state electricity grid by a 66,000 kV line.[32] Prior to this, power supply was generated locally. During World War II, Ballarat was the location of RAAF No.1 Inland Aircraft Fuel Depot (IAFD), completed in 1942 in the defence of Australia against a Japanese invasion and decommissioned on 29 August 1944. Usually consisting of four tanks, 31 fuel depots were built across Australia for the storage and supply of aircraft fuel for the RAAF and the US Army Air Forces at a total cost of £900,000 ($1,800,000).[39] In the post-war era, Ballarat's growth continued. In response to an acute housing shortage, significant suburban expansion occurred. An extensive Housing Commission of Victoria estate was built on the former Ballarat Common (today known as Wendouree West).[40] The estate was originally planned to contain over 750 prefabricated houses. While planning for the estate began in 1949, main construction occurred between 1951 and 1962. The 1950s brought a new optimism to the city. On 17 April 1952 it was announced that Lake Wendouree was to be the venue for rowing events of the 1956 Summer Olympics,[25] and work soon began on an Olympic village in Gillies Street. A new prefabricted power terminal substation at Norman Street Ballarat North was constructed between 1951 and 1953 by the State Electricity Commission.[41] The first Begonia Festival, a highly successful community celebration, was held in 1953. Elizabeth II visited on 8 March 1954.[25] The Civic Centre, Prince Alfred Hall had burned down suspiciously that year; however a new Civic Hall was constructed and opened in March 1955. On 23 November 1956, the Olympic torch was carried through the city, and the following day the rowing events were held at the lake.[25] On 2 March 1958 the Queen Mother visited Ballarat. During the following decades, the city saw increased threats to its heritage. In 1964, the Ballarat City Council passed laws banning pillar-supported verandahs in the CBD, which threatened the removal of historic cast iron verandahs in the city. The by-law was met by staunch opposition from the National Trust, which had begun campaigning to protect some of the city's most historic buildings.[25]:58 By the 1970s, Ballarat began to officially recognise its substantial heritage, and the first heritage controls were recommended to ensure its preservation. With the opening of Sovereign Hill, the city made a rapid shift to become a major cultural tourist destination, visited by thousands each year. During the 1970s, a further 300 houses were constructed at Wendouree West. Private housing in the adjacent suburb of Wendouree closely matched and eventually eclipsed this by the mid-1960s. The suburb of greater Wendouree and Wendouree West had evolved as the suburban middle-class heart of the city. Charles, Prince of Wales visited Ballarat on 28 October 1974 during which he toured Sovereign Hill, the Ballarat College of Advanced Education's new Mt Helen Campus and the White Swan Reservoir and spoke at Civic Hall.[42] 21st century View of central Ballarat from St Peter's Anglican Church The city continued to grow at the national average throughout the late 20th century and early 21st century. In 2008 the City of Ballarat released a plan directing that growth of the city over the next 30 years is to be concentrated to the west of the city centre. The Ballarat West Growth Area Plan was approved by the city and state government in 2010, planning an extensive fringe development consisting of 14,000 new homes and up to 40,000 new residents including new activity centres and employment zones.[43][44] The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse final report, published on 15 December 2017, found that 139 people made a claim of child sexual abuse to the Diocese of Ballarat between 1980 and 2015, and 21 alleged perpetrators were identified in these claims. Seventeen of the 21 alleged and convicted perpetrators were priests, which is 8.7% of the priests who ministered during this period.[45] About 45 victims are estimated to have committed suicide.[46] Geography Ballarat's skyline is hidden from this view of the city looking east across Lake Wendouree to Mount Warrenheip. Mount Warrenheip dominating the skyline from Dawson Street, with the town hall clock tower on the right. Ballarat lies at the foothills of the Great Dividing Range in Central Western Victoria. Also known as the Central Highlands, it is named so because of its elevated position and moderate hills and terrain with a lack of any alpine mountains that are situated a few hundred kilometres NE. The city lies within a mostly gently undulating section of the midland volcanic plains which stretch from Creswick in the north, to Rokewood in the south, and from Lal Lal in the south-east to Pittong in the west. Geologically, the area consists of alluvial sediment and volcanic flows originating from now-extinct volcanoes such as nearby Buninyong (750m, 2460 ft) and Warrenheip (746m, 2446 ft), which are the area's tallest peaks. As a result, the basin contains large areas of fertile agricultural soil.