



**Northern Territory Government**

Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment

# City of Palmerston

## Development and Demographic Overview

## HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The name of Palmerston was initially given to the early settlement at Darwin in 1863, to honour the then British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston. However, the harbour named Port Darwin, was the primary focus of activity and Darwin was eventually adopted as the official name of the Northern Territory capital.<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1970's it became obvious that, the supply of residential land in Darwin was diminishing, that the cost of housing was increasing and that a significant area would be required to provide for new urban growth. The site of Palmerston was selected as the land was adjacent to existing transportation and service corridors. Acquisition of the site by the Crown occurred in 1973, so that the orderly expansion of the Darwin area could be accompanied by a Government backed program of land development.

The decision to proceed with the development of Palmerston was made in 1980. Planning and development was managed by the Palmerston Development Authority. Palmerston Town Plan and Development Code came into effect in August 1982. Driver and Gray were the first suburbs to be developed, followed by Moulden and Woodroffe.<sup>2</sup>

## POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Palmerston's growth reflects its significance as the main urban development area of the wider Darwin region. A competitive process of broad acre land release provides residential lots with wide market appeal.

When construction commenced in Palmerston in the early 1980's it was anticipated that the area would house an estimated 50 000 residents. Recent revisions of the population estimates, taking into account current trends and demands are slightly lower, anticipating an ultimate threshold of approximately 45 000 residents.

<sup>1</sup>Palmerston Social Plan.

<sup>2</sup>Palmerston Development Authority. April 1983. Palmerston

On the basis of past trends it is expected that the population could increase by between 13,500 and 19,000 over a twenty year period. From a land supply perspective it would appear that the increase can be accommodated within the areas identified for future urban growth, provided that no major constraints are identified.

Table 1: Population Projections

Revised Small Area Population Projections			
2001-2021			
	Palmerston East Arm	Litchfield Shire	Palmerston & Litchfield
2001	22 559	15 573	38 132
2002	23 257	15 738	38 995
2003	24 800	16 269	41 069
2004	26 271	16 843	43 115
2005	27 474	17 428	44 902
2006	28 668	18 015	46 683
2007	29 898	18 611	48 508
2008	31 129	19 217	50 346
2009	32 403	19 823	52 226
2010	33 655	20 438	54 093
2011	34 944	21 052	55 995
2012	35 812	21 675	57 487
2013	36 210	22 314	58 524
2014	36 272	22 961	59 233
2015	36 346	23 621	59 967
2016	36 411	24 279	60 690
2017	36 490	24 949	61 439
2018	36 561	25 617	62 178
2019	36 628	26 304	62 932
2020	36 646	26 997	63 644
2021	36 669	27 698	64 367

Source: NT Treasury

## LAND DEVELOPMENT

Since 1995/1996 construction commenced on 5 new suburbs, Rosebery, Bakewell, Durack, Gunn and most recently Farrar. Uptake in the new developments has been swift. Development in Bakewell is complete and the suburbs of Durack, Gunn and Rosebery are well established, leaving only final stages to be released or developed.

Within the current planning framework it is anticipated that land release in Bellamack will follow that in Rosebery and Farrar. This could occur between 2005 and 2007, depending upon demand.

