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## THE RESURGENCE OF MARVELLOUS MELBOURNE REVISITED: TRENDS IN POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN VICTORIA, 1996 TO 2001

■ **John O'Leary**

*Both Melbourne and regional Victoria's populations are growing strongly. Both grew by more than one per cent in the year ending 30 June 2002. During the 1996 to 2001 period the population of Melbourne continued to grow faster than that of regional Victoria. The contribution of natural increase to population growth declined. However, both overseas migration and interstate migration contributed strongly to Victoria's population growth. Rather than losing population to the other States and Territories, Victoria is now gaining population through interstate migration. However, based on 2001 Census data, regional Victoria lost population through interstate migration during the 1996 to 2001 period. Regional Victoria gained population through net migration from Melbourne.*

### INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper is based on a paper by myself that was published in *People and Place* in 1999.<sup>1</sup>

In that paper I examined trends in population distribution in Victoria between 1991 and 1996. Between 1991 and 1996 the population of Melbourne grew faster than that of regional Victoria. During the same period the population of Sydney also grew faster than that of regional New South Wales. As noted in the previous paper, both of these developments were unexpected as they occurred during a period of declining net overseas migration. It was argued that fewer people leaving Melbourne and Sydney and moving to the regional areas of their respective states could partly explain this development in both Victoria and New South Wales. In Victoria this development could also be partly explained by an increase in the number of people migrating to other States and Territories from regional Victoria.

One implication of this development, pointed out in the paper, was that greater cognisance needs to be given to other factors in the broader population debate than the appropriate level of net overseas migration to Australia. If a slowing of overseas migration to Australia did not

necessarily result in a slowing of population growth of the major capital cities such as Sydney and Melbourne, then changes in interstate and intrastate migration, and the reasons for these changes, needed to be brought into the wider population debate.

Five years on — what has changed? This paper attempts to answer this question by examining the trends in population distribution in Victoria between 1996 and 2001.

One thing, though, that has definitely changed is the political climate. October 1999 saw the unexpected defeat of the Kennett Liberal Government in a Victorian State Election largely as a result of a loss of seats in regional Victoria.

In 2002, another Victorian Election was held with the Australian Labor Party, led by Steve Bracks, committing itself, if re-elected, to a specific population target for regional Victoria. That target was to increase annual population growth in regional Victoria from an annual average of 0.9 per cent over the period 1996 to 2001<sup>2</sup> to 1.25 per cent per annum by 2006 and to increase the population in regional Victoria to 1.75 million persons by the year 2025<sup>3</sup> from 1.33 million at June 2001.

According to the State Treasurer and Minister for State and Regional

Development, John Brumby, regional population growth in Victoria had slowed almost to a halt under the Kennett Government (1992-1999) as people moved away, discouraged by lack of opportunities triggered by the previous Kennett Government's neglect of the regions. After the 2002 election Brumby said that the re-elected Bracks' Government would achieve its population target by investing in regional infrastructure, education and health, restoring community and transport services and facilitating new investment.

Where this increased population growth would come from was never explicitly stated. There was talk of encouraging 'skilled' overseas migrants to regional Victoria. However, overseas migration policy is in the hands of the Commonwealth Government, not State Governments. Given that State Governments can do little to influence natural increase (especially in the immediate future), increased population growth would need to be achieved by attracting

more migrants to regional Victoria from either Melbourne or both Melbourne and the rest of Australia than would otherwise be the case.

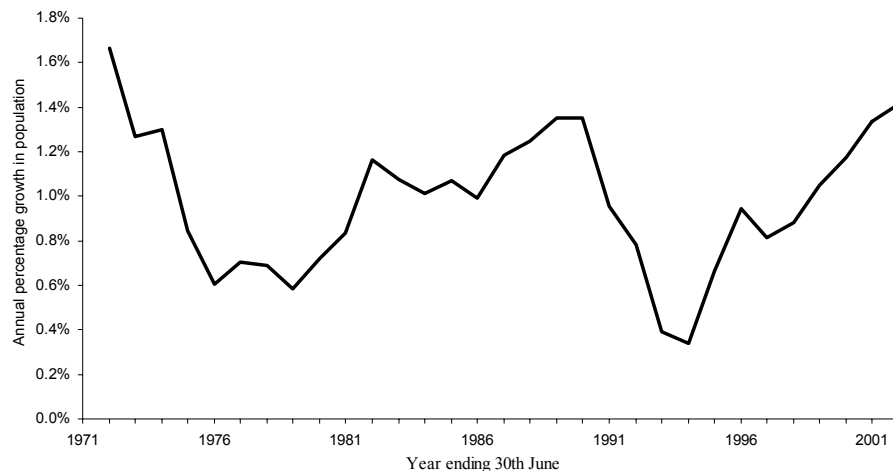
#### POPULATION CHANGE IN VICTORIA 1970-71 TO 2001-02

Victoria is currently experiencing a high rate of population growth. As Figure 1 shows the population of Victoria grew by 1.4 per cent in the 2001-02 financial year, the highest rate of annual population growth in Victoria since the early 1970s. By comparison, in the financial year 1993-94, Victoria's population grew by only 0.3 per cent.