[47] Ballarat itself is situated on an alluvial basin of the Yarrowee catchment and its tributary creeks, penetrated by sub-ranges of schists composed of granites and quartz. Along with the visible river and creeks, the catchment basin has numerous active and inactive aquifers and natural wetlands, which are used for urban water supply, agriculture and recreation. There are numerous densely forested areas around Ballarat; however due to historic wood milling and land clearing there remain no old-growth forests. The major natural bodies of water are in the west and include the former shallow swamps of Lake Wendouree which is central to the city's western suburbs and beyond Winter's Swamp and the large Lake Burrumbeet wetland complex. Almost all of the other numerous bodies of water have been created artificially and include several reservoirs, the largest being the White Swan Reservoir and smaller suburban lakes such as Lake Esmond. The contiguous urban area of Ballarat covers approximately 90 km2 (35 sq mi) of the local government area's 740 km2 (286 sq mi).[48] Approximately 90% of the urban area's land use is residential and suburban.[48] From the city centre this area extends approximately 6 kilometres (4 miles) north to the hills around Invermay, approximately 7.5 km (4.7 mi) east to Leigh Creek in the foothills of Mount Warrenheip, approximately 7 km (4 mi) west along the plains to Lucas and approximately 8.5 km (5.3 mi) south along the Yarrowee River and Canadian Creek valley to the fringe of Buninyong.[16] The central city is situated low in the valley of the Yarrowee River and surrounded by hills such that the city skyline is visible only from the hills and the lower lying inner eastern suburbs. The reach of the Yarrowee River toward Ballarat Central becomes a stormwater drain and is completely covered over as it flows under the CBD. Urban structure See also: Ballarat Central Map of the urban area (grey) and the extent of the municipal area The city is home to nationally significant heritage structures. These include the Ballarat Botanical Gardens (established 1857),[49] with the greatest concentration of public statuary,[50] the official Prime Ministers Avenue, the longest running lyric theatre building (Her Majesty's Theatre, established 1875),[51] the first municipal observatory, established 1886,[52] and the earliest and longest war memorial avenue (the Avenue of Honour, established between 1917 and 1919).[53] Ballarat is a primarily low-rise city. The City of Ballarat defines two Major Activity Centres within the urban area – the Central Business District (CBD) and Wendouree with a high concentration of business, retail and community function based primarily on the Melbourne 2030 planning model and a further 11 neighbourhood activity centres.[54] The tallest building in urban Ballarat is the seven-storey Henry Bolte wing of the Ballarat Base Hospital (1994). Beyond the central area, urban Ballarat extends into several suburban areas with a mixture of housing styles. Predominant styles are 19th-century villas, Victorian terraces,[55] Federation homes and Georgian red brick homes. Settlement patterns around Ballarat consist of small villages and country towns, some with less than a few thousand people. The Central Business District (located in Ballarat Central) is a large mixed-use office and retail district bounded to the north by railway lines, to the west by Drummond Street, to the south to Grant street and to the east by Princes Street and spanning the floodplain of the Yarrowee River. Lydiard, Sturt Streets, Armstrong, Doveton, Dana Street and Bridge Street (known as Bridge Mall) along with the historic centre of East Ballarat—Main Street and Bakery Hill have retained stands of commercial and civic buildings of state and national heritage significance. The inner established suburbs were initially laid out around the key mining areas and include Ballarat East, Bakery Hill, Golden Point, Soldiers Hill, Black Hill, Brown Hill, Eureka, Canadian, Mount Pleasant, Redan, Sebastopol and Newington. The post gold rush era has seen a boom in expansion, extending the conurbation north, south and west. To the west, Ballarat has expanded West to Lucas, Alfredton, Delacombe To The North West Wendouree, Wendouree West and Miners Rest To the north it has expanded to Ballarat North, Invermay Park,[56] Invermay, Victoria[57] Invermay and Nerrina; to the east to Warrenheip and south to Sebastopol, Mount Clear and Mount Helen with the urban area encroaching the large town of Buninyong. Wendouree is currently the only major suburban activity centre with a large indoor shopping mall—Stockland Shopping Centre (expanded in 2007[58]) and also has a number of surrounding retail parks including a strip shopping centre along Howitt Street including the large retail chain Harvey Norman. Elsewhere are small suburban hubs with supermarkets such as IGA (supermarkets) and small stretches of shopfronts. Unlike Melbourne, Ballarat does not have a defined urban growth boundary.