

Welcome to Issue 88 of *Research Matters*, the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning's quarterly planning research bulletin, featuring DELWP research and analysis, news about recently released data, and research from other sources. If you have any questions or comments, you can contact us at:

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## In this issue...

Welcome to the December 2019 edition of *Research Matters* in which we present research and analysis from the Land Use and Population Research team.

This edition starts by showcasing two online products that have been developed by the team. The first is the Victoria in Future (VIF) Data Explorer which enables users to view a range of projections data for Victoria.

The second online tool provides users with an interactive tool for viewing Urban Development Program (UDP) data. In the past, much of this data was available only to specialist GIS users. With the development of the online data viewer, users can now find data, maps and charts for their selected areas down to suburb level.

The online products show how much data the group has access to, but wait, there's more... Our third article shows a series of maps using census data stretching back more than half a century. This longer-term perspective on population change provides a depth of understanding about trends across Victoria.

The final part of the newsletter contains two conference reviews – the Australia and New Zealand Population Workshop held in October and the Regional Studies Association Conference in November.

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# Introducing the VIF 2019 Data Explorer

Victoria in Future 2019 (VIF2019) is the government’s official projection of population and households. Data have long been available via downloadable spreadsheets or with ready-made summaries provided in “One Page Profiles”. However, not every user needs all the data at once, or is satisfied with pre-packaged information in a static pdf.

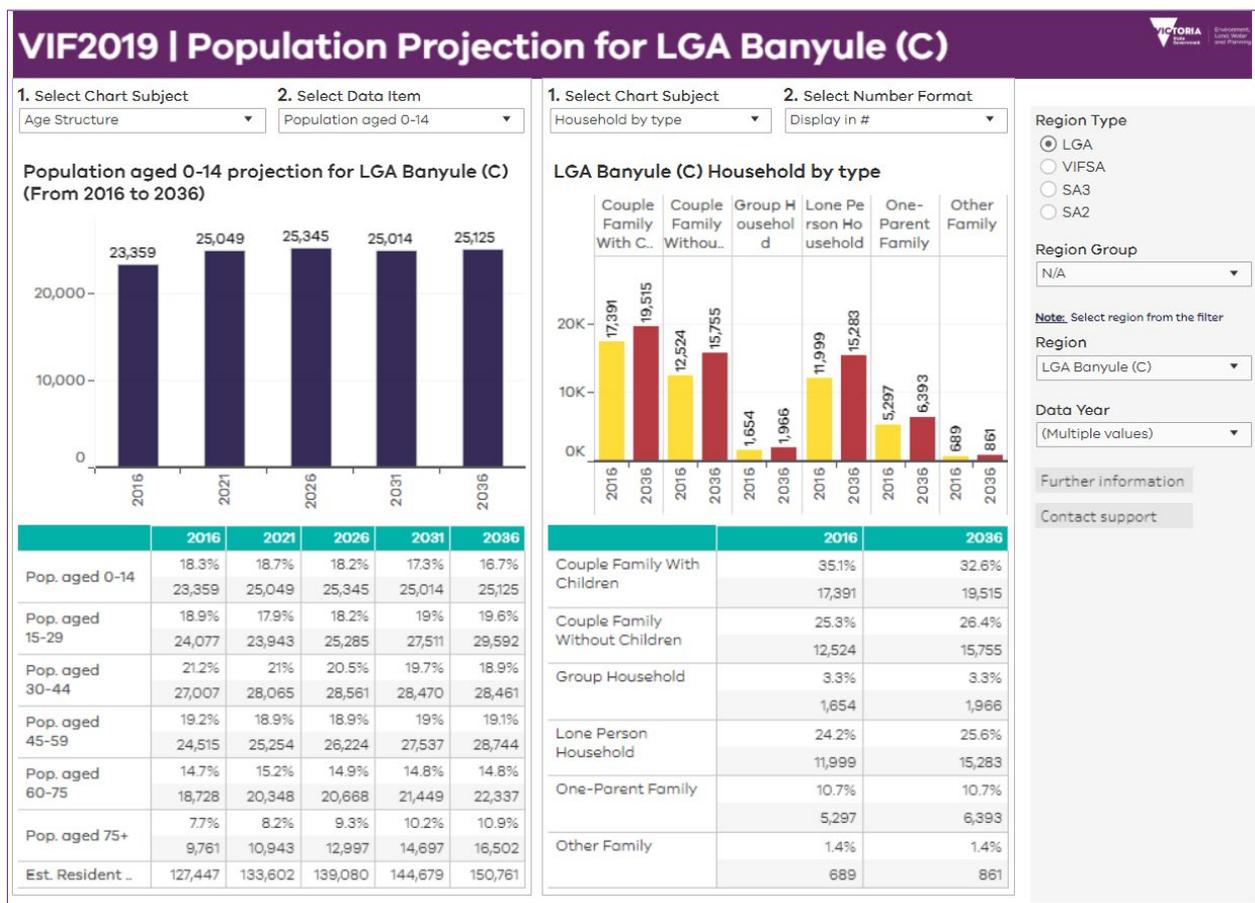
The solution is the new VIF “Data Explorer”, a Tableau dashboard embedded in the VIF2019 homepage. The Data Explorer allows the user to build their own demographic story for a small area, choosing from a range of variables and methods of presentation. Geographic coverage is comprehensive: the user can choose to explore Local Government Areas (LGA), Victoria in Future Small Areas (VIFSA) or two levels from the ABS boundary classification, SA3 and SA2. The SA2 geography is the most granular area, approximately equal to a suburb in Metropolitan Melbourne, or often a town or rural area in non-metropolitan areas.