The increase in population growth rates since 1993-94 is a consequence of an increase in net overseas migration to Victoria and a reversal in net interstate migration such that, rather than Victoria losing population to other States in net terms, Victoria now gains population from the other States.

Net overseas migration to Australia in 1992-93 was 30,000 persons, the lowest

**Figure 1: Annual population growth rates, Victoria, 1971-72 to 2001-02**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Australian Demographic Statistics*, cat. no. 3101.0, various editions

level of net migration to Australia since 1975-76. In 1992-93 net overseas migration contributed only 7,700 persons to Victoria's population growth (refer Figure 2). Since 1992-93 overseas migration has picked up, with net overseas migration to Australia reaching a peak in 2000-01 of 135,700 persons and 35,300 into Victoria.

The turnaround in net interstate migration was even higher. As explained in my previous article, although the economy slowed in all states, the 1990-91 economic recession hit Victoria earlier and harder than other states.

Net interstate migration loss from Victoria peaked in 1993-94 with a net loss of 29,200 persons, the highest net interstate migration loss from Victoria since the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) commenced publishing such data in the early 1970s.

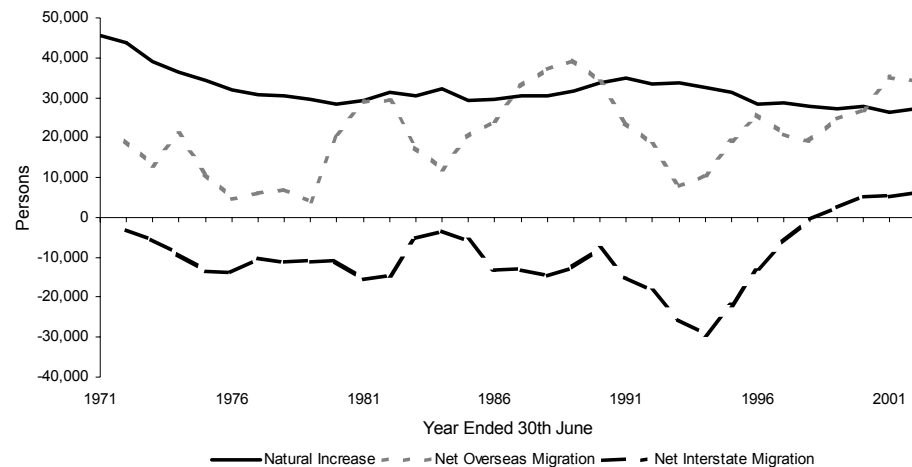
With the relative improvement in the Victorian economy since the mid 1990s the situation has been reversed. Over the financial years from 1993-94 to 1998-99

interstate movement to Victoria increased from 47,000 to 67,400 and migration from Victoria fell from 76,200 to 64,800. As a consequence, by 1998-99, net interstate migration to Victoria was positive. This was the first time Victoria had had positive net interstate migration since the ABS commenced publishing such data. Net interstate migration to Victoria has remained positive since 1998-99. In 2001-02, net interstate migration gain to Victoria was 6,200 persons, although there are signs now that net interstate migration may have peaked.

The reversal of a 29,000 person loss of population due to interstate migration to a 6,200 person gain because of interstate migration — a turnaround of 35,200 people — is a major explanation for the high population growth rates currently being experienced in Victoria.

By contrast, the contribution from natural increase (births less deaths) to Victoria's population growth has declined in the last ten years. Births have fallen (from 66,000 in 1990-91 to 58,700

**Figure 2: Components of annual population growth rate, Victoria, 1972-73 to 2001-02**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Australian Demographic Statistics*, cat. no. 3101.0, various editions

in 2000-01) while deaths have increased (from 31,100 in 1990-91 to 32,300 in 2000-01).

#### POPULATION CHANGE, MELBOURNE AND REGIONAL VICTORIA, 1996 TO 2001

During the 1970s and 1980s the population of regional Victoria generally grew faster than that of Melbourne (refer Figure 3). However, as previously noted, during the period 1991 to 1996, the population of regional Victoria grew more slowly than that of Melbourne.

During the period 1996 to 2001 the population of Melbourne continued to grow faster than that of regional Victoria. Melbourne's population increased by 188,300 people over this period, at an average annual rate of 1.1 per cent, compared to an increase of 56,200 in the population of regional Victoria, at an average annual rate of 0.9 per cent.

Though still lagging behind the growth rate for Melbourne, according to the preliminary population estimates published

by the ABS, the population of regional Victoria grew by 1.2 per cent in 2001-02, in sharp contrast to the 0.1 per cent decline in population seven years earlier.