[59] This has put continuing pressure on the city council to approve development applications for subdivisions outside of the city fringe. In response to lobbying by landholders, the Ballarat West Growth Area Plan, a major greenfield land development plan, was prepared and has approved by the city and state government to allow for planned fringe communities consisting of 14,000 new homes and up to 40,000 new residents, effectively doubling the city's urban area by extending the urban sprawl from Sebastopol, Delacombe and Alfredton west toward Bonshaw, Smythes Creek and Cardigan[43][44] with a new suburb to be known as Lucas to be created.[60] New activity centres have been developed at Delacombe and Alfredton. Architecture Victorian era buildings Ballarat is renowned for its Victorian architectural heritage. In 2003 Ballarat was the first of two Australian cities to be registered as a member of the International League of Historical Cities and in 2006 hosted the 10th World League of Historical Cities Congress.[61] The city's history is a major focus of the Collaborative Research Centre in Australian History, part of Federation University Australia, and is located at old Ballarat Gaol. The legacy of the wealth generated during Ballarat's gold boom is still visible in a large number of fine stone buildings in and around the city, especially in the Lydiard Street area. This precinct contains some of Victoria's finest examples of Victorian era buildings, many of which are on the Victorian Heritage Register or classified by the National Trust of Australia. Notable civic buildings include the Town Hall (1870–72), the former Post Office (1864), the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery (1887), the Mechanics' Institute (1860, 1869), the Queen Victoria Wards of the Ballarat Base Hospital (1890s) and the Ballarat railway station (1862, 1877, 1888). Other historic buildings include the Provincial Hotel (1909), Reid's Coffee Palace (1886), Craig's Royal Hotel (1862–1890) and Her Majesty's Theatre (1875), the oldest intact and operating lyric theatre in Australia[51] and Ballarat Fire Station (1864, 1911) one of Victoria's oldest fire fighting structures[62] and the Jewish synagogue (1861) the oldest surviving synagogue on the Australian mainland.[63] Streetscape with the former Post Office at the rear Ballarat East Fire Station, the oldest continually operating fire station in the Southern Hemisphere, and the site of the first operational telephone, made by Henry Sutton. Restoration of historic buildings is encouraged including a low interest council Heritage Loans Scheme.[64] and the prevention of demolition by neglect discouraged by council policies.[65] Since the 1970s,[66] the local council has become increasingly aware of the economic and social value of heritage preservation.[67] This is in stark contrast to the 1950s and 60s when Ballarat followed Melbourne in encouraging the removal of Victorian buildings, verandahs in particular. Recent restoration projects funded by the Ballarat include the reconstruction of significant cast iron lace verandahs including the Mining Exchange, Art Gallery (2007), Mechanics institute (2005–)[68] on Lydiard Street and in 2010 the restoration of the Town Hall and the long neglected Unicorn Hotel façade on Sturt Street.[69] Ballarat Citizens for Thoughtful Development formed in 1998 and was incorporated as Ballarat Heritage Watch in 2005 to ensure that the city's architectural heritage is given due consideration in the planning process.[70] The Ballarat Botanical Gardens (established in 1858) are recognised as the finest example of a regional botanical gardens in Australia and are home to many heritage listed exotic tree species and feature a modern glasshouse and horticultural centre and the Prime Ministers Avenue which features bronze busts of every past Australian Prime Minister. Ballarat is notable for its very wide boulevards. The main street is Sturt Street and is considered one of the finest main avenues in Australia with over 2 kilometres (1.2 miles) of central gardens known as the Sturt Street Gardens featuring bandstands, fountains, statues, monuments, memorials and lampposts. Ballarat is home to the largest of a collection of Avenues of Honour in Victoria. The 15-kilometre-long (9.3-mile) Ballarat Avenue of Honour consists of a total of