Geographic areas are nested in the menus to allow easier navigation. For example, the list of VIFSAs is grouped by LGA, so the user does not need to know the specific VIFSA name they are looking for, only an LGA of interest.

The two panes of the Data Explorer can tell complementary stories. The chart in the left pane shows the value for a single variable every five years into the future. The variable is chosen from three categories: age structure; dwellings and households; and, households by type. The table below the chart shows all values for all years across the chosen category. The right-hand pane shows either age structure or households by type, and shows the full range of variables for each category for one or more points in time. In this pane the user can choose to view absolute values or proportions. The table shows data as selected in the chart above.

Extra information and context is available by hovering over the elements of the charts and tables. Within the charts the user can see a quick pop-up showing change over time for the selected variable. Hovering within the tables brings up a chart of the Top 10 ranked regions for the variable of interest.

The Demographic Research team invites you to test the VIF Data Explorer and let us know what you think. It can be found using the following link: [VIF Data Explorer](#)



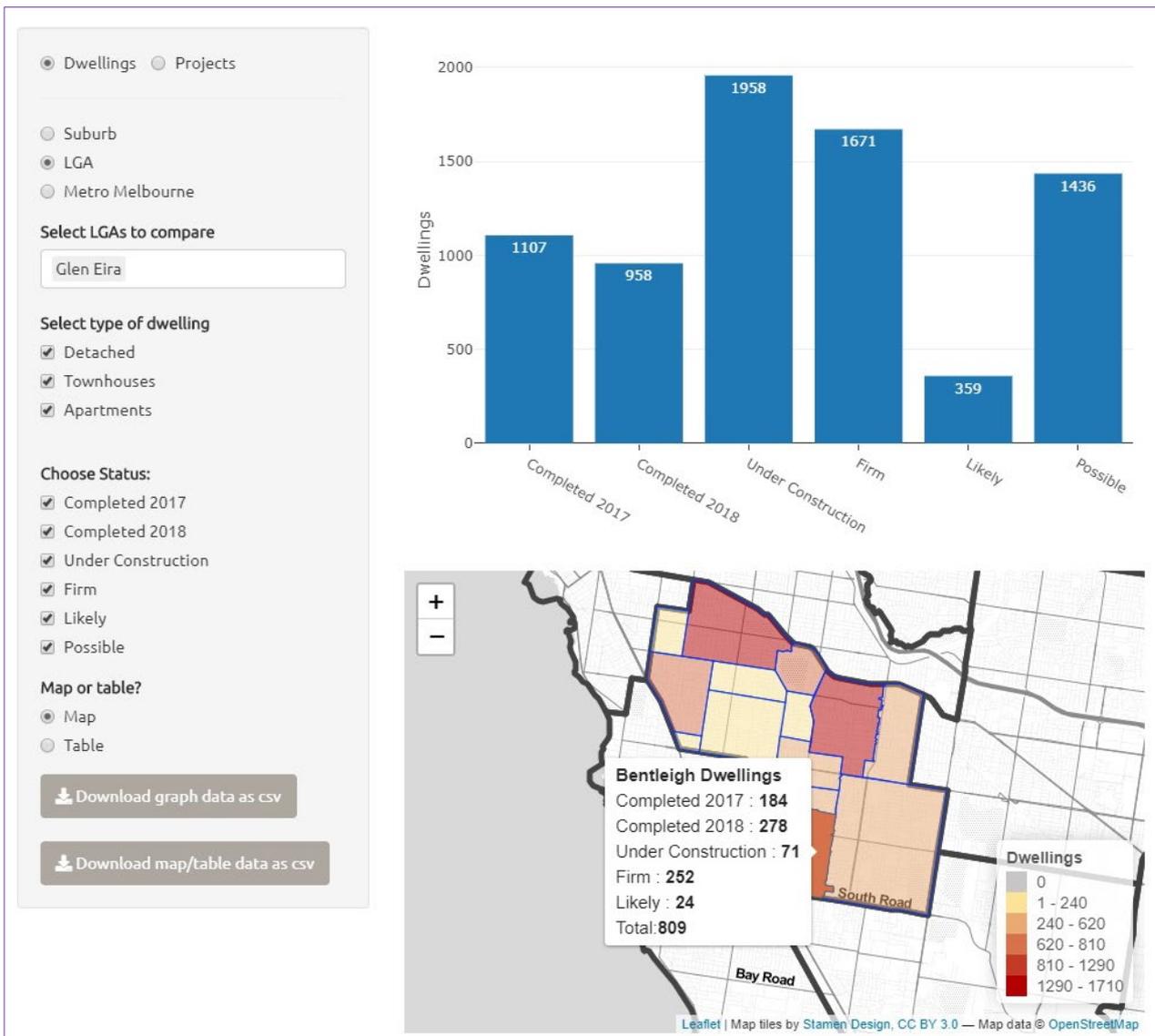
# Urban Development Program (UDP) Data Viewer

Readers of *Research Matters* may be familiar with the annual UDP reports and data published online. While detailed data have been available to specialist GIS users, other users have not had access to this resource until now. The Land Use team has developed a new data viewer which provides easy access to a range of UDP data in the form of maps, charts or tables. The data viewer enables users to access redevelopment sites data down to suburb level.

This is all part of our longer term aim to:

- increase user accessibility to our data;
- improve our data collection methods; and,
- better communicate results across a range of media.

As with the VIF Data Explorer, we would welcome any comments or feedback in relation to the UDP Data Viewer. It can be found using the following link: [UDP Data Viewer](#)