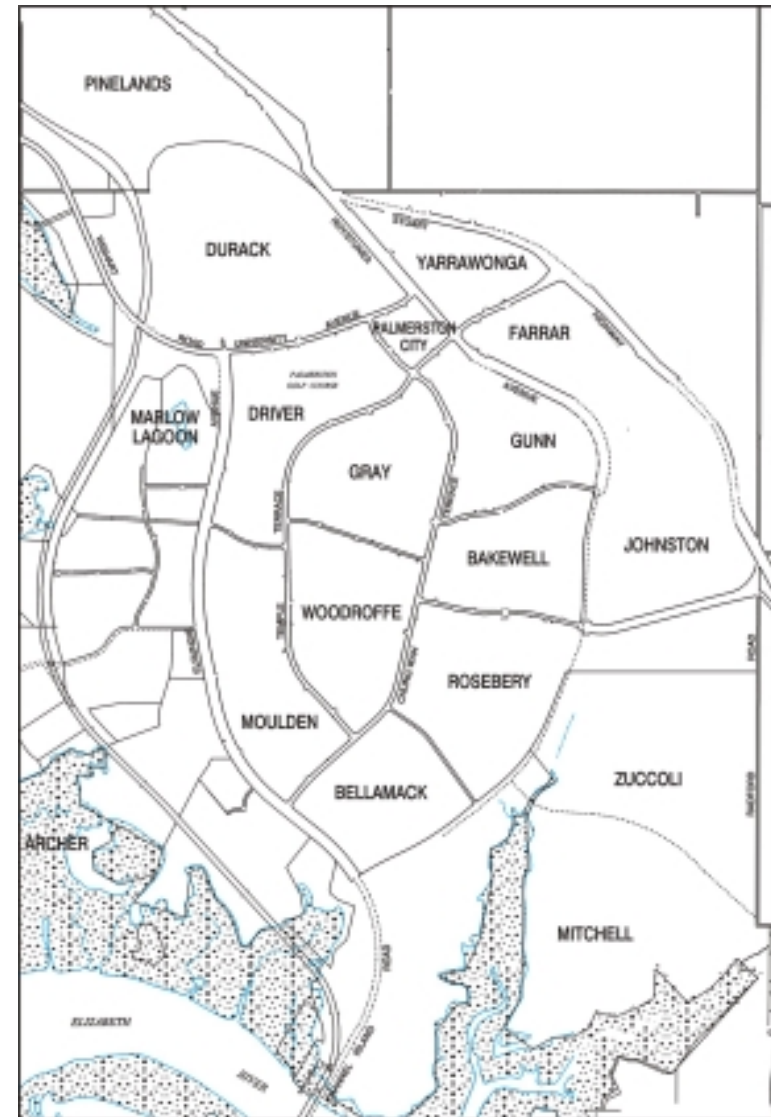
Further urban development is planned to the east of Mitchell Creek in Johnston and finally Zuccoli. (see Figure 4).

Whilst it is not possible to predict the future population of new suburbs with precision, estimates can be made using assumptions based on potential lot numbers and average household size. (Table 2).

Table 2. Population Capacity of Release Areas

Release Area	Potential Population Capacity		Land Release
	Low	High	
Farrar	1 830	2 105	2001
Rosebery (rem.)	2 627	3 028	2002 – 2004
Bellamack	3 423	3 926	2005 – 2007
Johnston	3 005	3 454	2007 – 2009
Zuccoli	5 927	6 806	2009 – 2013
<b>Total</b>	<b>16 812</b>	<b>19 319</b>	

Figure 1: Palmerston Suburbs and Future Development Areas



## DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

In 2001 the Australian Bureau of Statistics undertook a Census of Population and Housing. The Census is undertaken every 5 years, collecting a detailed range of demographic, economic and social information. Census data is specific to the geographic area in which it was collected, providing a valuable resource to assist planning for services and facilities.

Unless referenced otherwise the data in this document has been drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 Census, Basic Community Profiles for Palmerston (C), Darwin (C) and Australia, Catalogue No.2001.0.

A detailed Community Profile has been prepared for Palmerston City Council as part of the Palmerston Integrated Community Plan.<sup>3</sup>

### Population

As at June 2001, the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated the resident population of Palmerston – East Arm SSD to be 22 753 persons.<sup>4</sup>

### Rate of Growth

Population growth in Palmerston continues to be the highest in the Northern Territory. Since 1996 the population has increased at an average of 11.3% per annum with the strongest growth occurring in the three year period from 1996 into 1998. The significance of this rate of growth becomes clear when compared to annual rates of growth in the Darwin urban area of 0.2% and 1.9% across the Territory.<sup>5</sup>

The particularly high rate of growth in the 1996 – 1998 period corresponds with the 'Army Presence in the North' (APIN) Program and an increase in defence personnel moving to the Palmerston area.

Between 2000 and 2001 the population increased by a more modest 6.7%, or 1437 residents, including some 500 + births. (Palmerston – East Arm SSD).

<sup>3</sup> SKM 2003. Palmerston Integrated Community. Plan Background Paper 2 Community Profile

