

RESEARCH MATTERS
News from the Department of Sustainability and Environment's Research and Analysis Branch

THE NEW TOWNS IN TIME

Many people have been asking us when we are going to update *Towns in Time*. Since we first published *Towns in Time – Data* and *Towns in Time – Analysis* in 1999, it has been one of our most popular publications. The 1999 edition was a time series database for Victorian towns with a population of more than 200 people and covered the most used variables from the 1981, 1986, 1991 and 1996 censuses. We also included the rural areas of each municipality and some data about the New South Wales local government areas (LGAs) immediately north of the Murray River. The analysis report linked the changing characteristics of the labour force, industry, income levels, patterns of settlement and population change.

At the end of last year, we conducted a survey of our users. The results have been used to revise contents and improve modes of publication for the new *Towns in Time*.

As the 2001 census data has now been published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), we have embarked on updating *Towns in Time – Data* to 2001. This is not as straightforward as some might imagine. Town boundaries change and we have to adjust collection district census data back over time. There are also some changes to data, which require new concordances to be made back to 1981. Two Monash graduates have been helping us put this database together over the past two months. We should have the data task completed by the end of March.

We are hoping, therefore, to have a new 2001 census edition of *Towns in Time – Data* published by May. It will be published as a hard copy report and a read-only electronic version. Owing to resource constraints and the high priority placed on having new population projections, we have no immediate plans for a new edition of *Towns in Time – Analysis*.



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POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Projecting populations over 30 years or so is never easy. To do it well requires much information on the characteristics and drivers of population change. However, rapidly changing trends mean there is a need to constantly update projections for the wide range of users we have in government, local government, business and the community. We are conscious that our current published set of projections, *Victoria in Future*, published in February 2000, is now in need of renewal.

As the demand for many goods and services is age related, most users of population projections want projected age structures of populations. Doing this is complex as it involves ageing single year of age populations year by year, for each area, and ‘bombarding’ that population with propensities to migrate in or out to different places, and with age specific mortality and fertility rates. These propensities are based on assumptions, some gained from ABS and others derived from discussion with users.

We are intending, therefore, to fully update *Victoria in Future* once we have final ABS 2001 populations by age and sex, which we expect to receive from ABS in April. We anticipate that we will be able to publish a complete new *Victoria in Future* series by the end of 2003. These will project populations by age and sex for LGAs (and SLAs) to 2031 and for Melbourne and regional Victoria to 2051. We will also project households and dwellings for LGAs to 2031. In response to your requests, we also intend to produce projections of household types, but, given the uncertainties of this methodology, we can make no firm commitment at this stage.

Once a new *Victoria in Future* based on the final 2001 estimated resident populations (ERPs) is published, we intend to revise or update population projections on an annual basis, following the release of ABS local government ERPs (usually in March of each year).

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE ONLINE?

Becoming a more innovative and creative economy and society ensures that Victoria not only ‘keeps up’ with the rest of the world, but becomes a global leader and player in the areas that will drive future economic growth. Through the Innovation Statement: *Victorians. Bright Ideas. Brilliant Future*. (October 2002), the Victorian Government aims to achieve just this.

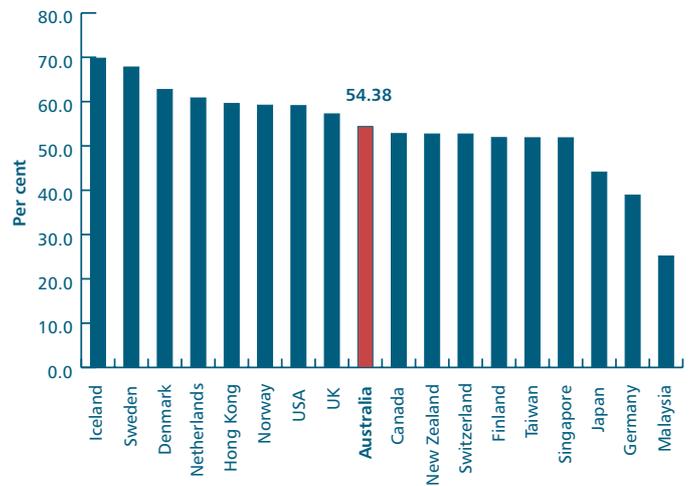
The spread of information and communications technologies (ICT) among the population, as well as the extent to which it is applied by businesses, is one measure of the performance of an innovation economy and *Melbourne 2030*, the Government’s metropolitan strategy, contains a number of initiatives designed to encourage the use of ICT throughout the community.

