1. Victoria's young people

1.1 The population of Victorian young people

There are 902,796 children and young people aged 12–24 in Victoria, representing around a quarter (24.4 per cent) of the national population of young people.

Although Victoria has the second highest population of young people in absolute numbers, its proportion of young people (17.7 per cent) is comparable with the average for the other states and territories (18 per cent) (see table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Number and percentage of young people in Australian states and territories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State or territory</th>
<th>Number of young people (aged 12-24)</th>
<th>Percentage of state population (aged 12-24)</th>
<th>Percentage of Australia's young people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>1,200,874</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>902,796</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>751,258</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>379,835</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>270,663</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>86,227</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>65,098</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>41,608</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,698,927</strong></td>
<td><strong>18.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population as of 30 June 2006
Source: ABS 2006a-i, Population by age and sex, Australian states and territories

Geographical distribution

Nearly three quarters (73 per cent) of Victoria's young people live in metropolitan Melbourne with the remaining quarter living in rural Victoria (see table 1.2).

Table 1.2: Youth population in metropolitan and rural Victoria (2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural/Metropolitan Victoria</th>
<th>Number of youth (aged 12-24)</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Victoria</td>
<td>656,496</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Victoria</td>
<td>237,093(^2)</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victoria</strong></td>
<td><strong>893,589</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population as of 30 June 2005
Source: Department of Human Services calculations based on ABS 2006, ABS data available on request

\(^2\) Includes 119 young people living in ‘unincorporated Victoria’.
Table 1.3 shows the distribution of Victoria’s youth population across the Department of Human Services regions. Nearly a third (30.9 per cent) of the youth population lives in the North and West (metropolitan) region.

**Table 1.3: Distribution of Victoria’s youth population across Department of Human Services regions (2005)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department of Human Services region</th>
<th>Number of youth (aged 12–24)</th>
<th>Percentage of Victoria’s youth (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North and West Metropolitan</td>
<td>276,032</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Metropolitan</td>
<td>203,380</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Metropolitan</td>
<td>177,084</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barwon-South Western</td>
<td>60,843</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gippsland</td>
<td>41,343</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grampians</td>
<td>37,916</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>44,726</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loddon Mallee</td>
<td>52,146</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unincorporated Vic</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victoria</strong></td>
<td><strong>893,589</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population as at 30 June 2005
Source: Department of Human Services calculations based on ABS 2006, ABS data available on request

Young people also make up a larger percentage (18.7 per cent) of the total regional population (in the North and West region) than in any other region (see figure 1.1).

**Figure 1.1: Youth as a percentage of the total population in each Department of Human Services region**

Population as at 30 June 2005
Source: Department of Human Services calculations based on ABS 2006, ABS data available on request

**Gender distribution**

The gender distribution of Victoria’s young people (51.1 per cent male, 48.9 per cent female) is consistent, at 30 June 2006, with that of other states and territories (ABS 2006b).
Age structure and distribution

There are broadly similar percentages of young people in the age groups 10–14, 15–19 and 20–24, with young people aged 20–24 making up the largest percentage (34.9 per cent) and young people aged 10–14, the smallest (32.2 per cent) (see figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Percentage of male and female youth by age group, Victoria

The pattern of population growth

Fertility rates, together with changes in life expectancy, are key influences on the pattern of population growth and the age structure of the population.

The total number of young people in the Victorian population is projected to remain stable (owing to trends in fertility rates). However, the number of young people as a percentage of the population is projected to decrease (in line with increases in life expectancy and an ageing population) (see figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3: Number and percentage of youth (aged 12–24) in total population of Victoria (1971–2006)

1 It should be noted that the age group 10–14 has been used here, as an alternative to 12–14, to ensure equal age groupings.
2 Fertility rates represent the total number of births per woman. A fertility rate of 2.0 is required to reach replacement level fertility for a population.
3 Fertility rates in Victoria are consistently lower than national rates. Rates in Victoria declined between 1995 and 2001, although they have shown a gradual increase since 2001 (ABS cat. no. 3301.0 2005 Births, Australia Chapter 6, Table 6.4, 1995–2005).
4 The population of young people in Victoria is expected to make up just 13.6 per cent of the total population by 2051 (compared with 16.8 per cent in 2011) (ABS 2005).
Population projections also show that decreases in the number of young people as a percentage of the total population are more marked in the rest of Victoria than in Melbourne (see table 1.4).

Table 1.4: Projected proportion of youth in population: Melbourne and the balance of Victoria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011 (%)</th>
<th>2021 (%)</th>
<th>2031 (%)</th>
<th>2041 (%)</th>
<th>2051(%)</th>
<th>Percentage change: 2011–2051 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>-2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance of Victoria</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>-3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>-3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS 2005

1.2 Young people and their households

The young people (aged 12–24) who are the focus of this report broadly include two groups:

• young people who are more commonly dependent on their parents and are usually living at home
• young people who are generally more independent, less likely to be living at home and may be parents themselves.

