Population projections to 2051
Queensland and Statistical Divisions
Queensland is Australia’s growth state. For much of the past two decades, Queensland has been growing faster than any other Australian state or territory, largely due to interstate migration. However, this growth brings with it challenges – challenges in providing a high quality and sustainable environment in which Queenslanders can live, work and play in the Smart State.

These challenges will continue in the future as millions of new people contribute to the future of Queensland. This continuing growth will provide opportunities – opportunities to create one of the best lifestyles, one of the strongest economies and one of the most vibrant communities in Australia.

To achieve these objectives we must plan now for the challenges ahead. Our population will grow and diversify as overseas migration increases and the population ages. We must plan now for the infrastructure needed in the locations where Queenslanders want to live, so that our unique and enviable environment and lifestyle is there for our children and future generations to enjoy.

The Queensland Government Population Projections will be invaluable in planning for the future of the Smart State. I recommend anyone with an interest in our future consider these projections closely in preparing for both the challenges and the opportunities that lie ahead.

The Honourable
T M Mackenroth MP
Deputy Premier, Treasurer
and Minister for Sport

Key points

- Queensland’s population is projected to grow from 3.6 million people in 2001 to 5.3 million people in 25 years, reaching 6.5 million in 50 years.

- Higher growth (1.7 million people) is projected for the next 25 years than was recorded in the past 25 years (1.5 million).

- Short-term growth rates of 2% each year are predicted to ease as the size of the population increases.

- While the number of births is estimated to remain relatively stable, the number of deaths is expected to double over the next 50 years, leading to natural decrease.

- The majority of growth is projected for the older age groups with the number of people aged 65 years and over increasing threefold by 2051.

- Ageing of the population will cause the median age of Queenslanders to rise from 35.0 years in 2001 to 47.3 years in 2051.

- Highest levels of absolute growth are expected in the short term, with average annual increases of 77,000 people each year to 2006.

- Queensland’s population is projected to grow substantially from both interstate and overseas migration.

- Most of the State’s growth will be concentrated in South East Queensland, which will reach the 2001 State population of 3.6 million people within 25 years.
Queensland
Population 2026 and population change 2001 to 2026, Statistical Divisions

Figure 8:
Projected population change, by Statistical Division Queensland, 2001-2026,

Map Legend
Share of 2026 population
- Between 7.1 and 43.4 per cent
- Between 3 and 7 per cent
- Less than 3 per cent

Far North Statistical Division
- Projected population as at June 2026
  - 320,800
  - Growth 2001 to 2026
  - 43.1%

All information on this map is based on 2003 medium series population projections
Map produced by the Planning Information and Forecasting Unit

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Queensland’s population will grow from 3.63 million people in 2001 to between 4.91 (low series) and 5.69 million people (high series) in the next 25 years (by 2026). Continuing growth will lead to a population of between 5.28 (low series) and 7.77 million people (high series) in the next 50 years (by 2051).

Queensland’s population milestones

- 1 million: 1938
- 2 million: 1974
- 3 million: 1992
- 4 million: 2006*
- 5 million: 2022*
- 6 million: 2040*

* Projections
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Queensland Year Book, various years, ABS, Australian Demographic Statistics, Cat. no. 3101.0; and Queensland Government Population Projections, 2003 (medium series)

Implications

Queensland’s population will continue to grow and this increase can be directly translated into increased demand for infrastructure, goods and services. Demand is also a function of the population composition and distribution, with considerable changes also projected in these characteristics in the future.

Changing composition

Population ageing will be a significant change impact on Queensland. The impact will be widespread and become increasingly apparent. For example, over the next two decades (to 2021), the number of children in Queensland is projected to increase by just under 10% to 848,000, while the number of older people is expected to more than double (increase of 110.2%) to 887,000 people. The workforce is also projected to double (increase of 110.2%) to 887,000 people. The workforce is also projected to double (increase of 110.2%) to 887,000 people.

In addition, as overseas migration contributes an increasing share of Queensland’s population growth, the population will become more diverse in terms of ethnic origin, language spoken and/or English language proficiency.

These changes in the composition of the population will alter patterns of demand. Services will need to cater for a larger population of older people, including greater numbers of older infirm people likely to require higher levels of care and support. Simultaneously, other sectors of the population will be competing for limited resources and infrastructure funding.
Location specific impacts

The impacts of future population growth will be location specific. Projections of future growth should be examined at both the regional and local levels to determine the nature and scale of impacts in particular areas. For example, in areas with limited land supplies and continuing demand, housing affordability may become an even more important issue. Some means of encouraging people to settle in less environmentally sensitive locations must be considered if sustainable management of the physical, economic and social environment is to be achieved.
Population projections for Statistical Divisions

As a result of the ageing of the population, there are significant changes to the median age of the population. In 2001, the median age of Queenslanders (that is the age at which half the population is older and half younger) was 35.0 years. Within two decades, the median age is projected to reach 40.2 years (by 2021), increasing further to 47.3 years by 2051.

Assumptions

The assumptions adopted in relation to fertility involve the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) declining to set levels by 2021, then remaining constant for the rest of the projection period. The modelling process also involved the ‘ageing’ of the age-specific fertility profile over the projection period, while current differentials between Queensland and the Statistical Divisions (SDs) were maintained.