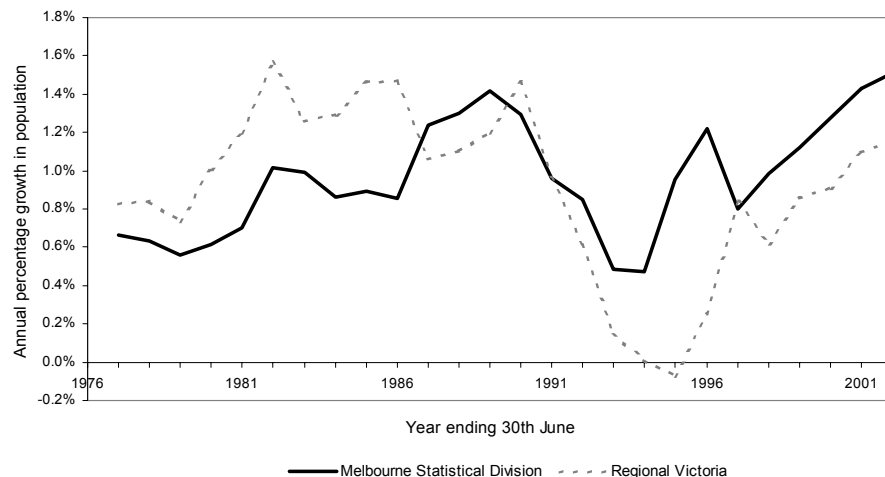
Perhaps the Victorian State Government's policy objective of 1.25 per cent population growth per annum in regional Victoria by 2005-06 is achievable. Whether this will be the case depends on an understanding of what is driving the resurgence in regional Victoria's population growth rate.

#### Natural increase

As stated previously, since the early 1990s the contribution of natural increase to Victoria's population growth has declined.

Between 1996 and 2001 the population of Melbourne increased by 188,300 persons (refer Table 1). Natural increase contributed 109,700 or 58 per cent of this increase while the population of regional Victoria increased by 56,200 with natural increase contributing 27,900 or just under half to this increase.

**Figure 3: Annual population growth rates, Melbourne Statistical Division and regional Victoria, 1976-77 to 2001-02**



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, Population Growth and Distribution*, Australia, 2001, cat. no. 2035.0, 16 June 2003; ABS, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, cat. no. 3101.0, various editions

**Table 1: Estimated components of population growth ('000 persons), Victoria, Melbourne Statistical Division and regional Victoria, 1996 to 2001**

	Victoria	Melbourne Statistical Division	Regional Victoria
Population change between 1996 and 2001			
Population June 1996	4,560.2	3,283.3	1,276.9
Population June 2001	4,804.7	3,471.6	1,333.1
Change in Population	244.5	188.3	56.2
Estimated population change due to:			
Natural increase	137.6	109.7	27.9
Net overseas migration (a)	127.4	120.5	6.9
Net interstate migration	6.4	13.4	-7.0
Net intrastate migration	0.0	-2.5	2.5
Intercensal discrepancy (b)	-26.9	-52.8	25.9

**Notes:**

(a) Net overseas migration for Melbourne and regional Victoria calculated by author (refer to text for methodology).

(b) Intercensal discrepancy for Melbourne and regional Victoria calculated as residual to balance the components of population change with the change in population.

**Sources:**

Victorian data: ABS, *Australian Demographic Statistics, September Quarter 2002, 2001 Census Edition - Final*, cat. no. 3101.0, 20th March 2003

Melbourne and regional Victoria data: ABS, Customised data on births by age and usual residence of mother provided to Department of Infrastructure; ABS, Customised data on deaths by age, sex and usual residence of deceased provided to Department of Infrastructure; ABS, *Australian Demographic Statistics, December Quarter 2002*, cat. no. 3101.0, 5 June 2003

**Intrastate migration**

According to the 2001 Census, regional Victoria gained 2,500 persons in net migration from Melbourne during the period 1996 to 2001.<sup>4</sup> That is 2,500 more people migrated to regional Victoria from Melbourne than migrated from regional Victoria to Melbourne.

As illustrated in Figure 4, the migration relationship between regional Victoria and Melbourne has changed substantially since the late 1960s. In the 1970s and 1980s, when regional Victoria was growing faster than Melbourne, there was increasing and high net migration gain to regional Victoria from Melbourne.