approximately 4,000 trees, mostly deciduous which in many parts arch completely over the road. Each tree has a bronze plaque dedicated to a soldier from the Ballarat region who enlisted during World War I. The Avenue of Honour and the Arch of Victory are on the Victorian Heritage Register and are seen by approximately 20,000 visitors each year. The city also has the greatest concentration of public statuary in any Australian city with many parks and streets featuring sculptures and statues dating from the 1860s to the present. Some of the other notable memorials located in the Sturt Street Gardens in the middle of Ballarat's main boulevard include a bandstand situated in the heart of the city that was funded and built by the City of Ballarat Band in 1913 as a tribute to the bandsmen of the RMS Titanic, a fountain dedicated to the early explorers Burke and Wills, and those dedicated to monarchs and those who have played pivotal roles in the development of the city and its rich social fabric. These include, Robert Burns, Peter Lalor, Sir Albert Coates, Harold Edward Elliott (Pompey Elliot), William Dunstan, King George V, Queen Victoria and more. Ballarat has an extensive array of significant war memorials, the most recent of which is the Australian Ex Prisoner of War Memorial. The most prominent memorial in the city is the Ballarat Victory Arch that spans the old Western Highway on the Western approaches of the city. The archway serves as the focal point for the Avenue of Honour. Other significant individual monuments located along Sturt Street include those dedicated to the Boer War (1899–1901), the World War II (1939–1945) cenotaph, and Vietnam (1962–1972) (located adjacent to the Arch of Victory). Climate Ballarat has a moderate oceanic climate (Köppen climate classification Cfb)[71][72] with four distinct seasons. Its elevation, ranging between 400–630 metres (1,310–2,070 feet) above sea level, causes its mean monthly temperatures to tend to be on average 3 to 5 °C (5 to 9 °F) below those of Melbourne, especially in winter.[citation needed] The mean daily maximum temperature for January is 25.1 °C (77 °F),[73] while the mean minimum is 10.9 °C (52 °F).[73] In July, the mean maximum is 10.0 °C (50 °F); average July minimum is 3.2 °C (38 °F). Ballarat has 55.2 clear days annually.[73] The city has a well known reputation for unpredictable and extreme weather, ranging from snowfall to intense heatwaves.[74] Perhaps the most infamous feature of Ballarat's climate is the chilly winter, often accentuated by driving winds.[75] Fog is common on autumn and winter mornings but usually dissipates by mid-morning.Temperatures can dip below freezing from May to September, however a low of 0-2 C° is more common - widespread frosts and fog are a regular sight. Snowfall typically falls on nearby Mount Buninyong and Mount Warrenheip a few times a year, but in the urban area only once or twice, particularly during heavy winters. Snow has been known to fall heavily with several inches accumulating even in the CBD. Heavy snow seasons occurred in 1900–1902 and 1905–1907 (with record falls in 1906), and moderate snow seasons were recorded during the 1940s and 1980s. Snowfalls in the urban area have occurred in recent years: November 2006 (light),[76] July 2007 (heavy),[77][78] June 2008 (light),[79] August 2008 (light),[80] August 2014 (moderate)[81] and June 2016 (light),[82] July 2017 (light), June 2018 (moderate), May 2019 (light),[83] and August and September 2020 (light and heavy).[84] Snowy scene in Sturt Gardens in 1905The mean annual rainfall is 693 millimetres (27.3 inches),[73] with August being the wettest month (75 mm or 3.0 in). There are an average of 198 rain-free days per year.[73] Like much of Australia, Ballarat experiences cyclical drought and heavy rainfall. Flooding of the Yarrowee catchment occurs occasionally. In 1869 a serious flood of the Yarrowee River put most of the lower section of business district including Bridge and Grenville streets under water and caused the loss of two lives.[85] Prolonged drought (an average annual rainfall with falls averaging as low as 400 mm (16 in) per year since 2001) caused Lake Wendouree to dry up completely for the first time in its history between 2006 and 2007. More recently higher rainfall levels have been recorded including 95.0 mm (3.74 in) in the 24 hours to 9 am on 14 January 2011,[86] ending a four-day period of flooding rains across much of Victoria and Tasmania,[87][88][89] and contributing to the wettest January on record, with a total of 206.0 mm (8.11 in) of rain for the month.[86][90] The city's mean daily wind run is 470 km,[91] almost twice that of Melbourne, making it one of the windiest cities in Australia. This in turn causes warm summers to feel substantially cooler and near freezing winter days to have a far below zero wind chill.