



Credit: Fred and Hannah

# Tasmania's Population Policy

*Planning for our future*





In recognition of the deep history and culture of this Island,  
we acknowledge and pay our respects to all Tasmanian  
Aboriginal people; the traditional owners of Tasmania.  
We also pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

Credit: Moon Cheese Studio

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Credit: Jon Gazzignato

## Foreword

In 2015, the Tasmanian Government set a bold and ambitious target to grow Tasmania's population to 650,000 by the year 2050. We did this because our economy was languishing, and population growth was wavering between stagnation and decline.

Since we launched the Population Growth Strategy in 2015, focusing on job creation and strengthening our economy, migration and liveability, our population has grown significantly. We've also got more people in jobs than ever before, and our economy is in a stronger position.

Amidst this success we've experienced some growing pains and this Population Policy aims to improve the available data, understanding and integrated approaches to better manage and prepare for future population change.

Continuing to work with the community, industry, and all levels of government to improve planning for future population change will place us in the best possible position to deal with the challenges and opportunities ahead.

We want all who are living in Tasmania – those who are locally born and who move here – to have opportunities and feel a sense of belonging.



Jeremy Rockliff  
Premier of Tasmania



Felix Ellis  
Minister for Skills and Training



Credit: Nick Hanson

# Introduction

This Population Policy arises out of the demographic changes Tasmania has experienced in recent years and outlines a blueprint with associated priorities to guide planning, decision making and delivery.

A diverse range of voices were heard during our consultation, from community members, service organisations, industry and businesses, who, along with all levels of government, have informed our way forward.

Preparing for and managing future population growth and decline is a responsibility shared across government. For example, while the Commonwealth is responsible for national funding arrangements and setting the parameters for overseas migration, states and territories are primarily responsible for infrastructure and service delivery, with local governments leading on planning and local service provision.



# What success looks like

Tasmania is a great place to live, work, invest and raise a family.

Our outstanding liveability and vibrant economy attracts people of all ages and stages to choose this place as home.



Credit: Stu Gibson



# Why a Population Policy?

We want all Tasmanians to have the opportunity to prosper, have a safe home, fulfilling work, healthy natural environments, and the right supports, at the right place and right time. We also want our industries and businesses to be able to employ the people they need to keep our economy moving and services flowing.

Our success depends on understanding and preparing for future population change, with the aim of ensuring it is both beneficial and sustainable.

Demographic change has significant implications for the state's economy, services and liveability. With time, as our communities change, we see shifts in the demand for infrastructure and services and our ability to supply them.

For example, changes in age cohorts, education and skills, mental, physical and material strengths and support needs, and family makeup all affect the types of housing, health, education, industries, workplaces and transport options we need in particular areas. Impacts on the natural environment and people's sense of community are also important considerations.

There are challenges ahead and we need to ready Tasmanians and all who provide infrastructure and services to meet these challenges. As the Australian Government's Intergenerational Report highlights:

*"Major forces will shape the economy in coming years, including population ageing; rising demand for care and support services; climate change and the net zero transformation; technology and digital adaptation; and geopolitical risk and fragmentation.*

*These forces will change the structure of our economy and how Australians live, work and engage with the world. The ageing population will likely reinforce the trend towards a services-based economy, while digital technology uptake will favour a higher skilled workforce. The net zero transformation will see some global demand for traditional exports decline while new markets and industries emerge and grow. The care and support, manufacturing and mining sectors are expected to undergo profound change."*<sup>1</sup>



Credit: Natasha Mulhall

# How has our population changed?

When released in 2015, the first Tasmanian Population Growth Strategy set a target of increasing the state's population to 650,000 persons by 2050. This included an incremental population target of 570,000 persons by 2030 which was achieved eight years early, in the March quarter 2022, with positive impacts on our economy and labour market. As at 30 December 2023, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures estimated Tasmania's population at 574,705 persons.

Tasmania's annual rate of population growth peaked in 2018-19 (2.1 per cent growth), but has since decreased. Our annual growth rate in the December 2023 quarter was 0.41 per cent.

International migration is a significant contributor to growth, with net interstate migration tending to be more volatile and less significant overall in the long term. Natural increase (births minus deaths) has been decreasing over time. In 2022, our total fertility rate was 1.5 (down from 2.1 in 2006).