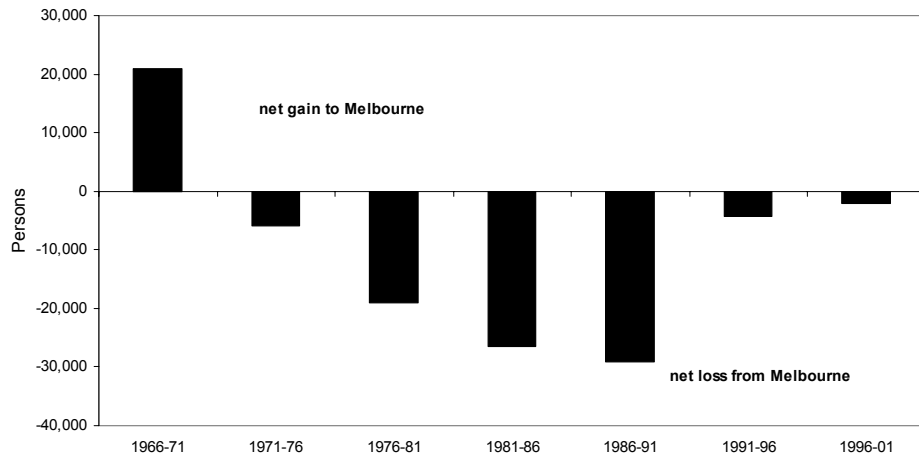
As noted earlier, the recession in the early 1990s hit regional Victoria harder than Melbourne and regional Victoria came out of the recession later. Not

surprisingly then, during the 1991 to 1996 intercensal period, net migration gain to regional Victoria from Melbourne declined.

Despite the higher population growth rates experienced by regional Victoria in the 1996 to 2001 intercensal period compared to the 1991 to 1996 period, there was an apparent further decline in the net migration gain to regional Victoria from Melbourne.

This result presents a conundrum. On the one hand we have population in regional Victoria growing by 56,000 between 1996 and 2001, but an analysis of the components of population growth does not seem able to explain where this growth came from. Net intrastate migration from Melbourne to regional Victoria would be considered a prime source for

**Figure 4: Net migration between Melbourne and regional Victoria, 1966 to 2001**



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, Population Growth and Distribution*, Australia, 2001, cat. no. 2035.0, 16 June 2003; Department of Sustainability and Environment, based on unpublished Census data from the ABS

this growth. Thus, one could come to the view that this estimate of net migration of 2,500 from Melbourne to regional Victoria over the period 1996 to 2001 may be on the low side and look for reasons why this may be the case.

On the other hand, there are strong reasons based on economic geography why net migration from Melbourne to regional Victoria would be low. As Healy and Birrell have argued, data on employment levels have shown that Sydney and, to a lesser extent, Melbourne 'have been the major beneficiaries of the structural changes associated with the globalization of the Australian economy'.<sup>5</sup> According to Healy and Birrell both Sydney and Melbourne have experienced an increase in their share of employment in the 'new economy' over the past decade.

This is an argument that is spelt out in further detail by O'Connor, Stimson and Daly who write that '... the concentration of population within the metropolitan-centred parts of Australia has not

diminished. One very important reason for this fact is that the expanding jobs in the new sectors of the economy are much more likely to be in metropolitan rather than non-metropolitan locations'.<sup>6</sup> They go on to claim that 'there has been a gradual strengthening of the metropolitan role in other activities which have a strong reason to be in rural areas'.<sup>7</sup>

However, it seems that this argument is not shared by Garnaut and others who assert that 'the old economic policies of high protection for manufacturing industry concentrated economic activity and population artificially into the large cities. The dismantling of protection and internationally-oriented reform more generally supported decentralisation of Australian population'.<sup>8</sup> In their view the growth of the new economy should promote population growth in regional areas.

Over the period 1996 to 2001 the population of both Sydney and Melbourne grew faster compared with other capital cities and rural Australia.

This does not fit with the Garnaut thesis. On the contrary, it is in accord with those who argue the 'new economy' increases the share of employment and population in Sydney and Melbourne. According to Garnaut the changes in population between 1996 and 2001 are due to a reduced rate of out-migration from Sydney and Melbourne to other parts of Australia which can be explained by extenuating factors. These factors include a period of exceptional growth in financial services following deregulation and economic growth (particularly in Melbourne and Victoria) as Victoria came out of the recession of the early 1990s. They also include drought (in regional Australia) and mostly low commodity prices that dampened economic conditions in much of inland Australia.<sup>9</sup>

Garnaut's thesis appears less convincing than that of O'Connor, Stimson and Daly for a number of reasons.

(a) Garnaut is wrong in suggesting that Sydney and Melbourne's high population growth rates in comparison with regional New South Wales and regional Victoria are restricted to the late 1990s. Healy and Birrell have pointed this out.<sup>10</sup> My 1999 article in *People and Place* and that of my colleague from New South Wales, Shane Nugent<sup>11</sup> were looking at explaining why Sydney had grown faster than regional New South Wales and Melbourne faster than regional Victoria during the 1991 to 1996 period. Figure 3 illustrates that Melbourne has been growing faster than regional Victoria in all financial years since 1986-87 except two.

(b) Under the 'new economy benefiting Sydney and Melbourne' view, one area of the economy that would be expected to grow, and grow strongly in Sydney and to a lesser extent in

Melbourne, is financial services. Yet Garnaut argues that growth in the financial services sector reflects 'exceptional circumstance'.

