

RESEARCH MATTERS
News from the Department of Infrastructure's
Research Unit

THE NEXT WAVE OF CHANGE

Identifying the shift that is occurring from an industrial economy to the new economy can be confusing; so many things are happening at once. Almost by definition, the transition is full of paradoxes. It is also becoming more apparent that we are looking at not just one shift but a series of changes which have different spatial outcomes and consequences for place-related policies. In this respect, post-industrialism is no different from the early waves of industrial development which took place more than 100 years ago. So far, it appears that two distinct but overlapping waves have occurred in this period following post-industrialism.

The first wave was about technical and engineering miracles and is best associated with powerful computers, microcomputers and networks, and still has a strong presence through the spread of the Internet. These smart technologies and communications facilitated the shift of the international finance system and business into a new global era. The young baby boomers were the engineers of the new technology. Many had benefited from the popular expansion of higher education; some used universities as a base for experimentation and development, while others dropped out to do their own, but equally effective, 'thing'.



Changing workplace of the X generation

This wave conjures up images of Silicon Valley and other lesser technology parks dotted around suburban or exurban North America, Europe and Australia. In many cases, defence industries and government contracts were a powerful market for the new technology and acted as a magnet for high-tech industries.

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The second and post-Cold-War wave of change appears different in most aspects. Rather than being dominated by technology, it is softer and more about image making, fashion and design, packaging and customisation. Yet although these industries increasingly utilise new information technology, their space demands or geography are different and characterised by a different demography.

Allied with changes in a revolution in information technology, a quieter revolution has been occurring in our social organisation and demography. Family, class, religion or neighbourhood have become less influential in determining the lives we lead. Our lifestyles are now characterised by disruption and uncertainty which can lead to less commitment to the future – hence lower marriage and fertility rates, a lessening desire for home ownership, etc. However, this individualism has created just the type of people to meet the challenges of the second-wave industries and to create the demand for them.

Members of the X generation have been able to launch themselves into the creative industries of the second wave. People in their twenties and thirties have been armed with a good education and cheap access to desktop technology that awaits the myriad applications of the creative mind. It is a marked turnaround from the older 'wait your turn' mindset of previous generations.

SUBURBS IN TIME RELEASED

Suburbs in Time, the much anticipated report on suburban change in Melbourne over the past 20 years, was launched by the Hon. John Thwaites, MP, Minister for Planning and Health, on Thursday, 22 January at the Astor Theatre, Melbourne. The launch, attended by local and State government officers, and representatives from peak industry bodies and businesses, attracted considerable media coverage.

Suburbs in Time brings together unique research, detailing for the first time Melbourne's suburbs and how they have changed socially, economically and demographically from 1981 to 1996.

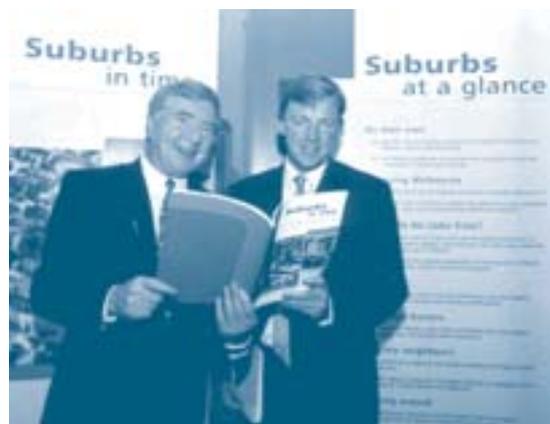
Suburbs in Time (analysis report and data on CR-ROM) is available in hard copy for \$20 (including GST) from Information Victoria or is free to download from the Internet: www.doi.vic.gov.au/research

Nimble minds and nimble fingers allied with imagination and application are economically powerful in a time of powerful economic growth and increasing skill shortages in the labour force.

The inner areas of large cities such as Melbourne and Sydney appear to be attracting these 'young creatives' where increases in specialist business and personal services are prominent. For many, the inner city has a challenging, innovative, live-by-your-wits milieu and lifestyle to match.

The second wave reinforces that irony we wrote about in the *From Doughnut City to Café Society* report – that modern technology, businesses and lifestyles have not made location unimportant. If anything, they have made centrality more important and have helped to create a new wave of industries that rely on the face-to-face contact that the inner areas of large cities promote.

Of course, this is only one element of the structural changes we are seeing in Victoria and elsewhere. In Victoria, other major changes such as the growth of clean capital intensive agriculture, the increasing two-way trade of goods, services and people, the rise of mass tertiary education and the ageing of the population, all act as overlays to a constantly emerging landscape of change within which institutions and policies operate and develop.



