



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

COUNTRY FOOTBALL CLUBS:
AN INDICATOR OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Population decline in regional areas is an issue which has gained public attention over the past decade. For demographic analysts, it is easy to focus on the numerical details of such phenomena without understanding some of the deep impacts which such change can bring to regional communities.

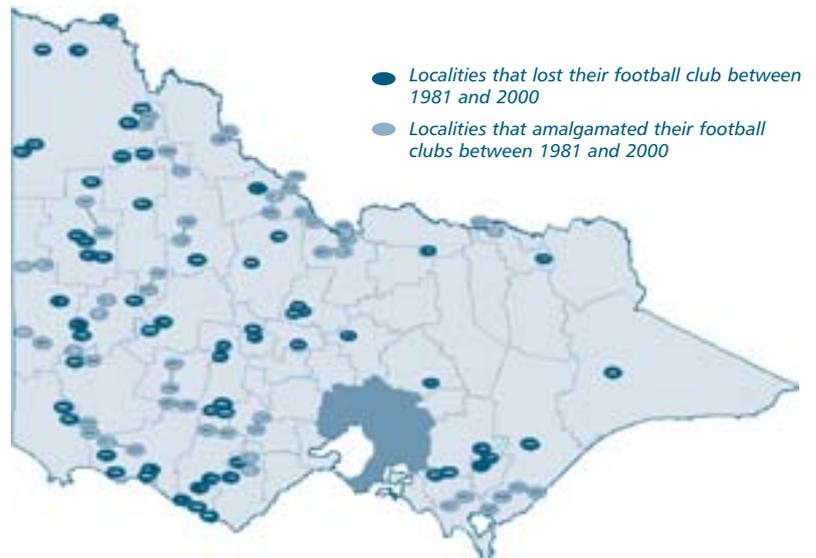
These impacts can be difficult to quantify, unlike the well-documented changes in total population numbers. Finding meaningful indicators is therefore challenging. Nevertheless, such indicators are often expressed through local descriptions of population and social change:

We used to have 10 football teams in a 25-mile radius around Nhill and now there's none. That's how life has gone.

Hindmarsh Shire Councillor, 2001

Mapping the change in country football clubs over the past two decades reveals a clear correlation with patterns of population decline. But more than that, it expresses a key impact of population change on local communities. Population loss not only affects the ability of small communities to raise a football team, it also impacts upon the ability to sustain the organisational structure needed to support sporting activities – referees, umpires, fund raisers and other volunteer-based tasks.

Loss or amalgamation of regional football teams between
1981 and 2000



INSIDE

FAQS ABOUT LONG-TERM PROJECTIONS 2

VICTORIA'S TRENDS AND PROSPECTS 2

MAKING SENSE OF THE CENSUS 3

WHAT'S NEW 4



CONTINUED . . .

In a study of regional sporting activity in south-west Victoria, it was found that sporting clubs provided community identity and pride as well as fostering leadership, participation and volunteer effort:

For communities experiencing comprehensive structural change, sport and recreation are perceived to be critical for town and community survival.

Losing these clubs and organisations. . . would mean a loss of experience, skill and history; in short, a loss of social capital.

Driscoll & Wood 1999, p. 8

The changing fortunes of country football clubs is just one indicator of demographic, economic and social change. We would welcome your suggestions on any other indicators which you feel capture such change: please contact Fiona McKenzie on (03) 9655 8806.

References

Hindmarsh Shire Councillor, reported in the Horsham Wimmera Mail Times 'Council takes up the fight for population', 21 May 2001, p. 5.

Driscoll, K. & Wood, L. 1999, Sporting Capital. Changes and Challenges for Rural Communities in Victoria, Centre for Applied Social Research, RMIT University, p. 8.

FAQS ABOUT LONG-TERM POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Q. Can we make long-term projections for Victoria?

A. Yes, they are relatively simple as the only factors that have to be taken into account are overseas and interstate migration and birth and death rates – and anyone can make quite simple assumptions about these. The model can help look at possible potential impacts of change – such as doubling or halving overseas migration.

Q. Can we make 36-year projections for Melbourne and parts of it?

A. Yes, but they are much much more difficult!

For Melbourne, land availability is an important determinant of future population growth and loss. To make a 30-year population projection for Melbourne and its parts we would need a 30-year forecast on land availability. To do this, would require assumptions to be made about what happens when growth corridors are filled up and where outward growth goes after that.

Long-term local population growth can be influenced by a large number of factors - the longer the projection and the more local the projection, the greater the potential for error.

Doing projections for 199 SLAs (statistical local areas) in Victoria -and hence for 31 LGAs (local government areas) in Melbourne - is enormously difficult and requires a lot of knowledge about Melbourne's dynamics to be built into a model. For instance we consult with all local governments and with industry in doing this. It is a major project and, if done to a desirable standard, a long and complex one.

Q. Are there any other issues about projecting to 2031 rather than 2021?

A. Yes. After 2021 we start entering a new era of population change. Natural increases of population alter radically as the baby boomers start dying off in droves and (as seems likely) their grandchildren forget to procreate. Since 1838 Victoria has always had a natural increase of population as births have exceeded deaths, usually to a considerable degree. In the 2020s Victoria is likely to begin to experience natural decrease but migration will bring about continued net growth.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Estimated Resident Population (ERP) of Australia increased by 219,900 persons (1.2 per cent) to 19,157,000 persons for the year ending 30 June 2000.
- The ERP of Victoria also increased by 1.2 per cent, or 58,266 persons to 4,756,856 persons for the year ending 30 June 2000.
- During this period metropolitan Melbourne grew by more than 52,000 persons (1.5 per cent) while regional Victoria grew by more than 6,000 persons (0.3 per cent).
- Net interstate migration data for the year ending 30 June 2000 showed Victoria gained 6,713 persons.
- Department of Infrastructure short-term projections indicate that the Victorian population is expected to grow to 4,831,000 persons by mid-2001, to 4,881,000 persons by 2002, and to 4,930,000 by 2003.
- Net overseas migration data for the year ending 30 June 2000 showed Victoria gained 24,752 persons, or 25.0 per cent of all overseas migrants to Australia.
- The number of households in Victoria in 2001 is projected to reach just over 1,802,000 an increase of 1.4 per cent on the previous year. For the same period, households in metropolitan Melbourne are projected to grow by 1.4 per cent, and in regional Victoria by 1.1 per cent.