Like many countries world-wide, Tasmania is ageing both structurally and numerically. Around 21 per cent of our population were aged 65 years and older in 2023. Despite the state's positive progress in population growth in recent years, particularly in the 20-34 year old age group since 2016, our population continues to be the oldest in the country.

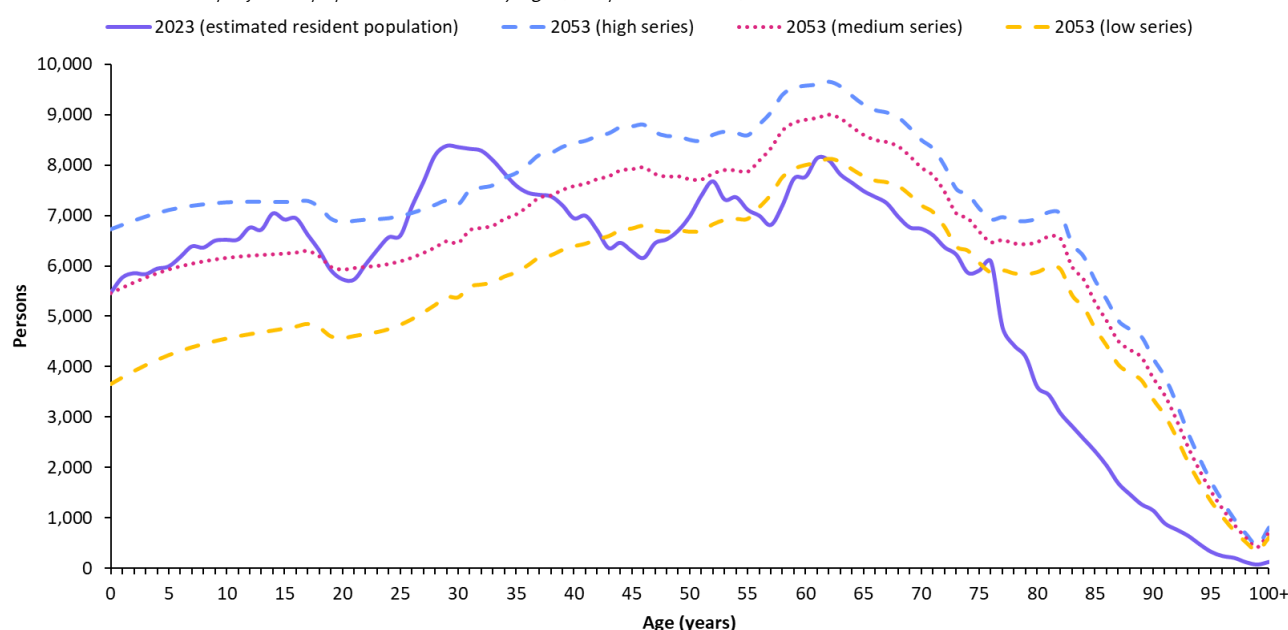
Our median age of 42 years at the time of the 2021 Census (up from 26 years in 1971) is four years older than the national median. Chart 1 below illustrates how our population is projected to continue to grow older over time.

ABS Census 2021 figures surprised many in confirming that by mid-2021 there were around 26,000 extra people living in Tasmania than had been previously estimated. The figures helped to make sense of the strain experienced by local systems over recent years.

The ABS provides the following 2021 Census highlights for Tasmania:

- Households are getting smaller. In 2021, the average number of people who lived in each household was 2.4, a decrease from 3.4 people in 1971. In 2021, 67.6 per cent of households were family households.
- The most common type of family in Tasmania was families with no children. At that time 44.5 per cent of families were couples with no children and 17.3 per cent were one parent families.
- Most people in Tasmania were born in Australia. The proportion of people who were born overseas has increased over time. In 1971, 10.2 per cent of people were born overseas. This increased to 15.3 per cent in 2021.
- Around 30,000 people identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in 2021, making up 5.4 per cent of the population.<sup>2</sup>

Chart 1 — Tasmania's projected population in 2053 by age (compared to 2023)