[92] Ballarat's highest maximum recorded temperature was 44.1 °C (111 °F) on 7 February 2009 during the 2009 southeastern Australia heat wave.[93] This was 2.1 °C (3.8 °F) above the previous record of 42.0 °C (108 °F), set on 25 January 2003. The lowest-ever recorded minimum was −6.3 °C (21 °F) at sunrise on 19 July 2015.[94] Climate data for Ballarat (Ballarat Aerodrome 1991–2020, records 1908–2020) Month Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Year Record high °C (°F) 42.0(107.6) 44.1(111.4) 39.7(103.5) 32.2(90.0) 25.0(77.0) 20.6(69.1) 16.7(62.1) 20.9(69.6) 26.5(79.7) 33.4(92.1) 37.2(99.0) 43.5(110.3) 44.1(111.4) Average high °C (°F) 26.2(79.2) 25.7(78.3) 22.9(73.2) 18.4(65.1) 14.2(57.6) 10.9(51.6) 9.9(49.8) 11.3(52.3) 14.1(57.4) 17.3(63.1) 20.4(68.7) 23.5(74.3) 18.0(64.4) Daily mean °C (°F) 18.1(64.6) 18.4(65.1) 16.2(61.2) 12.6(54.7) 9.8(49.6) 7.3(45.1) 6.6(43.9) 7.4(45.3) 9.1(48.4) 11.1(52.0) 13.9(57.0) 15.9(60.6) 12.2(54.0) Average low °C (°F) 11.0(51.8) 11.5(52.7) 9.9(49.8) 7.0(44.6) 5.1(41.2) 3.6(38.5) 3.0(37.4) 3.1(37.6) 4.4(39.9) 5.9(42.6) 7.9(46.2) 9.5(49.1) 6.9(44.4) Record low °C (°F) 0.7(33.3) −1.4(29.5) −0.6(30.9) −4.1(24.6) −4.5(23.9) −4.6(23.7) −6.3(20.7) −5.0(23.0) −4.6(23.7) −3.6(25.5) −1.0(30.2) −1.0(30.2) −5.6(21.9) Average precipitation mm (inches) 39.7(1.56) 31.2(1.23) 35.9(1.41) 43.4(1.71) 52.2(2.06) 61.9(2.44) 62.0(2.44) 72.3(2.85) 68.4(2.69) 59.1(2.33) 56.6(2.23) 52.2(2.06) 635.4(25.02) Average rainy days 7.7 6.9 8.5 11.7 15.8 18.2 19.9 18.6 16.8 14.5 11.8 10.5 160.9 Average afternoon relative humidity (%) 44 43 46 55 69 77 76 72 65 60 56 48 59 Source: [95] Environment Natural reserves and commons Ballarat Town Common in autumn 2018 While there are no national parks in Ballarat's proximity, Ballarat is bordered by extensive bushland to the north, south and south west and sensitive wetlands to the east. The most central park to the city is the 130 ha Victoria Park, with a plethora of ovals and fields, playgrounds, walking tracks and quiet roads. There are a number of nearby state parks and large reserves including the Enfield State Park,[96] Creswick Regional Park, Mount Warrenheip Flora Reserve, Mount Buninyong Reserve and Lake Burrumbeet park. There are also smaller parks, like Black Hill, Victoria Park, Pioneer Park and Yarowee Reserve, located within walking distance of the city centre. Ballarat is unique in Australia—and internationally—for having retained much of its commons land, which can be used by any resident of Ballarat. Ballarat Town Common, Ballarat West Town Common and Ballarat Common are located to the west of the city. Ballarat Town Common can be accessed via Howe Street in Miners Rest and is used by dog walkers and ramblers, especially because of its open grass fields and native wetland. Ballarat West Town Common is presently farmed on by licensed farmers.[97] The commons were reduced in size during the 20th century for property development.[98] The region is home to a large koala population with protected areas established in the city's outer southern and eastern settlements.[99][100] Pollution As a growing regional city there are issues including pollution, waterway health and invasive species. Air quality is generally good,[101] however dust is sometimes an issue in the summer months[102] and woodsmoke from fireplaces contributes to reductions in visibility in the winter months.[103] Ballarat's waterways have historically been affected by heavy pollution from both mining and industry.[104] The Ballarat Environment Network formed in 1993 to provide a voice for environmental and nature conservation issues in Ballarat and its surroundings.[105] Another large lobby group for sustainability in the city is the Ballarat Renewable Energy And Zero Emissions (BREAZE) formed in 2006.[106] The City of Ballarat released an Environment Sustainability Strategy for the city in 2007.[107] Many parts of urban Ballarat have been affected by the introduction of exotic species, particularly introduced flora. Common gorse is one such problem which has prompted the formation of an official Ballarat Region Gorse Task Force in 1999 to control.