Young people aged 12-24 living at home

Nearly seven in 10 (69 per cent) of 12–24 year olds in Victoria were recorded as living in the parental home on Census night, 2006. This is similar to the percentage of young people (aged 12–24) in New South Wales who are still living at home (68.3 per cent). However, the percentage is lower among other states and territories (ABS 2006 Census. ABS data available on request).

Of those 12–24 year olds still living at home in Victoria, 69 per cent are living with both biological parents and 22.2 per cent are in one-parent families. Victoria has the highest proportion of 12–24 year olds who live at home with both biological parents and the lowest proportion in one-parent families, although these proportions are similar to those in New South Wales (see figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4: Proportion of 12–24 year olds that are living at home with parent(s) in each family type by state

Source: ABS 2006 Census, ABS data available on request

7 Defined by the ABS as ‘intact families’.
Young people (aged 15–24) living at home as dependent students

Young people in Victoria aged 15–24 are more likely to be living at home as dependent students than young people in any of the other states and territories (see figure 1.5 and table 1.5).

Figure 1.5: Proportion of 15 to 24 year olds at home as dependent students or as non-dependents

Table 1.5: Proportion of young people at home as dependent students, by age (percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic.</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>Tas.</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>ACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15–19</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–24</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS 2006 Census, ABS data available on request.

Young people living as a couple

In Victoria, 8.1 per cent of 15–24 year olds are living as a married or de facto couple (compared with a national percentage of 10 per cent). Of those 15–24 year olds in Victoria who are living as a married or de facto couple, 24.9 per cent have one or more children (compared with 27.8 per cent of those nationally) (ABS 2006 Census, ABS data available on request).

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* Figures do not add up to 100 per cent as the following categories are not included: other relationship in household; relationship in household not applicable; and overseas visitor.
* A very small minority (0.3 per cent of all 15–19 year olds and 3.8 per cent of all 20–24 year olds in Victoria) are married or in a de facto relationship with one or more children. This compares with 0.5 per cent and 5.3 per cent of young people in these age groups respectively in Australia.
1.3 Diversity and Victoria’s young people

Young Victorians make up a culturally, ethnically and socioeconomically diverse group. While the majority of young Victorians are faring well, the available evidence suggests that some young people are not faring as well as they might. These inequalities in outcome are particularly notable for young Indigenous people.

Other groups of young people who tend to fare less well include young people with a disability, young people in out-of-home care, young homeless people and young people in the youth justice system. There is limited information on outcomes for young CALD people.

Some information about the numbers of Indigenous young people, CALD young people (including refugees) and young people with a disability in Victoria is given below. Information about young people in out-of-home care, young homeless people and young people in the youth justice system is included in the themed data chapters.

The Indigenous young people population

There are 6968 Indigenous young people aged 12–24 representing 0.8 per cent of Victoria’s total population of young people aged 12–24 (as at 30 June 2001). There are marked differences between the age structure of the Indigenous population and that of the total Victorian population. Young people make up 17.6 per cent of the total Victorian population, but young people account for 24.9 per cent of the total Indigenous population (as of 30 June 2001).

Nearly half (48 per cent) of the total Indigenous population are in rural Victoria and 52 per cent are in metropolitan Victoria. The figures are reversed for the Indigenous young people population with 52 per cent of Indigenous young people in rural Victoria and 48 per cent in metropolitan Victoria (as of 30 June 2001).

Figure 1.6 presents the distribution of the total Indigenous youth population across Department of Human Services regions. The largest percentage of Victoria’s Indigenous young people lives in the North and West (metropolitan) region (25.6 per cent) followed by Loddon Mallee (15.1 per cent).

Figure 1.6: Distribution of Indigenous youth across Department of Human Services regions

Population at 30 June 2001
Source: ABS 2004, ABS data available on request

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10 There are limited outcomes data available relating to young people with a disability.
11 Experimental estimates for the Indigenous population based on the 2006 Census have not been released at time of report production.
Cultural, linguistic and religious diversity

Data from the 2006 Census show that 15.1 per cent of Victorians aged 12–24\(^{12}\) (and 23.6 per cent of all Victorians)\(^{13}\) were born overseas (ABS 2006 Census, ABS data available on request). The top stated countries of birth for young people (aged 12–24) (after Australia) were China (1.8 per cent),\(^{14}\) India (1.2 per cent), New Zealand (1.2 per cent), Malaysia (0.9 per cent) and England (0.8 per cent).

The 2006 Census also finds that 19.9 per cent of Victorians aged 12–24\(^{15}\) (and 20.4 per cent of all Victorians)\(^{16}\) speak a language other than English at home. The top stated languages spoken at home for young people (aged 12–24) (after English) are Mandarin (2.3 per cent), Cantonese (1.8 per cent), Vietnamese (1.7 per cent), Arabic (1.5 per cent) and Greek (1.4 per cent).

Young refugees

Young refugees in Victoria arrive principally from Africa and the Middle East under the federal government’s Humanitarian Program.

These young people will often have been subject to traumatic experiences prior to arriving in Victoria. They commonly face a number of complex challenges, including cultural dislocation, the loss of social networks and the practical demands associated with resettlement (Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council 2002, cited in The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues 2006).