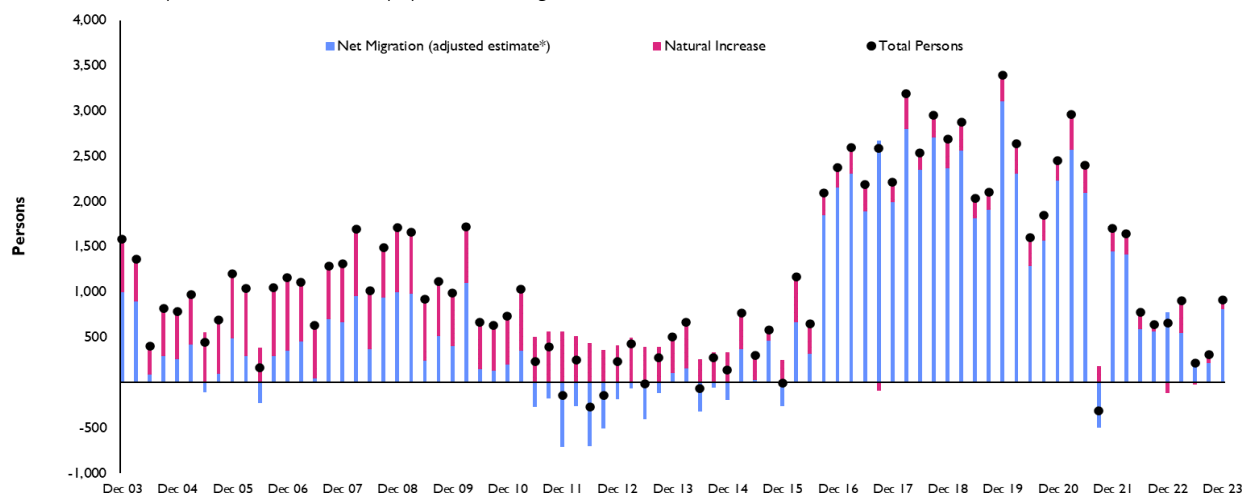


Source – Department of Treasury and Finance, Population Projections, 2024



The following Chart 2 shows how net migration was historically high between the 2016 and 2021 censuses, and how natural increase has been slowly declining over time.

Chart 2 — The components of Tasmania’s population change between 2003 and 2023



Source – Department of Treasury and Finance, 2024

All Tasmanian Local Government Areas (LGAs), except for Flinders, grew between 2016 and 2023. The southern region, particularly around the capital city, continues to be significantly more populated. The Greater Hobart area (Clarence, Glenorchy, Hobart, and Kingborough LGAs) and Launceston experienced the highest growth in the number of people. Sorell and Brighton saw the highest proportional growth since 2016, at 21.77 per cent and 19.97 per cent respectively. Population growth is expected to continue to be concentrated in and around Hobart, putting strain on existing infrastructure and services.

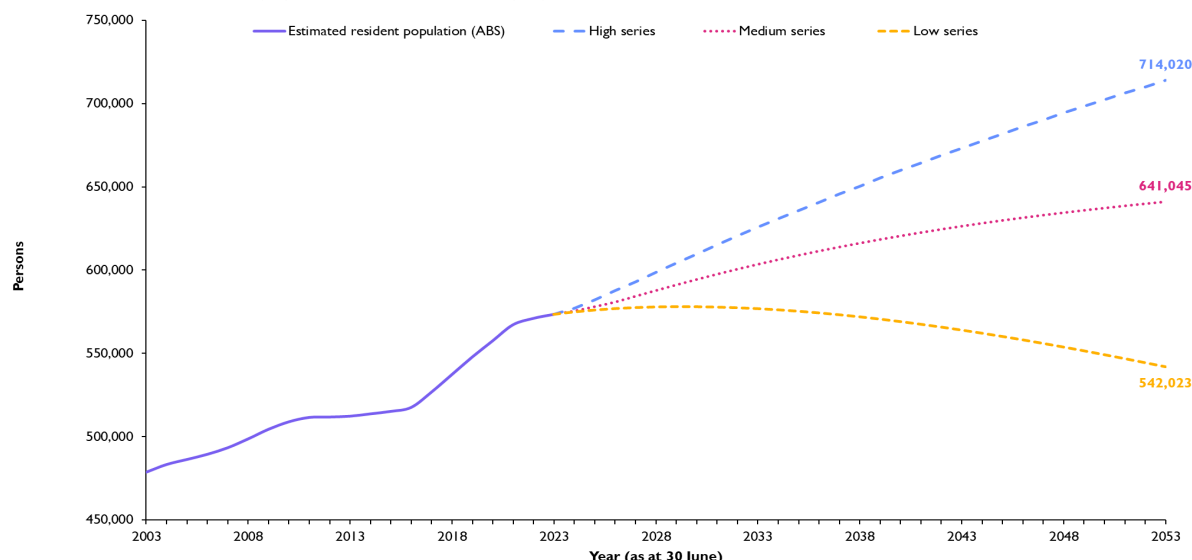
Between 2015-16 and 2022-23, Tasmania’s economy grew by 20.3 per cent in real terms. As at May 2024, employment in Tasmania was 18.6 per cent higher than May 2015.

