Age and Ethnic Structure

With 16.4 per cent aged 65+ years in 2013, the population of the Clutha District is a little older than the national average of 14.2 per cent. However age structures differ markedly by ethnic group. Figures 7 and 8 compare the age structures for the total Clutha District and for the district’s Māori population, which accounts for 9.5 per cent of the total.

In 2013 the median age for the region’s Māori population was 24 years (that is, one-half of the local Māori population is aged less than 24 years), compared with 42 years for all of Clutha. The graphs also show how each population has aged structurally since 2006 (unshaded bars) due to the declining birth rates, increasing longevity, and net migration loss at the key reproductive ages noted at Figure 6.

The population of the Clutha District is slightly older than the national average, but as elsewhere contains a very youthful Māori population whose median age is 18 years younger.

Clutha District: Population Size and Growth

The population of the Clutha District has declined more or less steadily over the past 27 years, from around 19,201 in 1986 to 17,350 in 2013 (-9.6 per cent). The population is likely to stabilise over the next two decades with a projected 2031 population of just 17,250. Longer-term projections indicate a population of a little below 15,000. These trends need to be understood in the context of the ending of population growth across the More Developed Countries by mid-century and globally around the end of the century.

Between 2011 and 2031, numbers at 0-4 years of age are projected to decline and those at 65+ years are projected to increase, the trends for Clutha being very similar to those for both the Otago Region and total New Zealand. The population of the Clutha District is slightly older than the national average, but as elsewhere contains a very youthful Māori population whose median age of 24 years is 18 years younger than that of the total Clutha population.

The population of the Clutha District is likely to stabilise over the next two decades with a projected 2031 population of just 17,250. Longer-term projections indicate a population of a little below 15,000. These trends need to be understood in the context of the ending of growth across the More Developed Countries by mid-century and globally around the end of the century.

Components of Change

Clutha’s population would have been even smaller today were it not for strong contributions from natural increase—the difference between births and deaths (Figure 2); all but the 2007-08 and 2010-11 years saw the district experience a net migration loss. As elsewhere, population ageing is now causing natural increase (the difference between births and deaths) to decline and growth to slow.


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- Components of Change by Component Flow
- