

Ageing trends in Victoria

The trend of structural population ageing has been occurring over several decades and will continue to affect Victoria and its regions over the next half century as the average age of Victoria's population increases. This information sheet outlines the causes of structural population ageing, its spatial characteristics and some of the issues arising from the trend.

The trend of population ageing

Since 1976 the number of Victorians in older age groups (65+) has increased by around 335,000 persons (table 1). Most notably, numbers of Victorians in very old age groups has increased as life expectancy continues to rise. There were approximately 116 males and 527 females over the age of 100 at the time of the 2006 census.

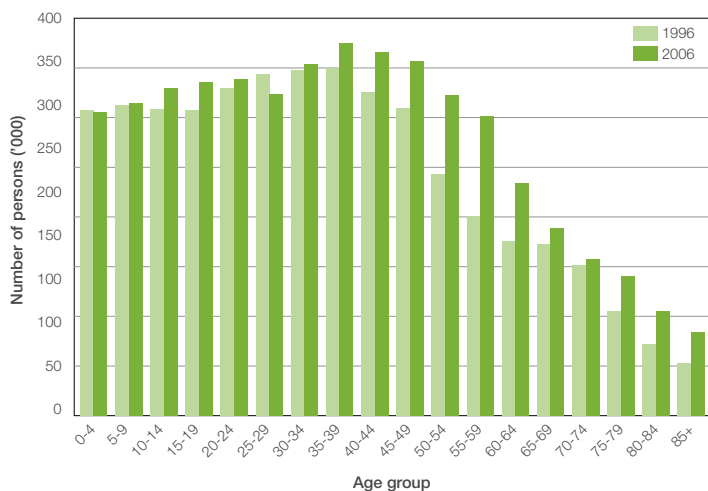
Table 1: Number and proportion of Victorians in selected age groups, 1976 and 2006

Age Group	1976 no.	1976 %	2006 no.	2006 %	Change
0-14 years	1,027,449	27	974,172	19	-53,277
65 and over	349,055	9	684,054	13	+334,999
75 and over	125,908	3	330,204	6	+204,296
85 and over	23,052	1	83,189	2	+60,137
100 and over	83	0.002	643	0.01	+560

Source: ABS Estimated Resident Population

While numbers of older Victorians have increased, numbers of children have declined. This has created a trend of structural ageing whereby proportions in older age groups have grown as compared to proportions in younger age groups.

Figure 1: Age structure of Victoria 1996 and 2006



Source: ABS Census 2006, BCP table B04

Causes of structural ageing

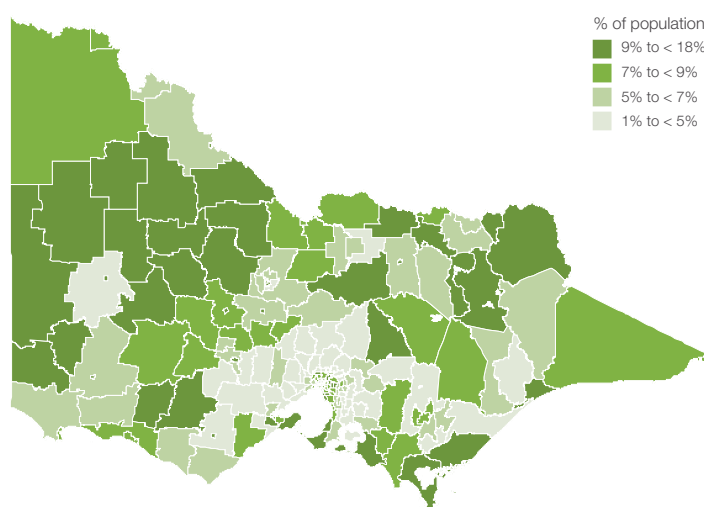
After the baby boom of the 1950s and 1960s total fertility rates fell sharply, meaning that women were having, on average, fewer children than in the past. The large group of 'baby-boomer' women have now mostly aged beyond child-bearing age. So not only are women having, on average, fewer children but there are fewer women to have children. Because of this, numbers of births fall and the overall effect on the population is to move the average age of the population higher.

