

The difference between the NSW Population Projections and the NSW Government's strategic plans



The NSW Population Projections are not NSW Government policy and they are one tool which is used in the planning for land use, service delivery, infrastructure investment and economic development. The NSW Government's policy or 'vision' for the future of NSW is outlined in its strategic planning documents.

The NSW Government's strategic planning documents, the nine Regional Plans, the Greater Sydney Region Plan: A Metropolis of Three Cities (<https://www.greater.sydney/metropolis-of-three-cities>), the State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038: Building Momentum (<http://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/expert-advice/state-infrastructure-strategy/>) and Future Transport 2056 (<https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/>) outline the direction for planning land use, service and infrastructure delivery across NSW. The NSW Government also has strategic plans for economic development with A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/regional-nsw/a-20-year-economic-vision-for-regional-nsw/>) and Regional Economic Development Strategies (<https://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/programs-and-services/centre-for-economic-and-regional-development/projects/regional-economic-development-strategies/>) setting the direction the NSW Government will take in supporting regional industries and jobs.

The NSW Population Projections are a point-in-time estimate of the future NSW population based on assumptions for fertility, life expectancy and migration. These assumptions are developed from information known at the time of publication from Census data, various government departments and short-term forecasts of net overseas migration. The projections also use known new housing supply and infrastructure investments in Greater Sydney to help distribute the projected future population across the city.

While the strategic documents set the direction for the NSW Government, many of the projects and programs identified are yet to be fully investigated and potential options for implementation identified. Population Projection assumptions are only for population drivers of change. There is little granular data available to show how things like new jobs or housing could change births, deaths or migration. This is why scenarios are useful to help us understand the range of potential impacts and to identify what needs to change if population outcomes are likely to meet strategic priorities set by the NSW Government.

Some of the specific data needed to monitor if the assumptions in projections are holding true, or if there are big changes happening in the way populations grow, are not always available in real time. Projections therefore give us a longer-term view of the future that can be used alongside other information to help inform planning and decision making.

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