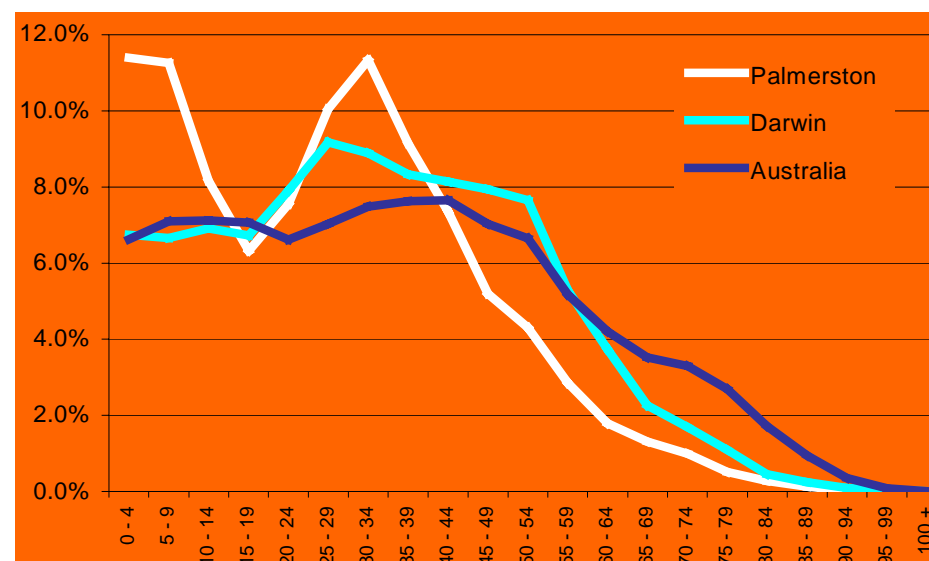
<sup>4</sup> ABS, Regional Statistics Northern Territory. 2002

<sup>5</sup> ABS, Regional Statistics Northern Territory. 2002

Table 3: Population 1986 – 2001 and Darwin LGA 2001

Palmerston SSD	1986	1991	1996	2001	Darwin
Enumerated Population	5 706	7 804	12 750	20 788	69 698
		<b>86 – 91</b>	<b>91 - 96</b>	<b>96 – 01</b>	<b>96 – 01</b>
Population Change		2 098	4 946	8 038	1 209
Av. Annual change		6.5%	10.3%	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>

Figure 2: Comparative Age Profile 2001



### Age Profile

The Palmerston population is relatively young with a median age at June 2001 of 27.9, compared to Darwin, median age 34.3 and the national median of 35.

66% of Palmerston residents are under 35 years. Nearly one quarter of the population (22.7%) is under 10. The two peaks obvious in Figure 1 represent three age groupings, 0–4, 5–9 and 30–34 years, highlighting the predominance of young families in the City.

Only 7.9% of the Palmerston population were 55 or over as compared to Darwin with 14.9% and the national figure of 22%. Whilst there has been a gradual increase in the 55+ age bracket since 1986 the Palmerston population is likely to retain a younger age profile by national standards for the foreseeable future.

#### Indigenous

The proportion of Palmerston's population that identified as indigenous in 2001 was 11.4 %, declining slightly from 1996 (11.5%) and 1991 (14.3%). Indigenous people comprised 8.6% of the urban Darwin population in 2001 and 8.1% in 1996.

#### Birthplace

The proportion of overseas born persons enumerated in Palmerston by the 2001 Census is relatively low when compared to Darwin and Australia as a whole. In 2001, 13.9% of Palmerston residents stated that they were born overseas as compared to 21.2% for Darwin and 21.6% for Australia.

Countries of origin for those born overseas were diverse with the largest groups coming from New Zealand, Europe and Asia. Of those born overseas 3.9% came from the United Kingdom, 2.1% from New Zealand, 1.2% from the Philippines and 0.6% from Viet Nam.

#### Household and Family Type

"Couples with children" is the dominant household and family type in Palmerston representing 52% of the population. A further 14.3% of persons are in single parent families and 14.2% in "couple without children" households. Single person households account for 5% of the population and 3% live in group households.

The proportion of "couple with children households" is higher than the national figure of 48% reflecting the younger age profile of the community. The proportion of "couple without children households" is correspondingly lower than the national average of 18.5%. Single person households as a proportion of total households (5%) is also lower than the national figure of 8.6%.

#### Household Size

The most recent household size data has been drawn from the 2001 Census. The average household size within Palmerston LGA is 3.2 for separate dwellings and 1.9 for attached/multiple dwellings. This compares to figures of 3.1 and 1.8 in Darwin and 2.8 and 1.8 nationally.

#### Income

In 2001 43.3% of Palmerston's population aged 15 and over had weekly individual incomes less than \$500 as compared to the national figure of 55.7% and Darwin 40.7%

#### Housing

##### Dwelling Type

As at August 2001 there were an estimated 7 685 dwellings in Palmerston and 27 847 in Darwin. In Palmerston, 5 272 (68.6%) were separate dwellings, 624 (8.1%) were semi detached, terrace or town houses and 1 093 (14.2%) were units. The proportion of single dwellings in Palmerston (68.6%) is significantly higher than that of Darwin (50.8%), reflecting the City's satellite location and availability of land.