These strong employment conditions have seen the state’s unemployment rate fall to around a historically low level of 4.0 per cent in May 2024, down 2.5 percentage points from the unemployment rate of 6.5 per cent recorded in May 2015. While Treasury has forecast that economic growth going forward will moderate reflecting the expected slowdown in the global economy, the outlook for Tasmania remains positive.

Tasmania’s population projections provide more localised data and are a useful resource to guide future planning. The Tasmanian Department of Treasury and Finance’s medium series projects continuous growth for Tasmania’s population, peaking at 641,045 in June 2053.

The Department of Treasury and Finance’s 2024 population projections are shown in Chart 3 below. To view state, regional and local government projection data visit: [population.tas.gov.au](https://population.tas.gov.au).

Chart 3 — Total Tasmanian population, estimated and projected



Source – Estimated data from ABS and Department of Treasury and Finance, Population Projections, 2024





Credit: Nick Hanson

## Looking forward

Now is an important time to plan for Tasmania's future. Our next phase of population planning builds on our goal of 650,000 people by 2050, with a strengthened focus on increasing the retention and attraction of younger residents while still supporting the wellbeing of all Tasmanians, across all ages and stages of life.

With a focus on liveability, our approach is based on promoting economic growth and prosperity, fiscal sustainability, environmental amenity and social cohesion.

This is about more than the now, with a focus on the future of our state and creating a solid economic and social foundation for intergenerational wellbeing.

We want all people living in Tasmania to experience a sense of belonging - whether they were born here or moved here.

Stories of belonging are also not complete without recognising the voices of Tasmanian Aboriginal people and their continuous custodianship of Country and culture.

Supporting changing population dynamics is ambitious because it involves getting the scale, nature and speed of infrastructure and services delivery right. This will require integrated, pre-emptive and well-coordinated efforts across all tiers of government, the private sector and service-based organisations.





Credit: Fred and Hannah

## A balanced approach

We recognise the need to facilitate long-term, balanced population growth and equip Tasmania to prepare, plan for and manage future population trends, issues, and opportunities.

Being able to provide the services our community members need, at all ages and stages, requires strategic intergenerational planning and a strong funding base. For instance, we know that the demand for health services increases as we age and the demand for childcare and education services increases with more births. We also know that many young adults are looking for compelling lifestyle options in order to choose to remain in, or return to, our state.

We will achieve a more balanced population by continuing to drive economic development and increasing the attractiveness of Tasmania as a place to thrive for younger and working-age residents, while improving liveability for all Tasmanians.

Attracting and retaining a younger cohort, and those looking to establish families, is critical to support our economic and social wellbeing into the future.

Balanced population growth will see an increase in the proportion of younger families and working-aged residents, largely made up of international migration. Skilled migration, matched to the needs of the workforce, brings many benefits to our communities and the economy. This is also likely to support the rate of natural increase and will help to offset Tasmania's structural ageing, an issue experienced worldwide.

Making it easier to be a working parent through providing greater access to affordable childcare, increasing the diversity and availability of housing, championing flexible work conditions, and taking action to improve gender equity are key to encouraging natural population increase, greater workforce participation, and stronger productivity. This will reduce the cost of having children and ease the tensions between work and family life.



# More than a number

Our Population Policy brings together our ambition of having 650,000 people living in Tasmania by 2050 with a strong focus on attracting the people and skills we need.

To achieve long-term, balanced population growth, we are determined to increase our young person and working-age demographics.

This will be a key enabler for economic growth, fiscal sustainability and service delivery.

Whether by births exceeding deaths, people moving to or staying in Tasmania, over time we will aim for an increased proportion of the population being in the 16-64 years age range and a stable or increasing proportion being in the 0-16 years age range.

We want to see more working-age members of the community on a consistent basis, especially over the period when demand for age-related services remains relatively high.

