



Part 1 The City's People

Christchurch City

Update 2000

Introduction

Christchurch City experienced significant population growth during the first half of the 1990s. This trend was fuelled by high levels of international migration, influenced by liberal central government immigration policies and a strong national economy. In recent years, however, changes to immigration policy, the sluggish New Zealand economy and international economic problems, particularly in Asia, have contributed to a considerable drop in net migration. This resulted in lower overall population growth, both locally and nationally, during the last few years of the 1990s.

Although there will be around 30,000 extra people living in the City by 2021, the City's population is expected to grow at a progressively slower pace over the next two decades. During this time major demographic changes are expected to occur in line with those occurring New Zealand-wide. Two of the most significant of these will be the continued ageing of the population and the general reduction in average household size.

Variations in the size and composition of the City's population will provide momentum for changes within the City's natural, physical, economic and social environments. As the population grows, demand will intensify for natural resources such as water, land and energy, and there will be increased pressure on existing roading, transport, water and waste systems.

A larger population in Christchurch is likely to have a positive spin-off for the local economy as the consumption of goods and services grows. However, greater economic activity will require more resources and supporting infrastructure.

Demographic changes, particularly the ageing population, will boost demand for specialist housing, health and support services, and community facilities. The ageing population may affect the structure of families as they are increasingly required to take responsibility for the care of elderly members. Changing household formation patterns and lifestyles will influence the location and types of future housing.

The following section on The City's People is designed to provide the human context for the subsequent discussions of trends in the natural, physical and economic environments. It describes Christchurch's current and projected populations, highlights key demographic features and provides information relating to other aspects of people's lives, including health, personal safety and education.