(c) Garnaut does not explain why Melbourne has come out of the recession of the early 1990s seemingly better than regional Victoria. Is it because Melbourne has been one of the major beneficiaries of the globalisation of the Australian economy?

Does an analysis of migration flows between Melbourne and regional Victoria through any light on this debate?

Figure 5 indicates that it is young adults in the 20 to 24 year age group that regional Victoria loses to Melbourne. However, an analysis of the 'where did you live one year ago question' in the 2001 Census by single year of age groups indicates a slightly different story. Generally migration of young adults from rural areas occurs at the end of year 12 studies when the person is aged 18. Such persons migrate to Melbourne or the major rural urban centres such as Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo, either to undertake further studies or to seek employment. The major rural urban centres tend to lose youth population at about age 23 when tertiary studies are completed.

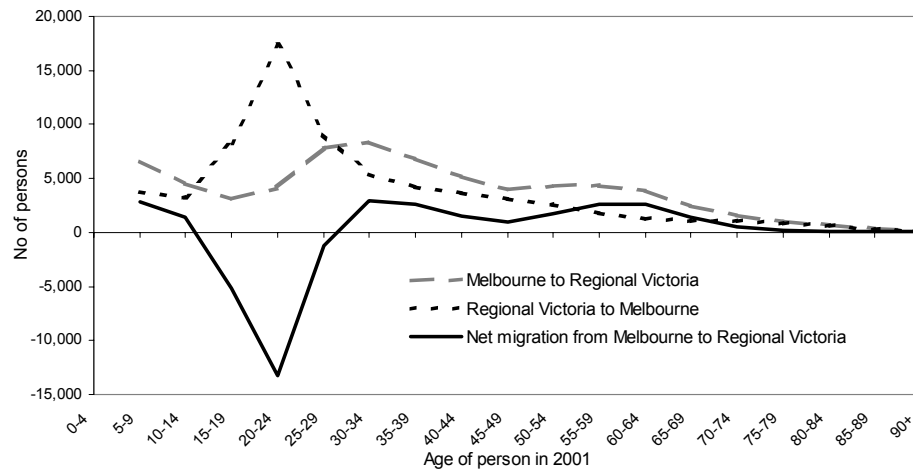
As illustrated in Figure 5, the main age groups at which people move to regional Victoria from Melbourne are people aged in their thirties and young children. This suggests migration of young family groups.

The net effect is that regional Victoria gained population during the 1996 to 2001 intercensal period from Melbourne in all age groups, except the 20-24 age group.

According to the 2001 Census, there were 72,500 people living in regional Victoria aged five and over who had been living in Melbourne five years earlier. The main destination for people leaving



**Figure 5: Migration between Melbourne and regional Victoria by age, 1996 to 2001**



Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment, based on unpublished Census data from the ABS

Melbourne to live in regional Victoria were the Local Government Areas bordering Melbourne (Macedon Ranges, Mitchell, Bass Coast, Moorabool, Baw Baw and Murrindindi) and the three major regional centres (Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo). Twenty-eight per cent of out-migration from Melbourne was to Local Government Areas bordering Melbourne and 20 per cent to the three major regional centres.

An analysis of migration between Melbourne and regional Victoria shows that Melbourne attracts young adults, especially school-leavers, coming to Melbourne for education, employment and to see the bright lights of the city. Regional Victoria attracts adults in their late twenties and thirties, their children and to a lesser extent retirees. However, to what extent is this migration simply border hopping — as more than a quarter of the out migration from Melbourne to regional Victoria is to those Local Government Areas bordering Melbourne?

### Interstate migration

Table 2 shows that, compared with the 1991 to 1996 intercensal period, interstate migration to both Melbourne and regional Victoria increased, while interstate migration from both Melbourne and regional Victoria decreased. In the period 1991 to 1996, Melbourne lost 45,700 people to interstate migration but in the 1996 to 2001 period Melbourne gained 14,000 from interstate migration. For regional Victoria, the loss from interstate migration fell from 32,000 in the 1991 to 1996 period to 6,700 in the 1996 to 2001 period.

However, what is surprising is that, although Victoria gained 7,000 persons through net interstate migration in the 1996 to 2001 period, regional Victoria continued to lose population through net migration (6,600 persons). But as we have seen regional Victoria grew at an average annual rate of 0.9 per cent between 1996 and 2001, adding 56,200 persons (see Figure 3 and Table 1). Here we have a puzzle. If regional Victoria is

**Table 2: Interstate migration arrivals and departures, Victoria, 1986 to 2001**

	1986 to 1991		1991 to 1996		1996 to 2001	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Interstate migration to Victoria						
Regional Victoria	42,474	34.5	37,571	34.4	47,675	32.4
Melbourne	80,648	65.5	71,764	65.6	99,416	67.6
Victoria	123,122	100.0	109,335	100.0	147,091	100.0
Interstate migration from Victoria						
Regional Victoria	57,172	34.1	69,570	37.2	54,337	38.9
Melbourne	110,335	65.9	117,480	62.8	85,412	61.1
Victoria	167,507	100.0	187,050	100.0	139,749	100.0
Net interstate migration						
Regional Victoria	-14,698		-31,999		-6,662	
Melbourne	-29,687		-45,716		14,004	
Victoria	-44,385		-77,715		7,342	

Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment, based on unpublished 1991, 1996 and 2001,

only gaining marginally through net migration from Melbourne and losing population in net terms to the rest of Australia, what is driving its rate of growth?