## Population change across Victoria: a 65-year overview

Population change is often reported in terms of one-, five- or ten-year periods. But what is revealed when we take a longer-term view? The Land Use and Population Research team has access to a great deal of ABS census data. The consistency of collection, and the geographical detail provided by the census enables long-term perspectives to be developed, as shown in the series of maps on the right.

In the immediate post-war period, regional Victoria grew relatively strongly. However, important changes were emerging in agriculture. Labour shortages hastened the increasing use of capital-intensive approaches. Machinery began to replace many labouring jobs while increasing productivity. More sophisticated farming inputs increased production costs, but these could be offset by seeking economies of scale through farm consolidation.

Population growth in the 1960s was patchy across regional areas as this economic restructuring played out. Importantly, these broad economic changes were occurring at a time of increasing personal mobility. Car ownership and improvements in road quality were to play a major factor in changing population distribution in regional areas. Small towns which had previously offered a range of basic services could now be bypassed as people could access a wider geographical area. This favoured larger centres in which businesses gained access to a wider market while those in small towns saw a contraction in demand for their goods and services.

The 1970s and early 1980s brought some population gain for non-metropolitan locations as trends of counter-urbanisation emerged. However, the trend mainly favoured areas close to capital cities like Melbourne while other, more remote, parts of Victoria fell into a cycle of population decline. This in turn led to business and service loss which encouraged further population decline.

By the late 1980s, regional Victoria was continuing to experience sectoral restructuring and adjustment as well as the outcomes of increasing personal mobility. Another change was also underway – the dismantling of many of Australia's protection policies and the floating of the dollar which opened up international markets but also increased competition in many sectors.

