



State of Australian Cities 2012

Newcastle



Population and Settlement

- Newcastle's population increased from 492,549 in 2001 to 540,002 in 2011, a growth rate of 0.9 per cent, lower than the national average of 1.5 per cent.
- Newcastle is now Australia's seventh largest city, having been overtaken by the Gold Coast-Tweed metropolitan area in the last decade. Newcastle is home to 7.5 per cent of New South Wales' population and 2.4 per cent of Australians.
- Over the five years 2006-11, Newcastle's stock of private dwellings increased by 11,266. With a population increase of 27,200 over the same period, there were 2.41 additional people for each new dwelling constructed over the period. Newcastle's 2011 household occupancy rate was 2.67 people per dwelling, just below the 2011 average major city occupancy rate of 2.73.
- Of Newcastle's total stock of 215,389 private dwellings in 2011, 9.32 per cent were unoccupied, just above the major city average of 9.16 per cent.
- In the year to March 2012, Newcastle hosted 3 million domestic visitor nights. This number has been relatively stable since 2008. It hosted 1.7 million international visitor nights in 2012, up from 1.2 million in 2008.

Productivity

- In 2011-12, the port handled almost 3 million tonnes of bulk imports and 6,737 containers (TEUs) and 110.8 million tonnes of bulk exports and 8,485 containers. Newcastle is by far Australia's largest city export port by volume.
- In 2011, 1.2 million domestic passengers passed through Newcastle Airport in 2011. This represented 1.1 per cent of Australia's 110 million total domestic passenger movements over the same period.
- Since 2008, Newcastle's labour force participation rate has declined slightly, dropping from 62.2 per cent to 61.3 per cent in 2011, below the national average of 65.1 per cent. However, it is still higher than it was in 2000 (57.6%).
- Since 2000, the female labour force participation rate in Newcastle has increased by four per cent. However, it still has one of the lowest female participation rates of the major cities at 53.8 per cent. Its male participation rate is 69.1 per cent, up just over two per cent since 2000.
- Between 2000 and 2012, Newcastle has experienced a standout increase in the labour force participation rate of 45 to 64 year old males, which increased by over 10 per cent to 77.6 per cent.

Sustainability

- Between 1952 and 2011, Newcastle's average minimum temperatures trended upwards.
- Newcastle experienced a reduction in average annual rainfall over this time.
- Newcastle will be the site of Australia's first commercial-scale smart grid, a demonstration project to test the integration of new technologies into existing communities. The project will include working with up to 30,000 households to add a chain of new smart technologies to manage the supply, demand and usage of electricity with the aim of increasing efficiencies.

Liveability

- According to the *Australian City Liveability Index* survey of residents in 10 Australian cities:
 - Most Newcastle residents agree that the city has a 'quality natural environment' (73%) and 'good educational facilities and healthcare services' (66%).
 - Just 55 per cent of Newcastle residents feel that the city provides 'quality urban design, recreational and cultural opportunities and amenity', the lowest rate of all surveyed cities.
- In 2009, the proportion of children in low socio-economic groups in Australian cities reported to be developmentally vulnerable was lowest in 'Metropolitan NSW' (comprising Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong).

Governance

- The key planning strategy for Newcastle is the NSW Government's *Lower Hunter Regional Strategy*, scheduled for review every five years. A systematic review is currently underway.