As illustrated in Figure 6, the movement from Melbourne to interstate and from interstate to Melbourne during the 1996 to 2001 period was concentrated around people aged in their twenties and thirties. This is not unexpected since it is usually the case in any mobility studies that young adults have the highest mobility rates.

In net terms, Melbourne gained young adults from interstate migration and, to a slight degree, lost people around the retirement age (55 to 64). The common myth that interstate migration from Victoria is older people leaving Victoria to live in Queensland comes from this last result. In net terms both Victoria and Melbourne lose older people (those around retirement age) through interstate migration. However, in terms of the number of movers it is young adults who have the dominant demographic effect.

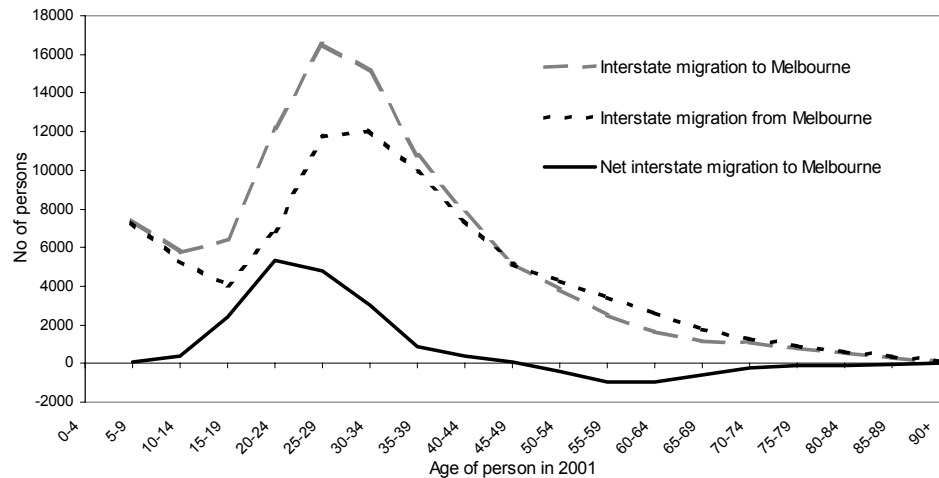
As with migration from regional Victoria to Melbourne, the biggest group moving from regional Victoria to interstate in the 1996 to 2001 period were young adults aged 20 to 24 at the time of the 2001 Census (refer Figure 7). As was the case with intrastate migration, an analysis of the 'where you lived one year ago' question by single year of age from the 2001 Census indicates much of this migration is associated with the completion of secondary education. That is, school leavers appear to be migrating from regional Victoria to interstate either to undertake further study or to find employment.

Migration to regional Victoria from interstate was highest for those people in the 25 to 34 age group and for those aged five to nine. As illustrated in Figure 7, in net terms regional Victoria lost young adults (aged 15 to 29) through interstate migration.

### Overseas migration

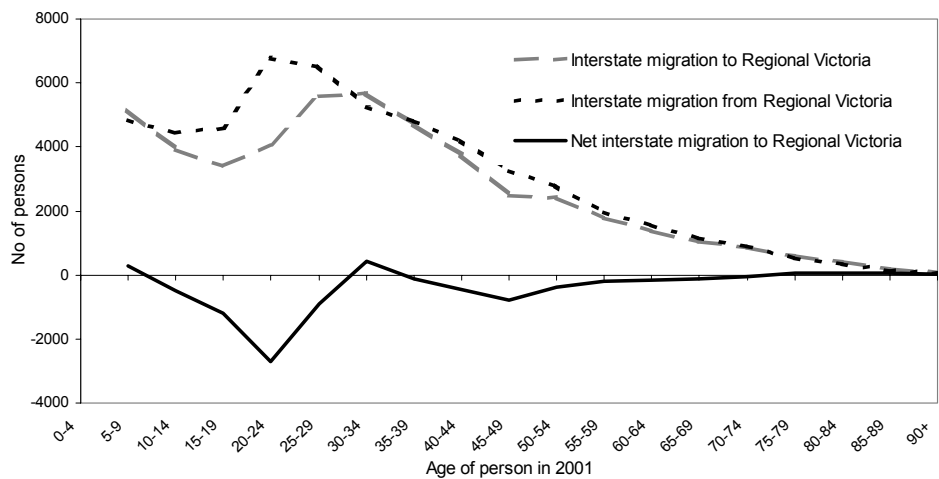
Table 3 provides data on overseas migration to Victoria from the last three

