Ethnic Composition, Size and Growth

The number in each of the region’s ethnic groups has grown. The European-origin population group grew by 6 per cent during the period 1996-2006, accounting for 45.7 per cent of the region’s growth, while the Māori population grew by 7.9 per cent, accounting for 15.9 per cent of growth. The region’s Pacific population grew by almost 25 per cent, contributing 6.7 per cent of growth. The region’s Asian population doubled between 1996 and 2006, accounting for 27.7 per cent of growth, while the relatively small MELAA population grew by 135 per cent, contributing 4 per cent of the growth. There were sizeable differences by TA in terms of each ethnic group’s contribution to local growth.

Ethnic Age Composition and Ageing

As elsewhere in New Zealand, the age structures of the region’s major ethnic groups differ markedly, with the European-origin population being relatively old, the Māori and Pacific populations extremely young, and the Asian population falling in between, closer to the European age structure. Within that picture, both Māori and European comprise a smaller share of the Waikato Region’s population than they do at a national level, and the situation is again similar by age. Pacific and Asian peoples on the other hand comprise a smaller share of the Waikato Region’s population than they do at national level, and the situation is again similar by age.

Natural Increase Implications of Changing Age Structure

For the Waikato Region, the ratio of elderly (65+ years) to children (0-14 years) is projected to increase rapidly from its present 6.6 (6-elderly for every 10 children), to 1.1 by 2031 (11 for every 10). For most of the Waikato Region’s TAs, proportions at the key reproductive ages (20-39 years) decline steadily across the period, but in Hauraki, Oturamgonga and Waikato, rising slightly to end the period at just above their 2011 levels. The projected declines are greatest for South Waikato and Taupo. However more notable are the extremely low proportions already at these ages in Thames-Coromandel and Hauraki (17.7 and 18.0 per cent), and the fact that all Waikato TAs, with the sole exception of Hamilton City, have lower proportions than is the case nationally. These low (and relatively low) proportions will eventually bring about the end of natural increase.

The changing proportions at reproductive age are closely associated with shifts in the ratio of elderly to children, which are projected to rise substantially in all TAs. The cross-over is projected to occur in both the Waikato Region and nationally from around 2026.

For the full report:
http://www.waikato.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/178132/No. 9- Waikato Region- ISSN-final-Jul-2013.pdf

Waikato Region Population Size and Growth

The population of the Waikato Region has grown steadily over the past twenty-five years, from 325,220 in 1986 to approximately 416,200 in 2012, an increase of 28 per cent. Steady growth is anticipated with the population reaching approximately 469,910 by 2031 (13.8 per cent above 2011). The majority of the growth (83%) is projected to be in the population at 65+ years of age.

The Hamilton City population increased by 55 per cent over the period 1986-2012 (contributing 58 per cent of the region’s growth).

The greatest overall growth was experienced by Waikato District (77.4 per cent, contributing 31.0 per cent to the region’s growth—a small portion of which reflects the 2010 boundary change), followed by Waipa which experienced growth of 29.9 per cent (contributing 11.7 per cent).

Noticeable growth was also seen in Thames-Coromandel (24.3 per cent), Taupo (18.2 per cent), and Hauraki (17.9 per cent), which together contributed 14.7 per cent of the region’s growth. Otorohanga experienced negligible growth (0.7 per cent).

Figure 1: Population of Waikato Region, 1986-2012

http://www.waikato.ac.nz/nidea/
Components of Change

Population growth in the Waikato Region has been mostly due to natural increase, where births exceed deaths. Growth was slowed by net migration loss, with more people leaving the area than coming in, particularly in the early 1990s and across the 1997-2001 period (Figure 2).

Districts where net migration gains contributed to greater than average growth over the 1986-2012 period were Hamilton City, Waikato, Waipa, and Thames-Coromandel Districts. Natural increase was also reasonably strong for Hamilton City, Waikato, and Waipa. Modest population increases in Taupo, Hauraki and Matamata-Piako were the result of high levels of natural increase offset by net migration loss. In South Waikato, Waitomo and Otorohanga, the number of people moving from these areas (net migration loss) exceeded natural increase. This is a main driver of the declining or minimally growing population numbers, i.e. more people leaving the area than being replaced through natural increase.

Age Structure and Population Ageing

The age structure indicated that all age groups above 40 years (at regional level) grew across the period 1996-2012, while numbers in several younger age groups declined. Compared to all of New Zealand the Waikato Region’s age structure is a little older than that of the national population, and ageing slightly faster. The age-sex structures of the Territorial Authorities (TAs) within the Waikato Region differ greatly. Waikato is home to the country’s oldest and youngest TAs (Thames-Coromandel and Hamilton City respectively). Hamilton City has a disproportion of those in their twenties and thirties, while all other TAs show various degrees of an ‘hourglass’ age structure, typically—but not always—reflecting net migration loss at young adult ages. Otorohanga, South Waikato, Taupo, Waikato and Waitomo each have disproportions of children, while Thames-Coromandel, Hauraki, and Waipa have disproportions of elderly. Waikato, Otorohanga, South Waikato, Taupo, and Waitomo show a sizeable decline in birth numbers over the period, in many cases reflecting the net loss of people of reproductive age.

Population Projections

More than four-fifths of the Waikato Region’s projected growth will be at 65+ years, while decline is expected at 40-54 years of age as the baby boomer cohort ages. Hamilton City is projected to experience overall gains in all broad age groups, while all other TAs are expected to see widespread decline across the younger and middle ages. The gains are not shared evenly across either the age distribution or by TA. By contrast, all TAs are projected to experience substantial growth in both numbers and proportions at 65+ years, with this growth accounting for all growth (and/or offsetting decline) in all but Hamilton City and Waikato District.

Labour Market Implications of Changing Age Structure

The Waikato Region is likely to maintain more people at labour market ‘entry’ (15-24 years) than ‘exit’ (55-64 years) age across most of the projection period, falling from close to 13 ‘entrants’ per 10 ‘exits’ in 2012, to 10 per 10 between 2016 and 2021, before returning to around 12 per 10 in 2031; this is when the recently born baby blip will have reached the labour market. However these population-based ratios may say little about labour market availability, given the region’s role as a centre for tertiary education. Reflecting its disproportionate bulge at 20-24 years and its relative youth overall, Hamilton City currently (2012) has the highest ratio of people at labour market entry to exit age, while the significantly older Thames-Coromandel District has the lowest, already down to 6 people aged 15-24 for every 10 aged 55-64. Ratios for Hauraki are also already below 10 entrants per 10 exits. Ratios for all TAs fall steadily until between 2026 and 2031, when they again rise slightly (and temporarily) due to the arrival in the labour market of the recently born baby blip.

Figure 2: Natural Increase, Net Migration and Net Change, Waikato Region, 1991-2012

Figure 3: Labour Market Entry/Exit Ratio at 15-24 and 55-64 Years, Waikato Region and Total New Zealand, 1996-2012