Measuring how many are online around the world is an inexact science. The following charts are based on many surveys, using different measurement parameters, compiled by the Irish internet statistics company, NUA, which qualifies the data as being ‘an educated guess’.

How is Australia performing?

Australia’s performance is good, as measured by the percentage of people online.

Percentage of population online, 2002

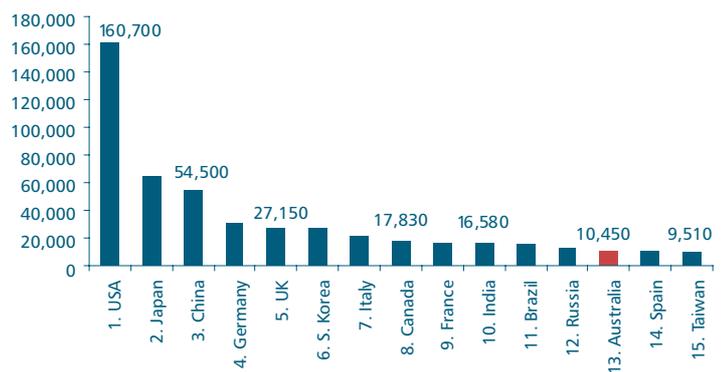


Source: www.nua.ie/surveys, accessed 29 Jan. 2003

More than 54 per cent of Australia’s population is estimated to be online, higher than countries such as Canada, Singapore, Japan and Germany. Scandinavian countries are the best performers, with Iceland achieving a remarkable 69.8 per cent of its population online.

Given its relatively low population, Australia performs well even in terms of the absolute number of its people defined as being online. According to a survey by ET Forecasts, Australia ranks thirteenth in terms of the absolute number of people who are Internet users (www.etforecasts.com, accessed on 11 Dec. 02).

Internet users, 2002 ('000)



Source: www.etforecasts.com, accessed 11 Dec. 2002

How does NUA define ‘online’?

Where possible, ‘How Many Online’ figures represent both adults and children who have accessed the Internet at least once during the three months prior to being surveyed. Where these figures are not available, NUA uses figures for users who have gone online in the past six months, past year, or ever.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS BRANCH NEWS

More changes for Research Matters

Who was it that once said 'the more things change, the more they stay the same'? With the recent creation of the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Planning and Strategic Planning functions from the Department of Infrastructure have been shifted into this new portfolio. This means another move for the Research and Analysis Branch and yet another name change?

Despite a few name changes, our core commitment is still to provide you with interesting, relevant and up-to-date information on the latest demographic, housing, and economic research. We look forward to continuing to bring you quality information and publications. In particular, we will be releasing updated 2001 Census-based updates to products such as *Melbourne in Fact* and *Regional Victoria in Fact*, *Towns in Time*, and in late 2003/early 2004, an updated set of small area population projections.

Monitoring Greater Melbourne Competition

Congratulations to the lucky winners of the *Monitoring Greater Melbourne* – we had a fantastic response with dozens of entries. The winners were: Liz Bailey, Karen Gray, Grant Meyer, Tim Nott, Janet Simmonds, and Helen Woodside.

Victorian Population Bulletin – 2003 edition

The 2003 edition of the *Victorian Population Bulletin* is currently running a little behind our regular schedule. ABS will not be releasing their small area population estimates (ERPs) until early April 2003. The *Population Bulletin* release is now likely to be some time in May 2003. It will provide preliminary population estimates for all 79 LGAs as of 30 June 2002. It will also include the ABS's finalised population estimates for 30 June 2001. The preliminary estimates, published in the *Special Edition* of the *Population Bulletin* last year, are expected to undergo some revision.

If you haven't received this product in the past and are interested in population and demographic statistics, please contact the Research and Analysis Branch, so that we can ensure you are on our mailing list.

