An extra two million people across NSW by 2031

The State’s population will rise by two million people by 2031 according to new figures which underline the need for a new planning system to better cater for this growth.

The Statewide and local area projections released by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure represent the first new figures in three years.

Continuing high birth numbers and overseas migration will combine to lift Sydney’s population from 4.3 million to 5.8 million and the State’s from 7.2 million to 9.2 million in the 20 years to 2031.

In particular, Sydney’s growth is accelerating, with its overall population expected to be 200,000 higher in 2031 than was predicted three years ago.

Department acting Deputy Director-General Andrew Jackson said the new figures highlighted the importance of the government’s new planning system which will provide a far more robust platform to plan for growth.

“Our new planning system will for the first time specifically recognise and support long-term strategic planning – helping ensure we have the housing, employment and infrastructure that we need alongside growth,” he said.

“Regional growth plans to be developed will support growth across NSW.”

The projections are future assumptions on population change based on births, deaths and migration data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and NSW Health.

They will be updated next year following the release of revised ABS data on 30 August and other ABS population statistics over the next few months.

The new figures also show significant changes in the community’s make-up which means the planning system needs to be able to provide a range of housing choices.

For instance, the number of elderly residents in the 65 and older age group is expected to grow by 78 per cent by 2031 – the strongest growth of any age group in the State.

At the same time, the number of children aged under 15 are expected to increase by 26 per cent.

“We will need to ensure that we understand and plan for these changes in our population make-up – for instance by supporting housing choice so that both elderly and younger people are able to live close to friends and family,” Mr Jackson said.
The new projections for 2011-2031 show that:

- Blacktown will record the biggest population gain in Sydney, with the City of Sydney, Liverpool, The Hills and Camden topping the list of other Sydney councils expected to experience strong growth;
- Tweed, Port-Macquarie-Hastings, Queanbeyan, Bathurst and Wagga Wagga are expected to have the biggest population gains in regional NSW, outside of the Lower Hunter, Illawarra and Central Coast;
- The population of the Lower Hunter, Illawarra and Central Coast will grow from 1.1 million to 1.4 million and regional NSW will increase from 1.8 million to 2.0 million;
- Natural increase (that is higher births compared to deaths) will continue to drive more than half of the State’s growth.

The NSW Government is also working closely with the Federal Government to ensure appropriate services are provided as the make-up of the population changes.

Detailed information for all local government areas is available at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/projections

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