The early 1990s brought recession in Australia as well as important changes in public and private sector policy approaches. Both factors had impacts on regional Victoria. However, they were not occurring in isolation;

industry was restructuring and becoming more global, agriculture was continuing to move to large-scale capital-intensive efficiencies, and individuals were maintaining high levels of mobility.

A sophisticated global economy required a more highly skilled workforce and more people were seeking tertiary education as a result. Computer technology and the internet were changing the nature of work and the demand for skilled, highly educated workers. For young adults living in regional Victoria, moving to a city like Melbourne could provide a wide choice of higher education and employment opportunities.

In some ways, the 1990s presented regional Victoria with a 'perfect storm' of factors: rationalisation of services, concentration of activity into larger centres, and a period of recession. Cities like Geelong, Ballarat and Latrobe were hard hit by the recession at this time. The map for the period 1991-2001 shows the overall pattern of population change during the decade with Melbourne and its immediate hinterland becoming dominant in terms of growth. Melbourne was reflecting a global pattern of urbanisation and concentration of economic activity and population.

The contribution of primary and secondary industry to the Victorian economy fell, in relative terms, against the rising sectors of population and business services. Agriculture is necessarily a rural activity, thus a relative decline in the sector affects regional areas. Population services generally reflect the spread of population, but business services gain greater benefit from agglomeration and this favours growth in Melbourne. The 2000s showed a continuing pattern of metropolitan growth.

The final map in the series shows a more complex picture of growth in regional Victoria. While the central areas of the state still have strong population growth (particularly Geelong and Melbourne), there is population growth over a broader area than in the previous two decades. Some of this may reflect retirement movement of older baby boomers. It may also reflect a greater retention of people in some regional areas as economic prospects improve and the relative affordability of regional areas proves attractive.

