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NSW population growth continues to rise

The estimated population of NSW at 30 June 2007 was 6.889 million, an increase of 71,900 during the financial year 2006-07. This was the largest population increase in NSW since 2000-01, and compares with a population increase of 58,900 during 2005-06. (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2007a, tables 2 and 4).

The NSW growth rate of 1.05% in 2006-07 continued to be well below the national average of 1.5%. The fastest growth was in the resource rich states of Western Australia (2.3%) and Queensland (2.2%) (ABS 2007a, table 3).

One in three (32.8%) Australian residents currently live in New South Wales, a marginally smaller proportion than twelve months ago (33.1%).

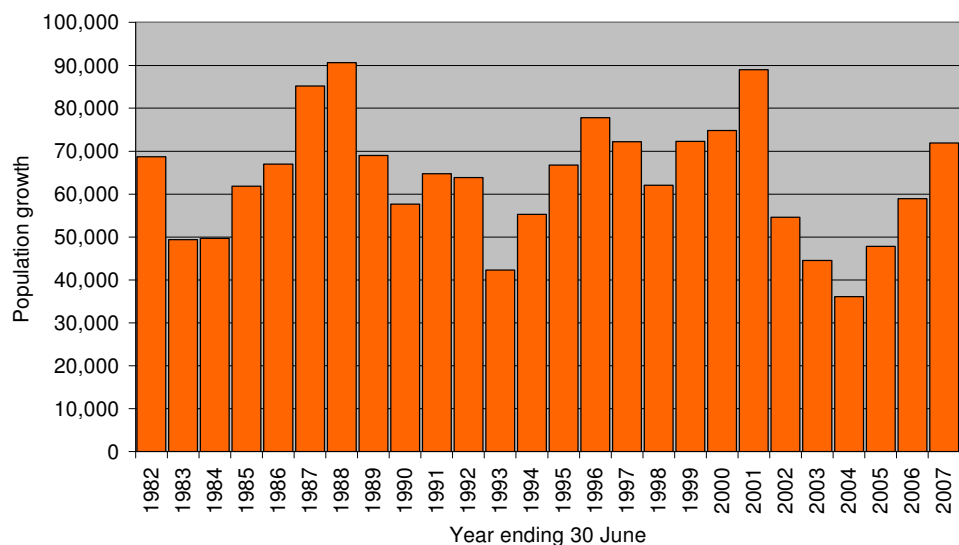
Seasons Greetings!

This tenth edition of the *Population NSW Bulletin* details the latest population estimates for New South Wales.

Also included are brief summaries of population trends in two regions of NSW outside Sydney – the Mid-North Coast and the Northern Region.

We welcome your comments or suggestions on ways in which the *Population NSW Bulletin* could be improved. Email us at population@planning.nsw.gov.au

Figure 1: Annual Population Growth, New South Wales, years ended 30 June 1982 -2007



Source: ABS 2007a and previous issues, table 3.

Components of population growth

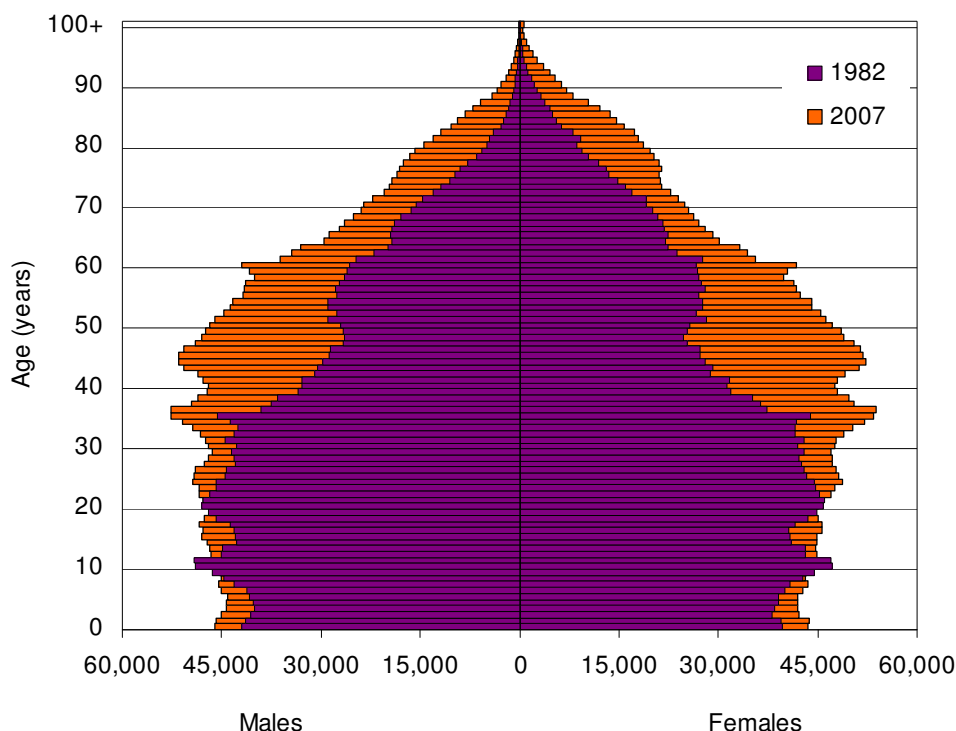
Population growth in NSW in the year to 30 June 2007 was due to natural increase of 44,300 and net overseas migration of 54,900. These were offset by a net loss of 27,300 people to other states and territories in Australia (ABS 2007, table 2). While natural increase has tended to be relatively stable in the past, there have been notable increases over the last two years, largely due to an increase in the number of children born in New South Wales. Net migration, being a combination of overseas migration

