Age and Ethnic Structure

With around 17 per cent aged 65+ years in 2013, the population of the Taupo District is older than the national average of 14.2 per cent, although is around the middle of the distribution in terms of the nation’s TAs. However age structures also differ markedly by ethnic group. Figure 7 compares the age structures of the Taupo District’s European and Māori populations (see Notes), which account for just on 66 and 24 per cent of the total (compared with 65 and 13 per cent nationally). In 2013 the median age for the district’s Māori population was 26 years (that is, one-half of the Māori population was aged less than 26 years), compared with 43 years for European.

The graphs also show how each population has aged structurally since 2001 (unshaded bars), due to declining birth rates, increasing longevity, and net migration loss at the key reproductive ages already discussed. Particularly notable is the migration-driven deficit at 20-34 years of age for the district’s European-origin population. The Taupo District is also somewhat less multi-ethnic than is the case nationally, with just 2.2 per cent Pacific Island, 2.9 per cent Asian, 0.4 per cent Middle Eastern/Latin American/African, and 4.7 per cent ‘not identified’, compared with 6.3, 10.1, 1.0 and 4.9 per cent respectively at national level.

Figure 7: Age structure: Taupo District, European and Māori 2001 (unshaded bars) and 2013 (shaded bars)

Source: Statistics New Zealand, Area of Usual Residence (2001, 2006 and 2013) and Ethnic Group (Total Responses) by Age (Five Year Groups) and Sex For the census

Summary

The population of the Taupo District has grown slowly but steadily over the past 27 years, from 29,027 in 1986 to 34,400 in 2013 (+18.5 per cent). Under the medium case assumptions, the population is projected to grow slowly to approximately 37,012 by 2033 (+8.4 per cent), all of the growth occurring at 65+ years, with decline at all ages below 54 years.

The major cause of the district’s growth has long been natural increase, with net migration loss a consistent feature. As elsewhere, however, growth at 65+ years will increasingly drive population growth as the baby boomer cohorts (born 1946-65) move into the 65+ age groups and numbers rise due to increasing longevity. Eventually, the same cohorts will drive the end of natural growth, as deaths will increase and will not be replaced by births. This shift will result in population decline, most likely beginning between 2035 and 2046.

Like many of its more rural counterparts, the Taupo District experiences an ongoing problem in terms of net migration loss at 15-19 and 20-24 years of age. Net migration gains at several older ages partially offsets that loss, but is not a perfect substitute because the sustained loss at young adult ages compounds over time to reduce the primary reproductive age group (20-39 years), and thus the numbers of children. At the same time the District has recently experienced gains at 25-39 years, and also at 60+ years. The trends have resulted in the Taupo District’s population having an older than average age structure, but at TA level it still falls in the middle of the national distribution, and is only the fourth-oldest of the Waikato Region’s ten TAs. Mover and Stayer data from the 2013 Census indicate that around 61 per cent of those enumerated as living in Taupo on Census night 2013 had been living there in 2008, very similar to the proportion at each of the previous three Censuses. Auckland typically accounts for Taupo’s largest gains and losses of internal migrants, while Rotorua, Hamilton, Tauranga and South Waikato feature prominently.

The Taupo District has double the national average of Māori, and smaller proportions of those of Pacific Island, Asian, or Latin American/African origins. The relative youth of the District’s Māori population has the potential to benefit from a forthcoming economic advantage, as the older European population disproportionately enters retirement, and the number of labour force entrants per ‘exit’ declines.