## How are we going to do this?

### Key enablers

#### Integrated policy

The Population Policy is innately connected to several other Tasmanian Government priorities and strategies, including the Equal means Equal: Tasmanian Women's Strategy, Wellbeing Framework, Housing Strategy, Climate Change Action Plan, and Youth Jobs Strategy. In addition, a number of existing and emerging key Australian, Tasmanian and local government policies and strategies will continue to help deliver on the Population Policy's purpose and priorities. The Policy also recognises the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the importance of improving outcomes for Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

#### Joined up collaboration

The Population Policy is a central, whole-of-government commitment, with relevance to economic, social and environmental policies and strategies and future-focused planning. Working across portfolios, and with all levels of government, collaboration will be proactively facilitated to integrate the objectives and priorities into related initiatives and funding opportunities. Where initiatives are underway, additional support and collaborative efforts may be put in place to speed up and/or scale the outcomes in a cohesive way.

#### Monitoring, evaluation and adaptation

A population outcomes evaluation framework and associated data dashboard will be developed to measure what matters in Tasmania and assess the interplay of economic, social and environmental factors that most significantly contribute to, and affect the outcomes we are working towards. This will include agreeing on the qualitative and quantitative metrics that will be used to measure impact over time. An iterative policy learning and adaptation process will be embedded.

#### Fit-for-purpose data and analysis

The Population Policy will continue to be informed by dedicated demographic data and analysis. Generating and sharing fit for purpose data and analysis is critical to equipping Tasmania to prepare, plan for and manage future population trends, issues, and opportunities. Sharing of population data, analysis and projections to guide future policy, infrastructure and services planning will be facilitated.

#### Roadmap forward

The Stage 1 Action Plan will outline how the Policy is to be implemented. Further action plans will be developed as we learn and adapt over time.



# Population Policy blueprint

Having heard from experts and our wider community, the following Population Policy blueprint illustrates the priorities we will focus on to grow our population in a balanced and more sustainable way, all working towards our ultimate goal of intergenerational wellbeing.





# The priorities we're focusing on

These priorities have been developed through consultation with community members, service organisations, industry and business, and experts in the field, along with all levels of government.

How we implement these priorities and report on progress will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders, and will be informed by data linkage, analysis, monitoring and evaluation.

## 1. Liveability

**Increase liveability through better infrastructure planning and delivery, greater housing supply and diversity and improved services.**

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### *Smart, sustainable cities and towns*

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1.1 Promote urban renewal and development that encourages sustainable approaches to support increased amenity as our population changes.

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1.2 Identify and activate underutilised spaces to increase housing, walkability and green spaces.

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1.3 Embrace emerging and innovative technologies to support quality of life.

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### *Timely delivery*

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1.4 Improve the alignment of supply and demand of infrastructure and services.

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1.5 Scale up delivery of affordable and diverse housing supply, close to amenities, services, communities, and work.

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1.6 Advance the availability of safe, affordable, and reliable public and active transport options.

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1.7 Increase access to quality and affordable early childhood education and care.

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## 2. The people and skills we need

Attract and retain the people and skills we need to support current and future generations.

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### *Workforce development*

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|-----|---|
| 2.1 | Proactively prepare people with the skills needed to provide the right services at the right time.            |
| 2.2 | Improve ways to connect employers and workers for meaningful employment outcomes.                             |
| 2.3 | Encourage workplaces to be adaptive and inclusive.  |
| 2.4 | Progress women's participation in the workforce through improved gender equity and family friendly practices. |
| 2.5 | Undertake targeted efforts to attract the people and skills we need.  |
| 2.6 | Support skills recognition and workforce transition.  |

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### *Social cohesion*

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|-----|--|
| 2.7 | Increase retention of skilled migrants and their families by supporting the implementation of a simpler, fairer, faster migration system in Australia.   |
| 2.8 | Identify social cohesion opportunities and challenges in local communities and support place-based approaches to deliver innovative solutions that engage young people, facilitate participation, and enhance feelings of belonging. |

### 3. Sustainability

Understand available data and learn from innovative initiatives to inform systems change.

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#### *Learning and adapting*

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3.1 Research, share and expand the available population data, analysis, projections and future foresight to guide infrastructure, housing and services planning and decision making.