**Figure 6: Migration between Melbourne and interstate by age, 1996 to 2001**



Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment, based on unpublished Census data from the ABS

**Figure 7: Migration between regional Victoria and interstate by age, 1996 to 2001**



Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment, based on unpublished Census data from the ABS

Censuses based on the 'where did you live five years ago' question. At the 2001 Census, 159,400 persons resident in Victoria aged five years of age and over stated that they were living overseas five years earlier. Of those people living in

Victoria in 2001 who had been living overseas five years earlier, 92 per cent were living in Melbourne. A similar 92 per cent share of overseas arrivals to Victoria in the five years preceding the 1996 and 1991 censuses located in Melbourne.

**Table 3: Overseas immigration to Victoria, 1986 to 2001**

Overseas migration to Victoria	1986 to 1991		1991 to 1996		1996 to 2001	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Regional Victoria	12,197	7.7	10,501	7.5	12,898	8.1
Melbourne	145,991	92.3	130,162	92.5	146,453	91.9
Victoria	158,188	100.0	140,663	100.0	159,351	100.0

Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment, based on unpublished 1991, 1996 and 2001 census data from the ABS

There was an increase in overseas migration arrivals in both Melbourne and regional Victoria in the 1996 to 2001 period compared with the 1991 to 1996 period (refer Table 3). The levels of overseas migrant arrivals in the 1996 to 2001 period were similar to those in the 1986 to 1991 period.

As illustrated in Figure 8 it is mainly young adults who migrate to Victoria from overseas. Over half the overseas migrants to Victoria in the 1996 to 2001 period were aged 15 to 34.

Unfortunately there are no Census data on persons residing overseas at the time of the Census but who had been living in Australia five years previously. This means we lack census data on migration from Victoria to overseas. To compile the quarterly estimates of the population of Australia, its States and Territories, the ABS uses overseas arrivals and departure cards to estimate overseas migration to and from Australia. According to this source, net overseas migration to Victoria over the period 1996 to 2001 was 127,400 persons.

Overseas migration arrivals to regional Victoria over the five year period 1996 to 2001 were 12,900 persons. A rough estimate of overseas departures from regional Victoria is around 6,000 persons.<sup>12</sup> Thus, over the five year period regional Victoria gained approximately a total of 6,900 persons through overseas migration, and Melbourne 120,500 persons (although these estimates should be used with great caution).

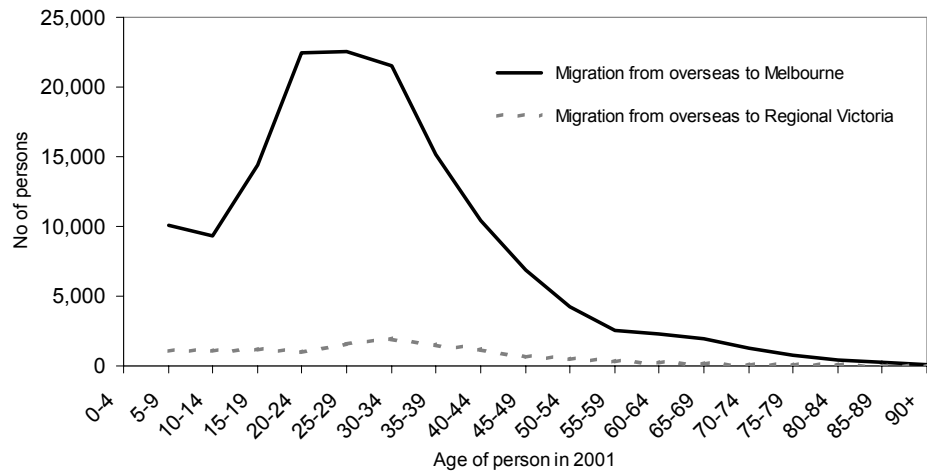
### Intercensal discrepancy

As mentioned previously, according to ABS estimates there has been a resurgence of population growth in regional Victoria since 1994-95 when the population of regional Victoria actually declined.

As we have seen, according to the ABS, regional Victoria's population increased by 56,200 between 1996 and 2001. Half of this increase came from natural increase (births minus deaths). Regional Victoria gained population through net intrastate migration from Melbourne (2,500 persons) but lost population through interstate migration to the other States and Territories of Australia (7,000 persons). The balance of regional Victoria's growth cannot be explained by overseas migration. Thus there is a sizeable gap (25,900 persons) between these four components of population growth and the ABS estimates for population growth in regional Victoria.