Components of Change by Component Flow

Using New Zealand’s first ‘demographic accounting model’ (Jackson & Pawar 2013a), the broad components of the Taupo District’s population change can be broken down into their underlying flows. Figure 3 shows that between 2008 and 2013, the Taupo District grew by approximately 1,000 persons. Natural increase (births minus deaths) accounted for 1,044 persons, slightly reduced by an estimated net migration loss of 44 persons. The natural increase component was in turn comprised of 2,396 births partially offset by 1,352 deaths. From estimated net migration we then account for ‘known’ net migration (-756), comprised of net internal migration (-30) and net international permanent/long term (PLT) migration (-726). This leaves an unaccounted natural increase component (+712 people enumerated as moving to the Region between 2008 and 2013, but their 2008 origin is unknown). The model further disaggregates each known net migration component into its respective inflows and outflows (5,118 internal immigrants and 5,148 internal emigrants; 1,922 PLT international immigrants and 2,648 PLT international emigrants). The overall picture is one of considerable ‘churn’, generated by large numbers of leavers and arrivals relative to the net outcome. Data for the 1996-2001 and 2001-2006 periods are available from NIDEA (see also Jackson with Pawar 2013b). NB. The 2008-2013 period reflects the impact of the delayed census.

Taupo’s Movers and Stayers

Data from the 2013 Census indicate that almost 61 per cent of those enumerated as living in the Taupo District in Census night 2013 (March 5th) had been living there in 2008. At the 2013 Census, those who had not been born in 2008 accounted for the single largest component of arrivals (7.2 per cent), followed by those ‘not elsewhere included’ (5.8 per cent), ‘those living elsewhere in NZ but not further defined’ (5.4 per cent), and those who were ‘overseas in 2008’ (5.3 per cent). The next largest contingent of arrivals were internal migrants from Auckland (3.0 per cent), followed by Rotorua District (1.3 per cent), Hamilton City (0.8 per cent) and Tauranga City (0.7 per cent).

The past four censuses indicate that between 58 and 61 per cent of people enumerated as living in the Taupo District at each census had been living in the District five years previously.

Leavers: The TAs of destination for those who had been living in the Taupo District in 2008 but were living elsewhere at the 2013 Census are similar to those for arrivals, the single-largest proportion of leavers having gone to Auckland (3.4 per cent), followed by Hamilton City (1.8 per cent), Tauranga City (1.5 per cent) and Rotorua (1.3 per cent).

The patterns have been remarkably consistent over time, with the proportion remaining in the district between Censuses ranging from 58 per cent (1996-2001) to 61 per cent (2008-2013), and Auckland, Rotorua, Hamilton and Tauranga consistently in the top 4-8 TAs of both origin and destination. Another TA to feature consistently as both an origin and destination for Taupo’s movers is the South Waikato District.

Migration by Age

Fig 4 shows that the Taupo District experiences consistent net migration loss at 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24 years of age. Between 2008 and 2013 net loss also occurred of people aged in their ‘40s and early ‘50s. However across both the 2001-2006 and 2008-2013 periods, the district enjoyed small net gains at 0-4, 25-39 and 60+ years, indicating the net arrival of young families and those of retirement age. Underlying data from the demographic accounting model shows that all age groups saw both internal and international (PLT) arrivals and departures, with international immigrants increasingly prominent at 60-69 years of age.

Population Ageing

As elsewhere, declining birth rates, increasing longevity, and—in Taupo’s case—net migration loss at young adult ages, are causing the population to age structurally. Between 2011 and 2031, numbers for all age groups below 54 years are projected to decline, and those at 65+ years to increase significantly (Figure 6). By 2031, 27.3 per cent of the population of the Taupo District is projected to be aged 65+ years, up from 15.6 per cent in 2011. However Taupo is only the fourth-oldest of New Zealand’s regions (Jackson & Pawar 2013b, Statistics New Zealand: Subnational Population Projections by Age and Sex, 2006-base-2031, October 2012 update). Waikato Region’s ten TAs. Figure 6 shows that the trends for Taupo District are not that different to those for either the Waikato or total New Zealand, both of which are also projected to experience the vast majority of their growth to 2031 at 65+ years. The Taupo District can expect to have more elderly than children by 2021, around five years earlier than for the Waikato Region and total New Zealand.