Philip Brady and the Hon. John Thwaites, Minister for Planning at the launch of *Suburbs in Time*

HIGHLIGHTS

- *Living the high life* – in 1996 Southbank had the highest proportion of high-income households and people working in the finance, property and business service sectors.
- *Trading space for place* – the suburbs of St Kilda, St Kilda West and Melbourne are the only suburbs in Melbourne that average less than two bedrooms per dwelling.
- *Looking for love?* – more than 50 per cent of residents in the inner city suburbs of Parkville, Carlton and Southbank are unmarried.
- *Getting up close and personal* – Fitzroy, Windsor and Balaclava have the highest population concentrations with more than 6,000 people per square kilometre.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1996:

- Springvale contained the highest proportion of people born overseas, accounting for 63.8 per cent of its resident population.
- The highest proportion of recent migrants to Melbourne were located in Southbank, closely followed by Carlton and North Melbourne.
- Avondale Heights was the top ranking suburb for home ownership, with 67.9 per cent of people owning their home.
- Southbank contained the highest proportion of people renting, whilst Roxburgh Park contained the lowest.
- Houses in Park Orchards had the greatest amount of bedrooms, with more than 59 per cent of residents living in four or more bedroom households.
- The largest proportion of married couples resided in Kilsyth South, accounting for 72.1 per cent of its resident population.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE

The Department of Infrastructure (DOI) is currently in the process of developing a Metropolitan Strategy that will shape the future direction of metropolitan Melbourne and its relationship with regional Victoria over the next twenty to thirty years.

Consultation will be an integral part of the process comprising three rounds of consultation throughout the strategy's development. The first round of consultation began in October 2000 and included 17 public forums throughout metropolitan Melbourne and in major regional centres. Participants were asked to identify what they liked and disliked about Melbourne and what they saw as the priorities for the future of the metropolitan area. A series of stakeholder workshops were also held and an issues paper, *Challenge Melbourne*, was published. More than 300 submissions have been received from groups, individuals and organisations across the State. The importance that Victorians place on the future of metropolitan Melbourne was evident through the tremendous response given to the first round of consultation for the Metropolitan Strategy.

Some of the key messages expressed during the first round of consultation include the need for:

- better and more integrated public transport
- a sustainable approach to the future of Melbourne
- a managed approach to urban development to avoid urban sprawl while retaining existing urban assets
- social issues to feature prominently in the future of the metropolitan area
- the Metropolitan Strategy to be action-oriented and integrated with other government strategies.

The ideas and issues raised through the first round of consultation have been combined with the results of other technical work undertaken by DOI and will form the basis for the second round of public forums which will be announced shortly.

Copies of the verbatim report from the first round of public forums *Metropolitan Strategy Public Forums – All Ears Listening*, are available at all public libraries in Victoria. *Challenge Melbourne* is available at www.doi.vic.gov.au/metroplan

REGIONAL ATLAS

The Research Unit is currently developing an online regional atlas for Victoria as part of its continued commitment to understanding regional issues through the analysis of regional demographic, economic and social change.

The regional atlas will present a range of data at a local geographical level (such as statistical local area [SLA]), along with a series of mapped data images and will also include key highlights, benchmarks and policy implications.

The project aims to produce an online atlas of regional Victoria that will increase the electronic availability of DOI resource information, collect and analyse useful regional data using a range of both Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and non-ABS sources and contribute to policy development via a spatial perspective on social, demographic and economic variables.

Research Matters will keep you up to date on the progress of the regional atlas during the coming months.

VICTORIA'S POPULATION AT A GLANCE

The DOI's latest *Victorian Population Bulletin* is soon to be released. The 2001 *Victorian Population Bulletin* is an annual report, based on the latest Victoria population statistics from the ABS. The Bulletin contains a simple summary of some of the most important trends across Australia and Victoria over the past year (the year ending 30 June 2000).

The Bulletin will be mailed out to all subscribers of *Research Matters*. For further information contact Chris Wight on (03) 9655 8808.

LOOKING INTO VICTORIA'S TRENDS AND PROSPECTS

The Research Unit has begun work on a population *Trends and Prospects* report to present an annual, consolidated set of population and demographic figures for use by all government agencies prior to the annual budget process. The report will include a summary of recent trends, current figures, estimates and projections, and key issues arising from this data. Key demographic indicators in the report will include: key highlights of population change in the past year; fertility rates; migration rates and households.

The report will be available from the Internet site at www.doi.vic.gov.au/research in a few months time. For more information contact Chris Wight on (03) 9655 8808

STAFF MOVEMENTS

Two of the Research Unit staff members have recently gone back to experience student life again. Senior Research Officer, John O' Leary will be taking nine months long-service leave in which he will be undertaking his Ph.D. at Monash University. Administration Officer, Steven Burrows, has left for the West where he is undertaking a musical theatre course at the Western Australian Academy for the Performing Arts. We wish them both every success in their studies.

BREAKFAST SEMINAR - TRADING SPACE FOR PLACE?

Jeremy Reynolds, Director, Research and Strategic Information will present highlights from *Suburbs in Time* and an insight into the 328 'pictures of change' which contribute to Melbourne's diversity. The seminar will be held in the western suburbs on Wednesday 16 May 2001 and is being sponsored by the Western Region Economic Development Organisation. To register your interest to attend, telephone Dan Oldfield 9655 8814 or email research.unit@doi.vic.gov.au by April 20, 2001.

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