Population Growth

Committee for Melbourne believes Melbourne’s population will continue to increase over the next 50 years, albeit at a slower rate than the previous 50 year period.

Melbourne’s population is set to reach approximately eight million people by 2060.

Planning for this growth now is imperative to protect and enhance Melbourne’s long-term liveability.

Committee for Melbourne believes in order to harness the benefits of population growth, the community, private sector and government must collaborate to create a long-term visionary plan for Melbourne.

Melbourne has a long history of growth. Since the 1850s gold rush period Melbourne has experienced strong increases in population, a trend that it is forecast to continue steadily in the future.

During the 12 months ending June 2010, Melbourne experienced an increase of approximately 79,000 people, bringing the total capital city population to an estimated 4.08 million.¹

Although the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data indicated a slowing of international migration for Australia in 2009-10, Melbourne continued to experience a relatively high population growth rate of 1.8 per cent.

In the Population Projections Australia release from September 2008, the ABS projected Melbourne’s population to be somewhere between 6.1 and 7.97 million by 2056² - depending on a series of assumptions about future levels of fertility, mortality, internal and overseas migration.

The Victorian Government’s economic projections in the 2011-2012 State Budget forecast a slowing of Victoria’s population growth over the next four years from 1.8 per cent to 1.5 per cent based on ABS figures,³ thus reinforcing the Committee’s viewpoint.

Although Melbourne’s population is likely to grow, the exact rate of growth is uncertain. However, even at a slowing growth rate, Melbourne is still expected to accommodate an average of approximately 800,000 people per decade by 2050.

By planning for this change in growth now, we can protect and enhance Melbourne’s liveability for the future.

Committee for Melbourne believes in order to harness the benefits of population growth, the community, private sector and government must collaborate to create a long-term visionary plan for Melbourne.

Historical and projected population, 1991-2051⁴
Source: Department of Planning and Community Development

¹ ABS, Regional Population Growth Australia 2009-10, March 2011
² ABS, Population Projections Australia, September 2008
³ ABS, Population Projections Australia, September 2008
⁴ DPCD, Victoria in Future 2012, April 2012