and interstate flows, fluctuates markedly over time. However the inflow of new residents from overseas is always offset by a net movement of people from New South Wales to other parts of Australia. The number of net overseas arrivals has increased steadily from a low of 29,800 in 2003-04. The number of people moving to live interstate has increased slightly over the last 12 months, but is still lower than the recent high recorded during 2002-03 when there was a net loss of almost 33,000 people to interstate destinations. Factors impacting on interstate migration include housing costs and relative economic conditions in other parts of Australia.

NSW population continues to age

The New South Wales population continues to age, due to the combined effect of relatively low childbearing levels and increasing life expectancy. This means that the age structure is changing with relatively fewer children and increasing numbers of people in the older age groups. Figure 1 shows how the state's population age structure has changed over the last quarter of a century. In 1982 the median age (the age at which half of the population is older and half is younger) of the New South Wales population was 30.6 years. At 30 June 2007 it was 37 years. New South Wales now has one of the older populations in Australia – only the populations of South Australia and Tasmania have an older age composition (ABS 2004, 2007b).

Figure 1: Age and sex distribution of NSW population, 1982 and 2007

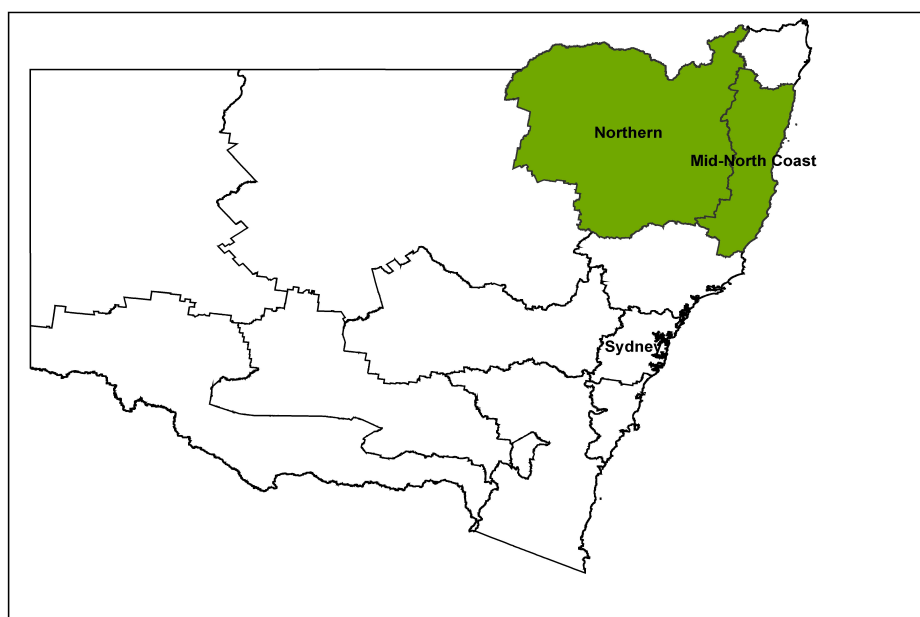


Source: ABS 2007c.

Regional population focus

The second part of our focus on regional NSW population issues provides more information on population trends in the Mid-North Coast and Northern regions of NSW.

Figure 2: Location of Mid-North Coast and Northern regions in NSW



Mid-North Coast

The population of the Mid-North Coast region is currently estimated at 297,000 (June 2006). Over the five years 2001 to 2006 the population increased by 16,600, or 1.2 per cent per annum. This is well above growth rates for the state as a whole and one of the fastest growing regions in New South Wales (ABS 2007d, table 9). Major population centres in the Mid-North Coast region include the coastal cities of Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie, with more than 40% of the region's recent population growth concentrated in these two centres. Local government areas that included the towns of Taree and Kempsey have also had reasonable population increases while the population of Grafton is growing slowly.