The explanation for the discrepancy is 'intercensal error'. This accounts for the balance of population growth in regional Victoria over the period. This 'intercensal error' arises because the data for the population estimates and the components of population growth are derived from a number of different sources. As explained by the ABS, 'intercensal error is caused by problems with intercensal components of population change together with inconsistencies (including improvements) between census end-points including their net undercount adjustments. This

**Figure 8: Migration to Victoria from overseas by age, 1996 to 2001**



Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment, based on unpublished 2001 Census data from the ABS

leaves open a vast range of processes, providers, methodologies and respondent actions as possible contributing factors'.<sup>13</sup>

### Implications

The above analysis has provided some information about the faster growth of Melbourne's population compared with that of regional Victoria during the 1996 to 2001 period. It has also compared the growth of this period that with the change that occurred from 1991 to 1996.

In both periods Melbourne's population grew faster than that of regional Victoria.

In 1996 to 2001 there was also a major turnaround in interstate migration with Victoria gaining rather than losing population in net terms to the other States and Territories of Australia. Yet, despite this turnaround, regional Victoria continued to lose population through net interstate migration.

If one accepts the thesis of O'Connor, Stimson and Daly that 'expanding jobs in the new sectors of the economy are much

more likely to be in metropolitan rather than non-metropolitan locations' then the faster population growth rates of the two major cities in Australia, Sydney and Melbourne, compared with the other capital cities and the rest of Australia are likely to continue.

This outcome, of course, assumes that growth in jobs in the expanding sectors of the economy is associated with population growth. Is this the case?

The Commonwealth Treasurer has recently announced a Productivity Commission inquiry into housing affordability in Australia. According to the *Australian Financial Review*, the State Treasurers are seeking to widen this inquiry to include factors affecting housing demand, including population issues.<sup>14</sup>

If population issues are to be raised as part of this inquiry then the implications pointed out in my previous paper still hold. These are that:

- (a) greater cognisance needs to be given to other factors in the broader population debate than the appropriate

- level of net overseas migration to Australia: and
- (b) changes in interstate and intrastate migration and the reasons for these changes need to be brought into the wider population debate.

This paper has pointed out a dilemma in trying to understand changes in interstate and intrastate migration. According to the ABS there has been a resurgence of population growth in regional Victoria over the period 1996 to 2001. However, when one examines the components of population growth it is not clear where this population growth is coming from. The reasons for regional Victoria's recent population growth are hidden somewhere in the black box known as intercensal

discrepancy. Obviously this is an area where more work needs to be undertaken.

Understanding the reasons for regional Victoria's recent population growth is also important from a Victorian Government policy perspective. Such understanding is required to help policy makers put in place the policies required to achieve the Bracks' Government population targets for regional Victoria.

#### Note

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Sustainability and Environment or the Government of Victoria.

#### References

- <sup>1</sup> J. O'Leary, 'The Resurgence of Marvellous Melbourne — Trends in Population Distribution in Victoria, 1991 to 1996', *People and Place*, vol. 7, no 1, 1999, pp. 33 - 38
- <sup>2</sup> Department of Infrastructure, 'Victorian Population Bulletin, Special Issue, Census 2001 Edition', Melbourne, September 2002
- <sup>3</sup> This election commitment was restated in a press release issued by the Minister for State and Regional Development (John Brumby) on the 11th April 2003.
- <sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Census of Population and Housing, Population Growth and Distribution, Australia, 2001*, Cat. no. 2035.0, 16 June 2003, p. 45
- <sup>5</sup> E. Healy and B. Birrell, 'Metropolis divided: the political dynamic of spatial inequality and migrant settlement in Sydney', *People and Place*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2003, p. 67
- <sup>6</sup> K. O'Connor, R. Stimson and M. Daly, *Australia's Changing Economic Geography: A Society Dividing*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 113
- <sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 114
- <sup>8</sup> R. Garnuat, with R. Ganguly and J. Kang, *Migration to Australia and Comparisons With the United States: Who Benefits?*, Report prepared for the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, May 2003, p. 45
- <sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p. 45
- <sup>10</sup> Healy and Birrell, *op cit.*, p. 67
- <sup>11</sup> S. Nugent, 'Why Sydney keeps growing — trends in population distribution in New South Wales 1991 to 1996', *People and Place*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1998, pp. 24-32
- <sup>12</sup> This rough estimate is based on net overseas migration to Victoria over the period 1996 to 2001 being 127,400 persons (based on passenger cards). Given arrivals to Victoria was 159,400 (based on the 2001 Census) this means that overseas departure would be in the order of 22,000 persons. If we assume 28 per cent of departures were from regional Victoria (regional Victoria's share of Victoria's population) an estimate of 6,160 for overseas departures from regional Victoria is derived.
- <sup>13</sup> ABS, *Revised Intercensal Error and Intercensal Discrepancy 1996-2001*, Canberra, 20 March 2003
- <sup>14</sup> M. Skulley, 'States make migration a housing issue', *Australian Financial Review*, 7 August 2003, pp. 1, 4