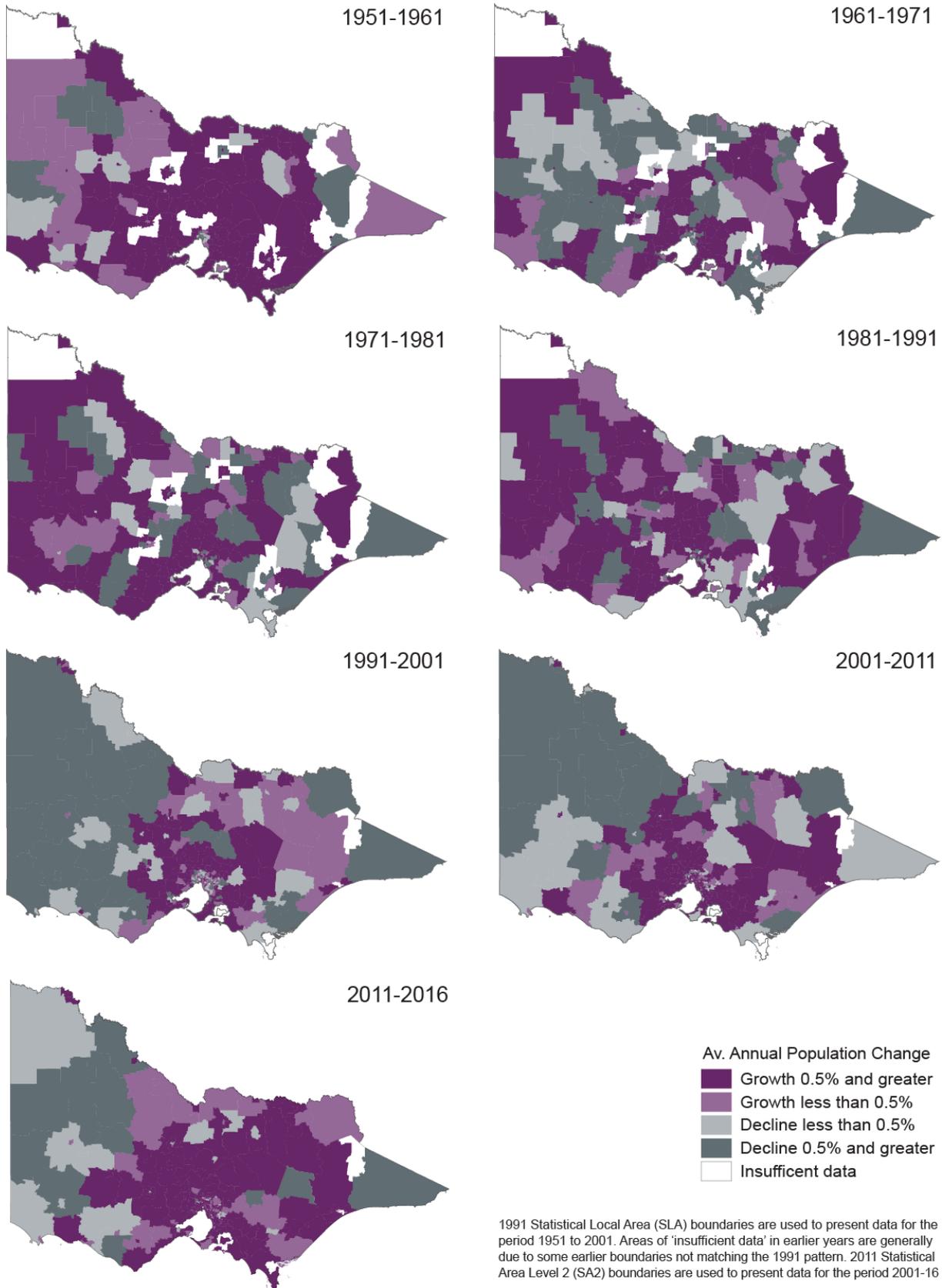


Figure 1: Population change, Victoria, 1951 to 2016.

Source: ABS Census

## Conference Reports

### Regional Studies Association Conference

In November, Fiona McKenzie attended the Regional Studies Association winter conference in London. The theme of the conference was: *Turbulent Times: Rethinking Regions and Cities*

With the issue of Brexit still on people's minds, it is no surprise that spatial researchers are turning their attention to the geography of discontent in Europe.

Ron Martin from the University of Cambridge noted a recent rise in the narrative of "left behind" places. In the UK, there is a wide discontent with London – its success, power and resources. Issues such as globalisation, new technology, Brexit and climate change, are exacerbating the differences between areas like London and other parts of the UK.

Austerity policies have hit some areas more than others. In fact some argue that the term should be "kept behind" places rather than "left behind". In either case, disadvantage can become self-perpetuating as out-migration to more successful areas occurs. There is increasing resentment felt by marginalised communities.

Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, from the London School of Economics, has undertaken research which shows that long-term economic decline is a major factor creating political discontent. He argued that investment in social infrastructure is the most successful response to reduce Euroscepticism.

### Australia and New Zealand Population Workshop and Technical Workshop

The demographics team (David Sykes, Beatrice Derody and Mitchell Valentine) attended the Australia and New Zealand Population Workshop and related Technical Workshop in Brisbane in October. The event attracts state government population experts from Australasia and provides an opportunity to share information about the work each jurisdiction is doing. The technical workshop enables the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to discuss new datasets which they are working on and also any possible changes to the forthcoming Census (2021). The workshop also provides an opportunity to provide feedback to ABS about improvements to their datasets.

The importance of social services was also highlighted by Flavia Martinelli from the Università Mediterranea di Reggio, Calabria. She noted that regional development policy often focuses on business services or cultural services. Social services tend to be regarded as redistributive rather than growth-generating, however this overlooks the economic role of social services in terms of being key infrastructure which improves investment and provides good jobs.

#### Further reading:

Dijkstra, L., Poelman, H. and Rodríguez-Pose, A. 2018, *The Geography of EU Discontent*, European Commission.

LINK: [The Geography of EU Discontent](#)



Since the 2018 workshop, the federal government has established a Centre for Population. Representatives from the Centre gave a presentation at the workshop which explored the role of data in improving our cities. In particular, they highlighted the importance of population projections for city planning.

The workshops also gave the demographics team an opportunity to present their own work. Beatrice gave a presentation on practical applications of population projections by highlighting the relationships between dwellings and demographics. Mitchell presented on the VIF2019 Data Explorer (see the first article in this edition of *Research Matters*). The dashboard provides an easy way for users to access the recently released Victoria in Future population projections.