Table 4. Palmerston Dwelling Type<sup>6</sup>

Area	Separate Dwelling		Semi/ Tw n House		Flats /Units /Apartments		Other/NS Unoccupied	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Driver	674	63.6	110	10.4	185	17.5	90	8.5
Gray	753	57.0	183	13.9	290	22.0	95	7.2
Moulden	912	77.4	41	3.5	129	10.9	97	8.2
Woodroffe	889	72.5	36	2.9	212	17.1	93	7.5
Bakewell	578	54.2	210	19.7	202	18.9	76	7.1
Durack	717	90.5	17	2.1	9	1.1	49	6.2
Palmerston Bal.	739	71.6	29	2.8	65	6.3	199	19.3
Palmerston Total	5 272	68.6	624	8.1	1 093	14.2	696	9.1
Darwin	14 136	50.8	3378	12.1	6 092	21.9	4241	15.2

<sup>6</sup> ABS 2001 Basic Community Profile and Snapshot

## Tenure

Significant changes in housing tenure have occurred in Palmerston over the last 15 years reflecting a change in the driving force behind the development of the City from public to private sector. It also indicates that the area is maturing from a greenfield site to an established centre.

In 1986 62.7% of housing in Palmerston was rental stock. The Northern Territory Housing Commission owned the majority of rental property (88%), with 12% being private, or other rental. As would be expected in a newly established area, only 1.1% of dwellings were fully owned and a further 28.8% of dwellings in the process of being purchased.

By 2001 the total proportion of rental property had dropped from 62.7% to 43.6%. Territory Housing was no longer the largest owner of rental property (35.1% of dwellings) as compared to private and other rental (64.9% of total dwellings).

Also notable is the increase in properties fully owned by the occupant (7.9%), or being purchased (39.9%).

When taken together the percentage of dwellings Fully Owned /Being Purchased was 47.8% in Palmerston and 47.2% in Darwin in 2001

Table 5: Housing Tenure Palmerston 1986 – 200 and Darwin LGA 2001

Housing Tenure	1986	1991	1996	2001	Darwin 2001
Fully Owned	1.1	3.8	6.5	7.9	20.6
Being Purchased	28.8	27.3	38.8	39.9	26.6
Rented: Authority	55.2	54.8	29.4	15.3	9.1
Rented: Other	6.8	8.6	19.4	27.9	30.8
Rented: Not Stated	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.5
Rented: Total	62.7	63.9	49.0	43.6	40.4
Other / Not Stated	7.4	5.0	5.7	8.4	12.4

Figure 3: Housing Tenure

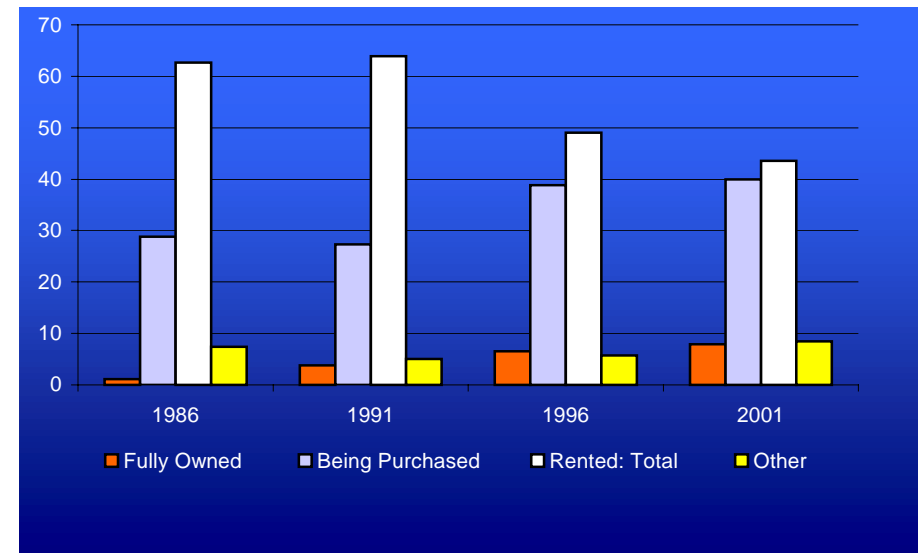
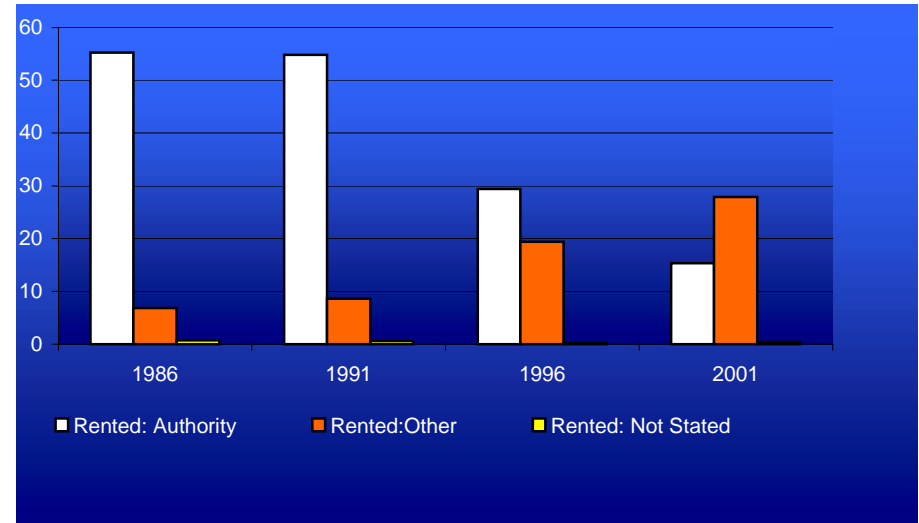


