



## Summary

Prior to European settlement, five Kulin Aboriginal tribes inhabited the Melbourne area. Many Aboriginal cultural heritage sites have been uncovered in the process of clearing land for urban development.

Melbourne has greatly expanded physically, numerically and culturally since the Second World War. Population growth has been fuelled by the post-war baby boom and its demographic echoes, and by large scale post-war immigration.

As migrants arrived in Melbourne, they first settled in the city's inner suburbs, where plenty of cheap, older housing close to industrial work and accessible by public transport was available. Successive waves of migrant groups then moved outwards, seeking modern housing and open spaces.

Melbourne's population is ageing, and the number of children in most suburbs has been dropping since 1951.

Melbourne is to some extent an age-segregated city, with young adults concentrated in the inner city areas, young children at the edges, and older people in the middle suburbs.

Fertility rates are now highest in outer urban areas, and are lowest in areas with the highest education qualifications.

While couples with children are still the most common family type, delaying childbirth, choosing childlessness and the increase in older couples means the number of couple-without-children households is likely to increase.

The impact of an ageing population on demand for services such as aged care and intensive health care over the next 20 years will be felt most in the middle ring suburbs.

At the same time, the numbers of children will decline in many areas, reducing pressure on services for specific age groups, such as 0-4 year olds.

A large part of the increased demand for housing is driven by the ageing population and shrinking average household sizes. **Chapter 3: Housing** takes up this theme.

Migration has increased the diversity of religious beliefs held by Melburnians as well as the languages they speak. However, Melbourne remains predominantly Christian and English-speaking. A large majority of Melburnians support Melbourne's multicultural mix, as shown in **Chapter 5: Living in Melbourne**. Proportions of people without religious affiliations are still a minority, although their numbers have increased.