



## State of Australian Cities 2012

### Wollongong

#### Population and Settlement

- Wollongong's population increased from 269,597 in 2001 to 288,101 in 2011. This represents a growth rate of 0.7 per cent, below the national average of 1.5 per cent.
- Wollongong is Australia's ninth largest city, home to four per cent of New South Wales' population and 1.3 per cent of Australians.
- Over the five years 2006-11, Wollongong's stock of private dwellings increased by 5,631. With a population increase of 12,474 over the same period, there were 2.21 additional people for each new dwelling constructed. Wollongong's 2011 occupancy rate was 2.71 people per dwelling, which is similar to the 2011 average major city occupancy rate of 2.73.
- Of Wollongong's total stock of 110,681 private dwellings in 2011, 8.2 per cent were unoccupied, less than the major city average of 9.16 per cent.
- Wollongong had the lowest proportion of dwellings under finance of the major cities in 2011, with 52.4 per cent of homes owned outright. However, this proportion has dropped significantly since 1996 when 65.3 per cent of homes were owned outright.
- Wollongong was the only city to experience a loss of non-government social housing. However, in 2011 it had the highest proportion of government housing as a proportion of total dwelling stock of all the major cities at 7.4 per cent.
- In the year to March 2012, Wollongong hosted slightly less than 1.4 million domestic visitor nights, down very slightly from 2008, and the lowest number of domestic visitor nights for any of the major cities. International visitor nights were up slightly however, increasing from 1.1 million in 2008 to 1.2 million in 2012.

#### Productivity

- In 2011-12, Wollongong's port (Port Kembla) handled 8.2 million tonnes of bulk imports and 6,973 containers (TEUs). It also handled 14.5 million tonnes of bulk exports and 8,190 containers.
- Wollongong's labour force participation rate was 57.2 per cent in 2012, lower than the national average of 65.1 per cent and the lowest rate of the surveyed major cities. It also dropped at the fastest rate for any surveyed major city between 2008 and 2012, down six per cent. This drop was due to male labour force participation declining by 6.9 per cent. The female participation rate increased 4.9 per cent over the same period. The participation rate is also currently lower than it was in 2000 (59.1%).
- The labour force participation rate for Wollongong's young people also declined notably between 2008 and 2012, particularly for males. The participation of 15 to 24 year old males dropped from 68.4 per cent to 56.5 per cent and for females it dropped from 77.6 per cent to 71.9 per cent.

- The labour force participation rate of males of 65 years of age and over increased significantly between 2008 and 2012, from 4.2 per cent to 11.3 per cent. Participation of females in this age group is well behind males, increasing from one per cent to 1.4 per cent over this period.

## Sustainability

- Between 1952 and 2011, Wollongong's average annual minimum and maximum temperatures trended upwards.
- Wollongong experienced a reduction in average annual rainfall over this time.
- Sea level rise around Australia has been equal to and in some cases greater than the global average of approximately 3 millimetres per annum. Since 1993, Wollongong (tidal gauge measures at Port Kembla) has experienced sea level rises of three to four millimetres per year.

## Liveability

- According to the *Australian City Liveability Index* survey of residents in 10 Australian cities:
  - Most Wollongong residents agree that the city has a 'quality natural environment' (76%) and 'good educational facilities and healthcare services' (62%).
  - Less than half of Wollongong survey respondents feel that the city is a 'safe place for people and their property' (39%) and provides 'good economic opportunity and quality of living' (39%).
- 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 Wollongong is the NSW Government's *Illawarra Regional Strategy*, which is scheduled for review every five years. A systematic review of the strategy is currently underway.