Healesville, Chum Creek, Badger Creek & Fernshaw

Locality Overview

The township of Healesville is located approximately 65km east of Melbourne and is the largest rural township in Yarra Ranges. It is located at the base of the forested areas of the Great Dividing Range at the eastern edge of the open rural farming areas of the Yarra Valley.

Healesville has pockets of residential areas set within rural and forested areas. It acts as a hub for the surrounding townships and attracts significant visitor numbers.

Healesville consists of a large Aboriginal community, which is diverse with membership made up of local traditional owners and those whose traditional lands are elsewhere. There are 294 Aboriginal residents living in and around Healesville, at the time of writing.

Badger Creek and Chum Creek make up the broader residential area around Healesville. Femshaw is located on the Watts River, north-east of Healesville. Femshaw lies at the foot of the Black Spur, with Mount Juliet and Mondah providing spectacular scenery.

There are 7,832 residents in the communities of Healesville, Chum Creek, Badger Creek and Femshaw, at the time of writing. Detailed demographic profiles are available from the Yarra Ranges Council website at http://yarraranges.vic.gov.au
Historical Context

Healesville and its surrounds is an important area in Aboriginal history as a result of policies which saw many Indigenous people moved to Healesville from their traditional lands.

Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve was established in 1863. Coranderrk was a 2300 acre parcel of land, south of Healesville and it was established as a ‘protectorate’ for the original habitants. By 1865 the population of Coranderrk number 105, making it Victoria’s largest reserve at the time. The Indigenous residents developed a thriving farming community, which soon became self sufficient.

The surrounding landowners started putting pressure on the government for access to the fertile land. By 1886 the government started to integrate the Aboriginal people at Coranderrk into white society. Although the residents protested, Coranderrk was scaled back until 1924 when the remaining residents were relocated to Lake Tyres, in East Gippsland. The Healesville Sanctuary now occupies part of the original Coranderrk Reserve.

Healesville was named after Richard Heales, the Premier of Victoria from 1860-1861. The town was surveyed in 1864 with the post office opening in May 1865. Healesville became a resting place for travellers on their way to the Woods Point goldfields. Shops began to open and timbercutters started to arrive as New Chum Creek was abandoned. The first land sales took place in 1865 and the township continues to grow. With the ongoing improvement of the roads, Cobb & Co established a coach service from Healesville over Black Spur in the late 1870s.

The arrival of the railway in 1889 from Yarra Glen enabled the development of Healesville as a tourist attraction and the development of guest houses. The railway line from Yarra Glen to Healesville includes a 1 in 40 climb into a 154m tunnel and then the same 1 in 40 descent. In the 1900s the township would see over 10,000 visits each year from tourists. The passenger railway closed in 1980 with the original station site reflecting the development of Healesville as a tourist destination.

The construction of the Maroondah Dam in 1927, to replace the weir, brought several hundred workers to Healesville. With the completion of the Dam, the departure of the workers and the onset of the 1930s depression Healesville’s limited range of industries highlighted the vulnerabilities of the area. The Colin Mackenzie Sanctuary (now the Healesville Sanctuary) opened in 1934 and the first platypus bred in captivity was born there c.1943.

Badger Creek was named after the wombats in the area, which were often called badgers. Although the township of Badger Creek was surveyed in 1894, it was not settled until some time later. The Coranderrk school opened in 1890 and was replaced by the Badger Creek primary school in 1899.

Fernshaw was first settled in the 1860s with the area cleared for orchards and berry growing. The Fernshaw picnic ground is the only local facility.

Transport Options

A bus service (686) connects the residential areas of Healesville with Badger Creek, Monday to Friday. Chum Creek is connected to Healesville by another bus service (687). The Lilydale to Healesville bus service (685) is a two-way service from Lilydale railway station, through the townships of Coldstream and Yarra Glen before going onto Healesville. This service operates approximately hourly, Monday to Friday and less frequently on Saturdays and Sundays.

Victorian taxis operate within prescribed taxi zones. The urban area of Yarra Ranges sits within the Metropolitan Taxi Boundary. Healesville, Badger Creek, Chum Creek and Fernshaw are all outside the Metropolitan Taxi Boundary. There are several taxis in operation in the area outside the Metropolitan Taxi Boundary these generally cover the Yarra Valley, Upper Yarra and Hills districts.
Retail and Commercial Overview

Healesville provides a range of retail, professional and business services to cater for both tourists and residents. The town has a shopping district stretching several kilometres along Main Street and an industrial area.

The township is also a tourist destination for agricultural produce and wine. It is a key outlet for Yarra Valley regional produce and a thriving tourist hub. There are over 40 Bed and Breakfast businesses operating in the area.

Healesville is home to a number of tourist attractions including Healesville Sanctuary, Yarra Valley Tourist Railway, Healesville Racecourse, Maroondah Reservoir and the RACV Country Club.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Services</th>
<th>Number In Area *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail businesses (e.g. supermarket, newsagent, drycleaners, etc)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Station</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Primary School</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Secondary School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary Education</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Practitioner Clinic/s</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational facilities (e.g. netball court, football oval, swimming pool, tennis courts, reserves, etc)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This is indicative only and decisions should not be made on this information alone.

Community Facilities & Services

Healesville and the surrounding towns are serviced by a range of facilities and services. These include childcare, kindergarten, the Healesville District Hospital, Yarra Valley Community Health Service (http://www.easternhealth.org.au/locations/yarravalleycommunityhealth/default.aspx), EACH (http://www.each.com.au/healesville-early-intervention-program/), primary schools and a secondary school in Healesville.

Worawa Aboriginal College is located on the edge of Healesville and provides mainstream education in a culturally supportive environment.

Healesville also has a library, Memorial Hall, swimming pool and a Council Community Link. The Flexi Library Service visits local aged care services and playgroups on a fortnightly basis.

There are also a range of recreational reserves, parks and BBQ areas.

Current Developments

A Healesville Cultural Community Precinct is currently under development, with renovations expected to be completed by mid 2012.

The facility will include a state of the art flexible community hall, theatre and community cinema. A new stage house will be included with a foyer and retracting seats that will create a large floor space and back of stage facilities.
Environmental Characteristics

Healesville is located on the junction of the Watts River and the Grace Burn creek. Some of the residential areas of Healesville consist of steep sections of land with an extensive cover of canopy trees.

Most of Watts River is contained within the forested Maroondah Reservoir water supply catchment. The tributaries of Watts River include Donnelly and New Chum creeks. Donnelly’s creek contains a heritage-listed weir. The Maroondah Reservoir was completed in 1927 and has a capacity of 22,000 million litres.

Rainforest vegetation is present in the creek lines and gullies with dryer vegetation around Chum Creek. There remains a large percentage of remnant vegetation in public and private land which is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna.

The Brush Tailed Pahscogale, a small nocturnal marsupial that lives in tree-tops and on trunks is found within the Healesville area.
References and Further Reading

- McKenzies Bus Service

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If you have any enquiries about information in these snapshots, please contact the Community Engagement and Development Unit on 1300 368 333.