The mortality assumptions show life expectancy trends to set levels by the end of the projection period in 2051. The same set was used for all series. These assumptions may be somewhat more optimistic than other mortality assumptions in use. However, the assumptions used here are predicated on the view that life expectancy at birth will continue to improve although no improvement is modelled for ages above 80 years. Current differentials between the Queensland rate and individual SDs have been maintained for the projection period.

The assumptions for overseas migration are based on Queensland receiving 16% of net overseas migration to Australia of 75,000 persons, 100,000 persons and 125,000 persons for the low, medium and high series respectively. The 2002 share of 18.6% is trended to the set level of 16% over a seven-year period, and then held constant for the remainder of the projection period.

For interstate migration and intrastate migration the model uses separate in-migration and out-migration rates to reflect the propensity of population groups to move to or from a region, State or statistical division. At the State level, the low assumption is based on no change in the current propensity to move to or from Queensland. The medium scenario assumes a 30% increase in the likelihood of moving to Queensland combined with a 15% increase in the likelihood of moving away from Queensland, while the high scenario...
Table 2
Actual and projected percentage share of State population, Queensland Statistical Divisions, 1976, 2001 and 2026

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Division</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2026</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreton</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Queensland</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide Bay-Burnett</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darling Downs</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central West</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far North</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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Source: Department of Local Government and Planning; ABS 3218.0; and Queensland Government Population Projections, 2003 (medium series)

Brisbane SD will continue to have the largest population, projected to be 64% of South East Queensland in 2026. Although accounting for 43% of the State’s population, the capital city SD’s share decreased over the past 25 years, and is projected to continue to decrease while Moreton SD increases. Currently, one in every five Queenslanders lives in Moreton SD, with this share projected to rise to one in every four by 2026 (see Table 2).

South East Queensland will continue to account for around three-quarters (74%) of Queensland’s growth in the coming 25 years. Brisbane SD is projected to be the location of nearly 40% of the State’s growth, declining from its previous share as available land stock diminishes. Moreton SD in contrast, is expected to increase its share of growth due to substantial stocks of residential land and an overflow of demand from Brisbane SD. Each of the remaining regions accounts for less than 10% of Queensland’s growth. Both Wide Bay-Burnett SD and Northern SD are projected to experience a slightly larger share of growth in the next 25 years compared with the past 25 years.

Accuracy of projections
The projections are based upon the characteristics of the population and the scale of population change. In each SD, ageing will be one of the most significant of these impacts. For example, Figure 7 illustrates the changing age structure of the Darling Downs SD which is indicative of the impact of the large projected increase of people aged over 50 years in Queensland SDs in coming decades. Note also the slight decline projected for the number of people aged less than 20 years in Darling Downs SD. Changes to the age structure will vary in each SD depending on the current age profile, the age profile of people moving to and from the SD, and projected growth or decline.

Figure 7
Age profile, Darling Downs SD, 2001 and 2026

Assumptions
Continued
Process

During 2003, the Government Statistician, Office of Economic and Statistical Research (OESR), Queensland Treasury, initiated a collaborative whole-of-Government process to develop new population projections for Queensland and its SDs. A number of agencies were invited to participate on the Population Projections Advisory Group. Membership was taken up by Department of Local Government and Planning, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and Queensland Health. Queensland Centre for Population Research (QCPR) at the University of Queensland was also invited to participate on the Advisory Group.

The model used to produce the projections was developed by QCPR under a collaborative agreement with OESR. It is a state-of-the-art, multi-regional cohort component population projection model. The model produces projections by single year of age and sex for each year of the projection period, adding projected births and in-migration, and subtracting deaths and out-migration for each year into the future.

Background research reports were prepared on fertility, mortality, interstate migration and overseas migration trends in Queensland over past years. These reports are available on the website (see back page for contact details). The reports assisted the project team to determine the basic assumptions used in the model to generate new population projections.

Three series, low, medium and high, were produced to give an indication of the range of potential outcomes over such a long period.

State and statistical division projections will be reviewed against new information annually to determine whether revisions to the projections are required. If necessary, updates will be produced and disseminated widely, and web-based products updated.

Acknowledgements

The Population Projections Advisory Group was responsible for the preparation of the Queensland Government Population Projections for Queensland and SDs in 2003. Membership of this group included personnel from Queensland Treasury (Office of Economic and Statistical Research, and Intergovernmental Relations Branch), Department of Local Government and Planning (Planning Information and Forecasting Unit), Queensland Health, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and the Queensland Centre for Population Research, University of Queensland.

When referencing these projections, please use the following description:
Office of Economic and Statistical Research (2003), Population Projections to 2051: Queensland and Statistical Divisions

Further information

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* New LGA Projections under preparation

The Planning Information and Forecasting Unit is currently preparing population projections for Queensland Local Government Areas, with an expected release date of December 2003. Subsequently, population projections for smaller areas such as Statistical Local Areas, Collection Districts and customised areas will be available on request. Please contact the Planning Information and Forecasting Unit, Department of Local Government and Planning, directly for more information.

Online Query Tool


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