[108] European rabbits[109] and red foxes[110] cause significant environmental damage in the region's agriculture areas. Economy The economy of Ballarat is driven by all three economic sectors, though contemporary Ballarat has emerged as a primarily service economy with its main industry being the service industry and its key areas of business including tourism, hospitality, retail, professional services, government administration and education. Secondary sector including manufacturing, which had grown in the 20th century remains an important sector. The city's historic primary sector roots including mining and agriculture continue to play a role, though one that has declined since the 20th century. Industries emerging this century include information technology service sector and renewable energy. Service industries As a major service centre for the populous goldfields region, Ballarat has large sectors of employment in business including retail, professional services and trades as well as state and federal government branch offices for public services and health care and non-government service organisations. Collectively these industries employ more than half of the city's workforce and generate the bulk of the city's economic activity. Ballarat is the main retail economy in the region. The city has several key retail districts including a pedestrian mall known as Bridge Mall comprising over 100 traders. There are also indoor shopping malls including Central Square Shopping Centre and Stockland Wendouree. better known as Wendouree Village, with a large number of specialty stores. Major department stores include Myer, Target, Big W, Kmart, Harvey Norman and Harris Scarfe.[111] Additionally each of the major supermarkets (Coles, Woolworths, IGA and Aldi) are represented. Servicing the financial sector are branches of the big four Australian retail banks (National Australia Bank, Australia and New Zealand Banking Group, Commonwealth Bank and Westpac) along with Bendigo Bank and St. George Bank and a number of smaller independent financial services firms. Federation University Australia exports education through a large international students program and throughout Australia through distance education programs. In recent years, a large technology park, the Ballarat Technology Park with communications centre has been established, with tenants including IBM and employing over 1,400 people.[112] Ballarat West Employment Zone (BWEZ) is located on the north-west fringe of Ballarat, adjacent to the Ballarat Airport, existing rail infrastructure and the Ballarat Western Link Road.[113] Ballarat West Employment Zone (BWEZ) will become the engine room for jobs and economic growth in Ballarat over the next 20 years. The project involves the development of surplus Crown Land for industrial, wholesale, logistics, construction, commercial and residential uses, encouraging employment growth in Ballarat and the surrounding region. BWEZ will also include a freight hub, secure infrastructure and access to road, rail and ports.[113] Businesses located un BWEZ include CHS Broadbent, Westlab Pty Ltd, Agrimac, Milestone Benchtops, Kane Transport and Office Vision. Tourism and hospitality Main Street in Sovereign Hill, a large open-air gold mining museum, is Ballarat's most famous attraction. Ballarat attracts 2.2 million visitors a year[114] and the tourism and hospitality industry is a A$480 million a year sector which accounts for around 15% of Ballarat's economy and employs around 2,870 people.[115] Tourism in Ballarat is promoted by Ballarat Regional Tourism.[116] A significant heritage tourism industry has not grown substantially in Ballarat since the 1960s. Ballarat is most notable for the award-winning open-air museum known as Sovereign Hill, a recreated 1850s gold mining settlement opened in 1970. Sovereign Hill is Ballarat's biggest tourism drawcard and is consistently rated among the best outdoor museums in the world and continues to expand. Sovereign Hill accounts for over half a million of Ballarat's visitors and $40 million in tourism revenue.[117] Several businesses and attractions have capitalised on Ballarat's gold mining history. They include Kryal Castle (1972), "Gold Rush Mini Golf" (2002) featuring the "Big Miner" (2006) one of Australia's big things (although the original proposal appeared larger and for the miner to hold the Eureka Flag)[118] at Ballarat's eastern entrance. Other tourist attractions include the Eureka Centre; The Gold Museum, Ballarat;[119] Ballarat Botanic gardens and Lake Wendouree; the Museum of Australian Democracy; the Ballarat Tramway Museum and Ballarat Ghost Tours and Ballarat Wildlife Park. A large number of Ballarat hotels, motels and restaurants service the tourism industry. The Ballarat Tourist Association is an industry based non-profit, membership organisation representing the city's tourism industry. Ballarat honours its rich history by hosting a number of annual festivals with historical and cultural focus including the Ballarat Begonia Festival, Ballarat Heritage Weekend and Ballarat Beat Rockabilly Festival.[120] Manufacturing According to the 2006 Australian Census, manufacturing is Ballarat's third largest employment sector, accounting for 14.8% of all workers.[121] Ballarat attracts investment from several international manufacturers. The Australian headquarters of Mars, Incorporated was established in Ballarat in 1979 with the main Ballarat factory producing popular confectionery including Mars bars,[122] Snickers and M&M's for the Australian market as well as expanding in 2013 to produce Maltesers.