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Special Edition Part 2 – Capital cities and Balance of states

**The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) rebases the estimated resident population (ERP) of Australia and its regions after each Census. An improved methodology in the 2011 Census – based for the first time on automated data linking – showed that the proportion of the population undercounted was lower than previously assumed and that previous populations had been overestimated using the ‘old’ methodology.**

**To take account of this new information, and to produce a consistent set of time series population data, the ABS recast population estimates in addition to the usual rebasing conducted after each Census. For further information about the revisions, consult the ABS web-site and demographic publications.**

Highlights of population change

* The population of Australia increased from 13.1 million people in 1971 to 22.3 million in 2011. This is an increase of 9.27 million at an average annual growth rate of 1.3 per cent.
* More than half of the population of Australia is living in the capital cities.
* This urbanisation trend is general and accelerating (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Population growth, Capital city and Balance of state, 2001 to 2011**



Figure is a map of Australia showing the total population growth (in percentage) in capital cities and balance of states between 2001 and 2011

Source: ABS. Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2012 (cat. no. 3218.0).

Population growth

* Between 1971 and 2011, Australia’s population increased by 9.27 million people. More than two-thirds of this growth, 6.2 million, occurred in capital cities.
* Table 1 shows the population of the capital cities and balance of state areas at 10-year intervals from 1971 to 2011, while Table 2 shows the changes in population during this period.

**Table 1 Estimated Resident Population at 30 June**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1971** | **1981** | **1991** | **2001** | **2011** |
| Greater Sydney | 3,015,900 | 3,279,539 | 3,672,914 | 4,102,580 | 4,608,949 |
| Balance of New South Wales | 1,709,603 | 1,955,350 | 2,225,817 | 2,427,769 | 2,609,580 |
| Greater Melbourne | 2,606,900 | 2,857,907 | 3,194,707 | 3,500,249 | 4,169,366 |
| Balance of Victoria | 994,452 | 1,089,010 | 1,225,666 | 1,263,366 | 1,368,451 |
| Greater Brisbane | 957,900 | 1,154,705 | 1,411,773 | 1,693,556 | 2,147,436 |
| Balance of Queensland | 893,585 | 1,190,503 | 1,549,178 | 1,877,913 | 2,329,342 |
| Greater Adelaide | 883,900 | 979,895 | 1,093,525 | 1,148,006 | 1,264,091 |
| Balance of South Australia | 316,214 | 338,874 | 352,774 | 355,455 | 375,523 |
| Greater Perth | 744,600 | 941,479 | 1,226,115 | 1,455,361 | 1,833,567 |
| Balance of Western Australia | 309,234 | 358,577 | 409,952 | 450,913 | 519,842 |
| Greater Hobart | 157,100 | 174,120 | 191,648 | 197,403 | 216,273 |
| Balance of Tasmania | 240,973 | 253,104 | 275,154 | 276,265 | 295,210 |
| Greater Darwin | 39,000 | 62,078 | 86,414 | 108,280 | 129,106 |
| Balance of Northern Territory | 46,735 | 60,538 | 79,079 | 93,463 | 102,186 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 151,169 | 226,821 | 288,586 | 321,538 | 367,985 |
| Other Territories |  | 760 | 734 | 2,584 | 3,117 |
| **AUSTRALIA** | **13,067,265** | **14,923,260** | **17,284,036** | **19,274,701** | **22,340,024** |

Source: ABS. Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2012 (cat. no. 3218.0)

**Figure 2 Shares of population growth, Capital city and Balance of state, 1971 to 2011**

***[Figure 2 is a bar chart showing the shares of population growth for the capital cities and balance of states between 1971 and 2011]***

Source: ABS. Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2012 (cat. no. 3218.0)