Figure 4: Ownership of Rental Stock



## Employment

Palmerston's total labour force increased by almost 4200 people between 1996 and 2001, an average annual increase of 11.3%. The largest increase in employment by any sector was in Government administration and defence. There were also increases in the percentages of people employed by the utilities sector, transport and storage, finance, property, business and community services.

The proportion of people employed in the construction sector decreased between 1996 and 2001. Decreases were also seen in agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining, communications, manufacturing and wholesale, retail sectors.<sup>7</sup>

## RETAIL

A recent study, *'Future Shopping Needs for Palmerston'* contracted by Palmerston City Council into retail needs, provides a profile of the Palmerston retail sector, the retail catchment and future demand for floor space.

The study reported that Palmerston residents are well served with food and grocery shopping but continue to travel to other centres for comparison shopping in clothing, footwear and household lines.

Whilst there is a level of retail need being met outside the City it is important to note that Palmerston provides a retail centre for rural residents and also attracts residents from the Darwin area to the discount department store in particular.

Whilst retail floor space is currently well supplied it was considered likely that an additional food retailing outlet would be required by 2011. The preferred location was identified as a site on one of the arterial roads in Rosebery or the future area of Mitchell.

Other demands for space, for the CBD in particular, were identified as commercial office space as well as space for the delivery of government services,

entertainment and leisure uses and community and education facilities and services.<sup>8</sup>

## References

1. Palmerston Social Plan
2. Palmerston Development Authority. April 1983. Palmerston.
3. ABS. Regional Statistics, Northern Territory 1362.7. 2002
4. ABS. Population Projections, Northern Territory 3222.7 1999 – 2001
5. Sinclair Knight Mertz. Palmerston Integrated Community Plan. 2003.
6. NT Treasury Revised Small Area Population projections 2001 - 2021
7. Sinclair Knight Merz 2003 'Future Shopping Needs for Palmerston'<sup>1</sup>
8. Sinclair Knight Mertz. 2003. Community Planning Study.

## Notes

The **enumerated population** taken from the Census, counts only those people present on Census night.

**Usual residence population** puts people back into their homes if they were temporarily absent, excluding residents temporarily overseas.

**Estimated resident population is recognised as the best measure for actual resident population. It includes resident's temporarily overseas, migration, births and deaths and is undertaken annually.**

ABS population estimates for Palmerston are prepared at the level of the Statistical Subdivision and include East Arm.

When considering issues of service provision and commercial catchments it will be necessary to identify the wider geographical area from which people travel to Palmerston to receive a good or service. As Palmerston is an important centre for the rural area, in particular Litchfield residents, it would be relevant to consider Litchfield population estimates in addition to the projections for Palmerston.

---

<sup>7</sup> SKM. 2003. Community Planning Study.

---

Sinclair Knight Merz 2003 'Future Shopping Needs for Palmerston'<sup>8</sup>