[123] McCain Foods Limited Australian headquarters was established in Ballarat in 1970 and the company continues to expand its operations.[124] The Ballarat North Workshops is a major manufacturer of public transportation products with current investment from Alstom.[125] Ballarat also has a large number of home-grown companies producing textiles, general industrial engineering, food products, brick and tiles, building components, prefabricated housing components and automotive components. Brewing was once a large-scale operation, with many large businesses including the public company Phoenix Brewery, and although large-scale brewing has ceased, the city retains a substantial microbrewery industry.[126] Primary sector Replica of the "Welcome Nugget", found at Ballarat, the second-largest gold nugget discovered in recorded history Though historically an important sector, the production of Ballarat's primary sector declined for many decades, recovering only marginally since 2006.[127] Where historically the mining industry supported tens of thousands of workers or the majority of the population, today agriculture dominates the sector, though collectively both industries employ less than thousand people or just over 2% of the City of Ballarat's total workforce.[128] Ballarat rose to prominence as a goldrush boomtown, though gold no longer plays a pivotal role in the economy of the city. Nevertheless, deep underground mining continues to the present date with a single main mine operating. There are still thought to be large, undiscovered gold reserves in the Ballarat region, with investigations being made by local and national companies.[129] Lihir Gold invested in Ballarat Goldfields in 2006,[130] however it downscaled its operations in 2009 due to the expense of extraction[131] before selling its stake in 2010 to Castlemaine Goldfields.[132] Along with gold, lignite (coal), kaolin (clay) and iron ore have also been mined in the Ballarat region and nearby Lal Lal however many of the resource deposits have since been exhausted. An active quarrying industry with large enterprises including Boral Limited[133] extracts and manufactures building materials from the Ballarat region, including clays, aggregates, cements, asphalts. Approximately half (38,000 hectares or 94,000 acres) of the municipality's area is rural with optimal conditions for agriculture including rich volcanic soils and climate.[127] This area is used primarily for agriculture and animal husbandry and generates more than $37 million in commodities.[134] The region supports an active potato growing industry that has supplied local food manufacturers including McCain, though more recently has been threatened by cheaper imports.[135] Other large crops include grains, vegetables, grapes and berries. Cattle and poultry stocks, including sheep, cows and pigs, support an active local meat and dairy industry. The Ballarat Livestock Selling Centre is the largest cattle exchange in regional Victoria.[136] The Ballarat Agricultural and Pastoral Society formed in 1856[137] and has run the Ballarat Show annually since 1859.[138] A$7.5 million[139] forestry industry is active in nearby state forests as well as on a small scale in the urban area along the Canadian Valley around the suburbs of Mt Clear and Mt Helen areas

2010–11 and 2014,[223] however Ballarat City Council and federal member of parliament have dismissed recent proposals.[224][225][226] Ballarat Airport located 8 km (5 mi) north-west of the CBD consists of two sealed runways (each approximately 1,400 m (4,600 ft) long and 30 m (98 ft) wide) as well as extensive sealed aprons, night lighting and NDB navaid. Master Plans for the Airport were completed in 2005 and subsequently 2013.[227] The report made a series of recommendations and forecasts that included lengthening, widening and strengthening of the existing main runway, consideration for expansion of the passenger terminal, recommendations for future use of aprons, and development of future structures supporting larger aircraft that would result from the forecast increased frequent usage. In 2020, initial Federal funding was provided to enable the re-building and re-instatement of the main north–south runway to 1900m (6233 feet). Ballarat has a long history of cycling as a form of transport and recreation. The current cycling network continues to grow and consists of several marked on-road routes and 50 kilometres (31 miles) of segregated bicycle facilities including several main routes: the Ballarat–Skipton Rail Trail and the Yarrowee River Trail with connections to the Gong Gong Reservoir.[228] Buningyong Trail, Sebastopol Trail, and the Lake Wendouree shared path.