Q. When will the Department of Infrastructure start working on new projections?

A. In 2002, when the data from the 2001 Census has been published.

MAKING SENSE OF THE 2001 CENSUS

Australia's 14th national Census of Population and Housing is soon to be held on 7 August 2001.

What is it?

The Census of Population and Housing is a statistical collection that aims to accurately measure the number of persons living in Australia on Census night, their key characteristics, and the dwellings in which they live. It is the largest statistical operation undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and one of the most important.

Why do it?

The census is one of the few sources of detailed statistical information about small geographic areas and small population groups.

Australia's census is highly regarded internationally. Unlike many others, it is conducted regularly (every five years since 1961), has a high degree of public acceptability, and a high level of data quality. The census provides a range and depth of information not available elsewhere. It provides invaluable information for planning the provision of goods and services.

Why does it take so long from the time of collection to release the data?

Although there have been advances in technology to help deal with census information, there is still a relatively long lead time required to release census data because of the essential activities for collection, capture, coding and validation of more than 700 million responses. A centralised processing centre will be established and staffed by about 1,000 ABS officers to capture, code and validate the responses to census questions.

What type of information can I get?

The ABS is developing a range of products and services from the 2001 Census to meet the objective of providing users of statistics with the information they need. The ABS has produced a Directory of Census statistics which contains a description of the range of publications, electronic products, maps and consultancy services available from the 2001 Census.

When can we get it?

As with the 1996 census, the data be released in two stages. The first release will contain a wide range of topics and be available for all geographic areas by July 2002. The remaining data, which requires extensive coding, will be released progressively thereafter, with all data available by the end of 2002.

How can I keep informed?

If you would like to be kept informed of the latest news and issues related to the census you can join the ABS Census email alert, new.users@abs.gov.au or telephone 1300 135 070

Want to know more about Victoria's trends and prospects?

Two new publications recently released by the Research Unit, Victorian Population Bulletin and Population Trends and Prospects 2001 provide a valuable insight into how Victoria is changing in the short term.

The Victorian Population Bulletin is an annual six-page report, which highlights population change in Victoria for the year ending 30 June 2000. Victorian Population Trends and Prospects 2001 is a complementary product to the Victorian Population Bulletin and provides a more detailed look at the most recent figures, recent trends, and projections. This online publication covers areas such as population growth, natural increase, migration, household growth and a brief discussion of the implications.



METROPOLITAN STRATEGY – MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

TAs mentioned in the last issue of Research Matters, the Department of Infrastructure is currently in the process of developing a metropolitan strategy that will shape the future direction of metropolitan Melbourne.

Consultation has been an integral part of the process – the first round of public consultation forums began in October 2000. The second round of public forums, entitled 'Moving forward together', has just been completed and built on the combined outcomes of the first round of consultation along with issues arising from research and analysis.

The purpose of the second round 'Moving forward together' public forums was to seek the community's views on work undertaken to date towards the preparation of the draft Metropolitan Strategy. Participants at the forums were given the opportunity to contribute their views in relation to a diverse range of topics including; improving transport and accessibility; new households in established areas; the natural environment; neighbourhoods and communities; urban growth on the fringe; economy and employment; and heritage.

The results from the first two rounds of public consultation will be used to help shape the draft Metropolitan Strategy which is expected to be released later this year.

For further information of the Metropolitan Strategy project, visit:

www.doi.vic.gov.au/metroplan

THE VIRTUAL MEETING PLACE FOR WORLD CITIES

The Metropolis Association is an international forum of 69 world cities, which explores issues and concerns common to major cities, such as urban planning, development and economic and social issues. Melbourne joined Metropolis in 1988 and is represented by the Minister for Planning through the Department of Infrastructure. Melbourne is the regional office for the Asia Pacific region and is president of a major study exploring global water quality issues. The Metropolis Association is also presently undertaking studies examining urban indicators, major events, information technology and urban poverty. To find out more, visit the new web site at www.metropolis.org. The site was developed by a project team at the Department of Infrastructure. For further information about the Association please contact Mary Lewin on tel. 03 9655 3378.

NEW ResCODE FOR VICTORIA

On 24 May 2001, the Victorian Government released ResCode, the new provisions for residential development in Victoria. ResCode will better protect Victoria's streets, suburbs and towns by making neighbourhood character the mandatory starting point for the assessment of development applications and introducing higher standards to protect residential amenity.

ResCode has been developed following extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, and balances the needs and concerns of residents' groups, the building industry and local councils. ResCode will come into effect in August 2001.

For more information on the new code, telephone 1800 012 346 or contact: ResCode Taskforce,

Department of Infrastructure, GPO Box 2797Y, Melbourne Victoria 3001 or

www.doi.vic.gov.au/rescode

Research Matters is a quarterly newsletter of the Research Unit
Department of Infrastructure, Level 20, Nauru House
80 Collins Street, Melbourne 3000

Tel: (03) 9655 8814

Email: research.unit@doi.vic.gov.au

Internet: www.doi.vic.gov.au/research

Editor: Libby Best

© DOI. All Rights Reserved