**Table 2 10-year changes in Estimated Resident Population**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1971-1981** | **1981-1991** | **1991-2001** | **2001-2011** |
| Greater Sydney | 263,639 | 393,375 | 429,666 | 506,369 |
| Balance of New South Wales | 245,747 | 270,467 | 201,952 | 181,811 |
| Greater Melbourne | 251,007 | 336,800 | 305,542 | 669,117 |
| Balance of Victoria | 94,558 | 136,656 | 37,700 | 105,085 |
| Greater Brisbane | 196,805 | 257,068 | 281,783 | 453,880 |
| Balance of Queensland | 296,918 | 358,675 | 328,735 | 451,429 |
| Greater Adelaide | 95,995 | 113,630 | 54,481 | 116,085 |
| Balance of South Australia | 22,660 | 13,900 | 2,681 | 20,068 |
| Greater Perth | 196,879 | 284,636 | 229,246 | 378,206 |
| Balance of Western Australia | 49,343 | 51,375 | 40,961 | 68,929 |
| Greater Hobart | 17,020 | 17,528 | 5,755 | 18,870 |
| Balance of Tasmania | 12,131 | 22,050 | 1,111 | 18,945 |
| Greater Darwin | 23,078 | 24,336 | 21,866 | 20,826 |
| Balance of Northern Territory | 13,803 | 18,541 | 14,384 | 8,723 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 75,652 | 61,765 | 32,952 | 46,447 |
| Other Territories | 760 | -26 | 1,850 | 533 |
| **AUSTRALIA** | **1,855,995** | **2,360,776** | **1,990,665** | **3,065,323** |

Source: ABS. Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2012 (cat. no. 3218.0)

Urbanisation

* The proportion of population growth occurring in capital cities steadily increased between 1971 and 2011 - from 60 per cent between 1971 and 1981 to 72 per cent between 2001 and 2011.
* Except Brisbane, all capital cities increased their share of state population. In 2011, 66 per cent of Australia’s population lived in the 8 state and territory capital cities.
* Between 2001 and 2011, all state capitals grew at a faster rate than the remainder of their states. (Table 3 and Figure 2). For the whole period between 1971 and 2011, only Greater Brisbane did not grow as fast as the balance of its state. The growth in the balance of Queensland was due to the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, which are contiguous to Brisbane.

**Table 3 Average annual population growth rates (%)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1971-1981** | **1981-1991** | **1991-2001** | **2001-2011** |
| Greater Sydney | 0.8 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.2 |
| Balance of New South Wales | 1.4 | 1.3 | 0.9 | 0.7 |
| Greater Melbourne | 0.9 | 1.1 | 0.9 | 1.8 |
| Balance of Victoria | 0.9 | 1.2 | 0.3 | 0.8 |
| Greater Brisbane | 1.9 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 2.4 |
| Balance of Queensland | 2.9 | 2.7 | 1.9 | 2.2 |
| Greater Adelaide | 1.0 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 1.0 |
| Balance of South Australia | 0.7 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 0.6 |
| Greater Perth | 2.4 | 2.7 | 1.7 | 2.3 |
| Balance of Western Australia | 1.5 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 1.4 |
| Greater Hobart | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.3 | 0.9 |
| Balance of Tasmania | 0.5 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.7 |
| Greater Darwin | 4.8 | 3.4 | 2.3 | 1.8 |
| Balance of Northern Territory | 2.6 | 2.7 | 1.7 | 0.9 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 4.1 | 2.4 | 1.1 | 1.4 |
| Other Territories | n/a | -0.3 | 13.4 | 1.9 |
| **AUSTRALIA** | **1.3** | **1.5** | **1.1** | **1.5** |

Source: ABS. Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2012 (cat. no. 3218.0)

Victoria

* Victoria is part of the national urbanisation trend.
* The accelerated population growth of the past decade has mostly affected Greater Melbourne: between 2001 and 2011, Greater Melbourne population growth (669,000 persons) accounted for 86 per cent of Victoria’s total growth, compared with 73 per cent between 1971 and 1981 (Figure 3).
* The average rate of growth in Greater Melbourne is now more than double the rate of the balance of Victoria (Figure 4).
* In 1971, 72 per cent of Victoria’s population lived in Greater Melbourne. This proportion has risen to 75 per cent by 2011.

**Figure 3 Population growth, persons, Victoria, 1971 to 2011**

***[Figure 3 is a bar chart showing the population increase in Greater Melbourne and the balance of Victoria for the periods 1971-1981, 1981-1991,1991-2001,and 2001-2011]***

Source: ABS. Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2012 (cat. no. 3218.0)

**Figure 4. Average Annual Population Change, Victoria, 1971 to 2011**

***[Figure 4 is a bar chart of the rate of population growth in Greater Melbourne and the balance of Victoria for the periods 1971-1981, 1981-1991,1991-2001,and 2001-2011]***

Source: ABS. Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2012 (cat. no. 3218.0)

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**www.dtpli.vic.gov.au/victorian-population-bulletin**

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