[229] The Ballarat Bicycle Users Group provides advocacy for the growing number of cyclists in the city.[230] The popularity of cycling in Ballarat is also demonstrated by the large number of spectators and participants drawn to cycling sporting events held in the city.[231] Utilities Ballarat's residents are serviced by a wide range of public utilities including water, gas and electricity, telephony and data communications supplied, overseen and regulated by state based authorities and private enterprise and local council. Water supply as well as sewage collection and disposal are provided by Central Highlands Water.[232] Drinking water is sourced from a network reservoirs all located in the highlands to the east, however the majority is sourced from two main reservoirs—Lal Lal and White Swan. The Lal Lal Reservoir (built in 1970[233] with a capacity of 59,500 megalitres (1.57×1010 US gallons)[234]) is Ballarat's largest water catchment accounting for approximately two-thirds of the city's water usage.[235] The White Swan reservoir (built in 1952[233] with a 14,100 Ml (3.7×109 US gal) capacity) supplies most of the remainder.[234] Since May 2008, the White Swan has been topped up by water from Bendigo's Sandhurst Reservoir through the Goldfields Superpipe with water originally sourced from the Goulburn River system.[236] Kirks Reservoir (built between 1860 and 1862 with a capacity of 400 Ml (110,000,000 US gal)) and Gong Gong Reservoir (built in 1877 at Gong Gong, Victoria[228] with a capacity of 1,902 Ml (502,000,000 US gal)[234]) are historic main water supplies now maintained for emergency use.[237] Other reservoirs supplying Ballarat include Moorabool reservoir (located in Bolwarrah, Victoria[238] with a capacity of 6,738 Ml (1.780×109 US gal)), Wilson's Reservoir (located in the Wombat State Forest with a capacity of 1,013 Ml (268,000,000 US gal)), Beales reservoir (built 1863[239] located at Wallace with a capacity of 415 Ml (110,000,000 US gal)) and Pincotts reservoir (built 1867[239] located at Leigh Creek, Victoria[240] with a capacity of 218 Ml (58,000,000 US gal)).[241] Sewage is managed by two plants—the Ballarat North Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Ballarat South Waste Water Treatment Plant.[242] Residential electricity is supplied by Victorian electricity distributor Powercor, while residential natural gas is supplied by AGL Energy. Telephone services are provided via the Doveton Street (BRAT) telephone exchange[243] which was originally built by the Australian Telecommunications Commission (now known as Telstra) who remains its owner, though Optus now also operates services from this facility. The city's cellular network currently uses Universal Mobile Telecommunications System (UMTS). Telstra has provided mobile telecommunications to Ballarat since 2003 (initially as CDMA). Optus provided competition with its entrance to the market in 2003 along with significant service upgrades in 2004[244] followed by Vodafone in mid-2009.[245] Data communications are provided by several companies. Telstra was the first company to provide dial-up Internet access via the Ballarat exchange, however the first network for broadband Internet access available in the city was a hybrid optical fiber cable and coaxial cable built by Neighbourhood Cable in 2001.[246] Since then, Telstra and Optus have entered the Ballarat market, providing Asymmetric digital subscriber line (ADSL) services for residential Internet access from four main exchanges—Ballarat, Wendouree (Howitt Street), Sebastopol (Skipton Street) and Alfredton (Cuthberts Road). These companies also provide mobile data access Evolved HSPA and since late 2011 3GPP Long Term Evolution (4G). Ballarat's rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN) is seen as vital for the city's growing IT industry.[247][248] During Ballarat's first stage NBN rollout in 2012, 17,800 homes will be directly connected to the network via optical fibre cable.[249] Crime In 2014, the city was one of a number of Australian regional centres examined by an ABC Four Corners report on the use of methamphetamine, along with Devonport, Burnie, Castlemaine and St Arnaud.[250][251] See also List of people from Ballarat References ^ a b c d "3218.0 – Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2017–18: Population Estimates by Significant Urban Area, 2008 to 2018". Australian Bureau of Statistics. Australian Bureau of Statistics. 27 March 2019. Retrieved 25 October 2019. Estimated resident population, 30 June 2018. ^ "2016 Census Community Profiles: Ballarat". ABS Census. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved 15 September 2016. ^ "Ballarat History – Origin of some Ballarat Names". Ballarat.com. 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