The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues provides information about numbers of young refugees in Victoria, derived from Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs statistics. This information shows that there were 1110 youth arrivals (aged 13–25) to Victoria in 2006–07 under the Humanitarian Program.\(^{17}\)

Young people from Sudan, Burma, Afghanistan and Iraq accounted for 75 per cent of all entrants, with young people from Sudan as the largest group (25 per cent of all entrants) (The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues 2007).

Religion

The 2006 Census highlights that just over half (54 per cent) of young Victorians (aged 12–24) describe themselves as Christians\(^{18}\) (compared with 58.6 per cent of young people aged 12–24 in Australia and 60.5 per cent of the total Australian population).

Almost a quarter of Victorian young people aged 12–24 (24.4 per cent) state they have no religion (compared with 22.2 per cent of young people in Australia and 20.4 per cent of the total population)\(^{19}\) (ABS 2006 Census, ABS data available on request).

Buddhism and Islam are the next most commonly reported religious affiliations in Victorian 12–24 year olds (both at 3.1 per cent), compared with 2.3 per cent of young people in Australia who reported each of these affiliations.\(^{20}\)

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\(^{12}\) This does not include 5.7 per cent of young people for whom birthplace was not stated.

\(^{13}\) This does not include 6.6 per cent of all people for whom birthplace was not stated.

\(^{14}\) This excludes Special Administrative Regions (SARs) and Taiwan Province. SARs comprise ‘Hong Kong (SAR of China)’ and ‘Macau (SAR of China)’.

\(^{15}\) This does not include 5 per cent of young people for whom language was not stated.

\(^{16}\) This does not include 5.2 per cent of all people for whom language was not stated.

\(^{17}\) The Humanitarian Program is divided into an onshore and offshore stream. The offshore stream includes Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program visa holders. The Special Humanitarian Program has been established ‘for people who have suffered discrimination amounting to gross violation of human rights’. Special Humanitarian Program holders may fit the United Nations definition of a refugee, (United Nations 1951) but are not tested against it. The onshore stream of the Special Humanitarian Program includes temporary protection/humanitarian visa holders (The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues 2005).

\(^{18}\) Western Catholic, Anglican Church of Australia and Uniting Church were the three most commonly identified Christian religions respectively among this age group in Victoria.


\(^{20}\) Approximately 11 per cent of people do not state their religious affiliation.
Young people with a disability

It can be difficult to provide accurate estimates of the number of young people with a disability because of debate surrounding the definition of a disability and because of problems of identification even where a definition is agreed.

Each person’s experience of disability is different. Experiences of disability are influenced by a person’s own life experiences, the attitudes of other members of the community towards disability, and how easy it is for a person to get access to information, services and the physical environment (DHS 2002).

Disabilities can be caused by a genetic condition, by an illness or an accident. The main disabling conditions among young Australians (aged 15–24) are intellectual and other mental disorders (accounting together for 20 per cent of all disabling conditions). Psychiatric disorders are the second most common disabling condition. Other frequently reported conditions include other musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory diseases and neurological conditions (AIHW analysis of the ABS 2003 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carer’s CURF cited in AIHW 2007).

Victorian data

The ABS definition of disability has been used to estimate the prevalence of disability among young people in Victoria. The definition is:

Any limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities (ABS 2004).

Four levels of core activity restriction are identified by the ABS: profound, severe, moderate and mild.

The ABS 2003 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers indicates that approximately 77,500 young people aged 12–24 in Victoria have a reported disability, representing 8.6 per cent of all young people in Victoria. This is lower than the national average of 9.4 per cent of young people.

A higher percentage of males aged 12–24 in Victoria have a reported disability compared with females (9.3 per cent compared with 7.9 per cent) (see figure 1.7).

The survey also shows that a slightly higher proportion of 12–24 year olds in Victoria have a profound/severe core activity limitation compared with the national average (3.2 per cent compared with 2.8 per cent) (see figure 1.8). This represents approximately 29,100 young people and 3.2 per cent of the 12 to 24-year-old population.

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21 Young people with a reported disability include those with mild to profound core-activity limitation (where core activities comprise communication, mobility and self care), those without core-activity limitation but with a schooling or employment restriction and those without specific limitations or restrictions but who need assistance with health care, cognition and emotion, paperwork, transport, housework, property maintenance or meal preparation.

22 Relative standard errors are too high to reliably report gender differences in profound/severe core activity limitation.

23 The 2006 Census also measures the number of people with a profound or severe disability using the ‘Core Activity Need for Assistance’ variable. People with a profound or severe disability are defined as needing help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication because of a disability, long-term health condition lasting six months or more, or old age. The Census indicates that 1.4 per cent of 12 to 24 year olds in Victoria have a need for assistance with core activities. The percentage in Australia as a whole is the same (ABS 2006 Census, ABS data available on request).
The CIV Survey provides information on young adults (aged 18–24) who report having a disability. Respondents were asked ‘Would you describe yourself as a person with a disability?’ and 2.9 per cent of young Victorians answered yes. Males were more likely to say yes than females (3.9 and 1.7 per cent respectively). Young adults in country areas were also more likely to say yes than those living in metropolitan areas (4.6 and 2.4 per cent).