3.2. Identify ways to mitigate potential negative impacts of future population change.

3.3 Measure what matters in Tasmania to track population outcomes over time and inform future policy.

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#### *Plan and act for current and future generations*

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3.4 Assess and reduce the barriers impacting long term population planning and infrastructure delivery.

3.5 Facilitate integrated approaches across all levels of government to improve outcomes for our changing population.

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Credit: Moon Cheese Studio



# Glossary

## 1. Balanced population growth

Balanced population growth would see a stable or increasing proportion of the population aged between 0-15 years and an increased proportion of the population aged between 16-64 years. The benefits of a more even spread of non-working and working age groups include increased ability to fund services (offset structural ageing), and the demand for age related services is more able to be serviced (offset numeric ageing).

## 2. Infrastructure

Infrastructure refers to the physical and organisational facilities and assets that are necessary for the functioning and development of a region, city, or state. It encompasses transport networks (roads, bridges, railways, ports), utilities (water supply, sewage systems, electricity and telecommunication grids), as well as the social components of housing, health, education and aged care that are critical to society. It is a vital aspect of urban and regional development to enhance the quality of life and promote economic growth.

## 3. Place-based approaches

Place-based approaches target the specific circumstances of a place and engage local people as active participants in development and implementation, requiring government to share decision-making. Place-based approaches can complement the bigger picture of services and infrastructure. They engage with issues and opportunities that are driven by complex, intersecting local factors and require cross-sectoral or long-term responses.<sup>3</sup>

## 4. Liveability

A liveable place is somewhere that is safe, attractive, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable; with affordable and diverse types of housing, public open space, local shops, health and community services, leisure and cultural opportunities; with opportunities for employment and education all accessible by convenient public transport, walking and cycling.<sup>4</sup>

## 5. Smart, sustainable cities and towns

A 'smart city' is one that uses information and communication technology to enhance its liveability, workability and sustainability (Adam Beck). 'Smart' can be people, process and technology.<sup>5</sup>

## 6. Urban

There is no standard definition of 'urban', which differs substantially between countries. However, most agree that the term 'urban' refers to cities or towns along with the suburban fringe around them.

## 7. Fertility rate

The fertility rate of a country, state or region is the average number of children a woman has in their lifetime. It is expressed as children per woman. Alongside deaths and migration, fertility is an element of population growth, reflecting both the causes and effects of economic and social developments.<sup>6</sup>

## 8. Early Childhood Education and Care

Early Childhood Education and Care, sometimes referred to as childcare or preschool, is delivered by qualified educators through a formalised learning framework to instil social, physical, emotional, personal, creative, and cognitive learning in young children (generally from infancy to school age).<sup>7</sup>

## 9. Social cohesion

Social cohesion is about how the community operates together in a diverse society and the willingness of members of society to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper.<sup>8</sup>

## 10. Sustainability

Sustainability is making the right choices today, to ensure the future health of the planet and all who live and depend on it. Sustainability is understanding how individual and social wellbeing, the economy, and the environment are inseparable and interdependent. Social factors like poverty, food security, access to education, decent work, and safe and resilient communities, are all concerns for sustainability action. The terms 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development' are often used interchangeably. In the 1987 report titled "Our Common Future"<sup>9</sup> by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, known as the Brundtland Commission, sustainable development is defined as – 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

## 11. Wellbeing

Wellbeing can mean different things to different people, but it generally includes economy, health, education, safety, housing, living standards, environment and climate, social inclusion and connection, identity and belonging, good governance, and access and services.<sup>10</sup>

# Endnotes

1. <http://treasury.gov.au/publication/2023-intergenerational-report>
2. <http://abs.gov.au/articles/snapshot-tas-2021>
3. <https://www.vic.gov.au/framework-place-based-approaches/executive-summary>
4. <https://auo.org.au/measure/>
5. <http://www.smartcitiescouncil.com/article/2022-defining-smart-cities-again>
6. <https://data.oecd.org/pop/fertility-rates.htm>
7. <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/about-early-childhood-education-and-care-australia>
8. <https://scanloninstitute.org.au/research/mapping-social-cohesion/what-social-cohesion>
9. <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>
10. [http://premier.tas.gov.au/site\\_resources\\_2015/additional\\_releases/progressing\\_tasmanias\\_first\\_wellbeing\\_framework](http://premier.tas.gov.au/site_resources_2015/additional_releases/progressing_tasmanias_first_wellbeing_framework)