GET THE FACTS

- Are you looking for easy-to-use, LGA-by-LGA breakdown of key demographic variables from the 2001 Census?
- Would you like to compare household income or labour force participation for Melbourne with other State capital cities?
- Do you need to compare Victorians' computer use or methods or travel to work with the national averages?
- Perhaps you are looking to compare the age structure and educational attainment of several neighbouring LGAs in Victoria.
- Or you may have been a user of *Melbourne in Fact* or *Regional Victoria in Fact* in the past.

Well, the Research and Analysis Branch is nearing the final stages of production on the 2001 Census versions of both *Melbourne in Fact* and *Regional Victoria in Fact*.

Melbourne in Fact and *Regional Victoria in Fact* provide:

- 2001 Census data for Melbourne's 31 LGAs and Regional Victoria's 48 LGAs, including the newly created Benalla and Mansfield
- 2001 Census data for Australia, the States and Territories and all capital city Statistical Divisions (SDs)
- an easy-to-use snapshot of key variables from the 2001 Census
- quick comparisons between local or regional areas and the Melbourne, regional Victorian, total Victorian, or Australian averages
- useful information for planning infrastructure and services at the local level
- critical input to informed investment decisions.

These publications update *Melbourne in Fact 1996* (released in 1998) and *Melbourne in Fact 1991* (released in 1995).and *Regional Victoria in Fact 1996* (released in 1998) and *Regional Victoria in Fact 1991* (released in 1995).

They will be available through Information Victoria and we intend to have them printed and on sale in April.

KNOW YOUR AREA

Since Stage 2 of *Know Your Area* last went online, we have received a lot of positive feedback from our users.

We will be emailing our customers when new data additions take place. Users are also encouraged to email us if they are interested in updates to particular datasets or to all datasets.

For further information, please contact Christina Inbakaran on tel. 9655 6054 or email christina.inbakaran@doi.vic.gov.au



WEB SITE NEWS

Research online

The reorganisation of the Research web site is now complete. However, we will be moving to the Department of Sustainability and Environment web site in the coming months. We will keep our customers posted via *Research Matters* and email updates. For the time being, our Internet address remains www.doi.vic.gov.au/research. Key information is available as follows:

Sections	Some of things you'll find
Population	<i>Victorian Population Bulletin</i> (all editions since 2000) <i>Victoria in Future: population projections 1996–2021</i>
Housing and land	<i>Residential Land Bulletin</i> since March 2001 Future residential land development Residential redevelopment monitoring Subdivision process Industrial land monitoring
Mobility and accessibility	Links to Activity Centres and <i>Latrobe Valley Access and Mobility Study</i>
Employment and economic activity	An upcoming section – Includes access to Monitoring Greater Melbourne
Metropolitan and regional research	<i>Suburbs in Time</i> <i>Towns in Time</i> <i>Know Your Area</i> <i>Regional Atlas</i> , etc. Local Connections Online, Seminars and Workshops

We would like to remind our readers to use the Local Government and Research Network mailing list form, which can be accessed via the Research Contacts page. Please email your comments, questions and suggestions to christina.inbakaran@doi.vic.gov.au.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESEARCH NETWORK AND LOCAL CONNECTIONS ONLINE

The Local Government Research Network (LGRN) section of our web site has also undergone reorganisation as part of the Research section redesign. The key sections are:

- LGRN seminars and workshops
- *Local Connections* online
- Join the LGRN
- LGRN working group
- Contact details for the LGRN coordinators.

We have also received a large number of constructive comments from our users regarding *Local Connections* being an online newsletter. The *Local Connections* online archives page enables the user to easily access articles of interest. The Housing Strategies page is another good information-sharing point for local councils; it:

- enables councils to register their Housing Strategies
- lists the datasets used
- details issues the councils are faced with
- nominates the contact person.

Another page similar to the Housing Strategies page is the Councils project list page. This page is another useful tool for people to keep up to date with projects from other councils. To register a project, please provide:

- name of the project
- contact person
- status of the project.

The response from councils has been positive and, for councils who would like to add their details, to either the Housing Strategies or Council project list pages, please email christina.inbakaran@doi.vic.gov.au. To view a complete list of all councils that have registered so far, please visit our Housing Strategies page.

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