Spatial patterns of ageing in Victoria

Regional Victoria continues to experience a net loss of young people (15-29 year olds) to Melbourne for education and employment. While regional Victoria continues to experience a net loss of young people to Melbourne, it gains in other age groups.

The out-migration of young adults from regional Victoria is one contributor to the more rapid ageing of regional populations compared to Melbourne. The projected strong growth in retirement age groups over the next 20 years will contribute to a more rapid increase in the proportions of older people in regional areas compared to Melbourne.

Figure 2: Population aged 75+ SLAs Victoria 2006



Source: ABS Census 2001 BCP table B04

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Implications of population ageing

Structural ageing of the Victorian population can have implications for the relative proportion of working age compared to non-working age (sometimes called 'dependent') population. An important factor shaping government superannuation policies has been the prospect of government facing an increasing financial burden for aged pensions while the tax-paying (working) segment of the population shrinks. This has led to a range of policies encouraging workers and employers to contribute to the future funding of a large non-working segment of the community.

Other implications arising from population ageing relate to the changing patterns of service consumption and demand. As people live longer, they are likely to have changing needs during their retirement years - from leisure goods and services during an active retirement phase through to an increasing need for health and medical services beyond the age of 75 (figure 3).

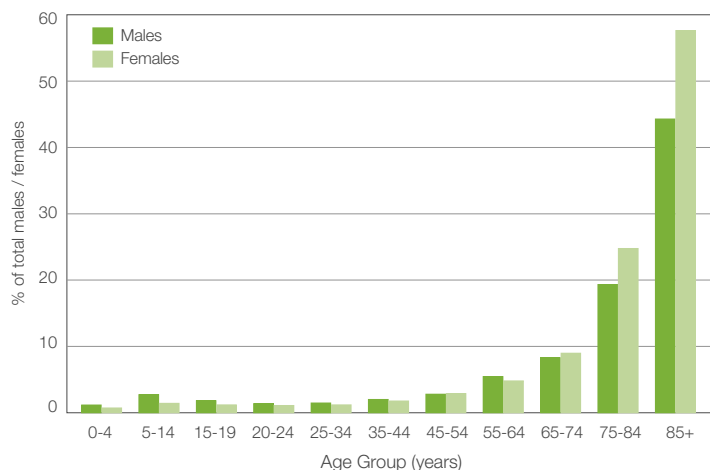
Another implication of an ageing population is geographical. While older people generally age in place, some will choose to move at the time of retirement. Given that the large baby boomer population is about to reach retirement age,

the numbers of people relocating will increase, even if the proportions moving remain similar to past patterns. The popularity of coastal, riverine and alpine areas for retirement raises issues of transport, infrastructure provision and service delivery for many communities. Regional areas have an older age profile (table 2) and are likely to attract increasing numbers of retirees. Combined with the lower numbers of young adults in some communities, there may be increasing challenges in servicing ageing populations in regional areas.

Table 2: Victorian LGAs with highest number and proportion of people aged 75+, 2006

Municipality	no. aged 75+	Municipality	% aged 75+
Greater Geelong	16,396	Queenscliffe	17.2
Mornington Peninsula	13,303	Hindmarsh	12.7
Whitehorse	13,083	Yarriambiak	11.8
Booroondara	12,749	Buloke	11.6
Monash	12,443	Central Goldfields	10.7
Moreland	11,660	Strathbogie	10.6
Glen Eira	11,617	Bass Coast	10.4
Kingston	11,043	London	9.9
Darebin	10,400	Gannawarra	9.9
Banyule	9,048	Benalla	9.8

Figure 3: Proportion of males and females needing assistance by age, Victoria 2006



Further information

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) will be undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the Census and providing value added data sets and other information. Check our website (www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/research/urbanandregional) to see our plans and how we are progressing. Information about the release of DPCD Census products is available by telephoning (03) 9637 9441 or emailing spatialanalysis.research@dpcd.vic.gov.au

NOTE: 'Need for Assistance' measures the number of people with a profound or severe disability requiring help or assistance in self-care, mobility and/or communication.

Source: ABS Census 2006, Table B17

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