The population of the Mid-North Coast region is expected to continue to grow faster than the NSW average, reaching a population of around 374,000 by 2031 (Department of Planning 2005, preferred series projection).

The Mid-North Coast region has the oldest population of all regions in NSW. In 2005 19% of the region's population was aged 65 years or over, compared with 14% in NSW as a whole. Within the region, Port Macquarie has the highest proportion of older people, with 24% of the population aged 65 years or older in 2005 (ABS 2006). The proportion of older people in the population is expected to increase rapidly as a result of ageing of the existing population and retirement migration.

Northern Region

The recent history of the Northern region is quite different to that of the Mid-North Coast. An inland region immediately south of the Queensland border, the Northern region currently has an estimated population of 180,000. Over the five years from 2001 to 2006

the population declined by 1,400 people, or a annual rate of decline of 0.2% (ABS 2007d, table 9). The region's largest centre Tamworth continues to grow, with an average annual growth rate of 1.7% over between 2001 and 2006. The population of the Northern region is expected to remain virtually static, with a projected population of 180,700 people by 2031 (Department of Planning 2005, preferred series projection).

Like many other regional areas, the Northern region has net out-migration of young adults, resulting in an age distribution with relative small numbers of people aged between 20 and 40 years. It has a smaller proportion of older people than the Mid-North Coast region, with 15% of the population aged 65 and over in 2005. The region's population will age over the next 25 years, with a large decline in the number of children under 15 years of age, and dramatic increases in the number of people in the older age groups.

What's new?

A number of publications containing demographic statistics have been released by the ABS over the past few months. They include:

1. *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, Jun 2007*, Catalogue No. 3201.0, released 12 December 2007
This issue contains preliminary estimates by age and sex of Australian states and territories as at 30 June 2007. Revised age distributions are also provided for the period 2002 to 2006.
2. *Regional Population Growth, Australia, 1996-2006*, ABS Catalogue No. 3218.0, released 24 July 2007.
This report contains preliminary population estimates for all local government areas in Australia as at June 2006, as well as a time series for the period 1996 to 2005. The accompanying spreadsheets also include population estimates for statistical local areas.
3. *Australian Demographic Statistics*, March quarter 2007, ABS Catalogue No. 3101.0, released 24 September 2007.
Australian Demographic Statistics, June quarter 2007, ABS Catalogue No. 3101.0, released 4 December 2007.
These reports contain preliminary estimates of the population of Australia, states and territories, as at March 2007 and June 2007 respectively, along with estimates of the components of population growth in each quarter.
4. *Births Australia 2006*, ABS Catalogue No. 3301.0, released 29 October 2007.
This publication brings together statistics for live births and fertility in Australia
5. *Deaths Australia 2006*, ABS Catalogue No. 3302.0, released 9 November 2007.
This publication brings together statistics on deaths and mortality in Australia. It is accompanied by life tables for each state and territory (New South Wales life tables are ABS Catalogue No. 3302.1.55.001).
6. *New South Wales Regional Statistics 2007*, ABS Catalogue No. 1368.1, released 18 December 2007
This issue contains statistics from a range of ABS and non-ABS sources for the financial year 2006-07. Data are provided for all Local Government Areas (LGAs) and other selected regions in NSW.

7. *Australian Social Trends 2007* (catalogue number 4102.0) is the 14th edition of an annual series that presents information on contemporary social issues and areas of public policy concern. The report is arranged into nine chapters that provide summary statistics on issues of population, family, health, employment and housing. The report also includes a number of articles that update previous research and introduce new topics of interest. Articles of interest to readers of this bulletin include recent increases in Australia's fertility and international comparisons, factors affecting the health of Australia's babies and recent changes in the composition of permanent migration flows to Australia.

For further information on all Australian Bureau of Statistics products go to the ABS website at www.abs.gov.au.

2006 Census

A range of statistics is now available from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. Many summary statistics can be downloaded free of charge from the ABS website. Other statistics are available, for a fee, on CD-Rom or as customised tables. For further information see <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/Home/census>.

What's coming?

2011 Census

The ABS is currently seeking comments on the proposed nature and content of the 2011 Census of Population and Housing. The closing date for submissions is 31 March 2008. For further details refer to the information paper *Census of Population and Housing: ABS Views on Content and Procedures, 2011* (Catalogue No. 2007.0) or www.abs.gov.au/2011censusviews

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Department of Planning 2005, *New South Wales State and Regional Population Projections, 2001-2051, 2005 Release*, downloaded from <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/programservices/population.asp>, produced by the Transport and Population Data Centre, Department of Planning, Sydney.

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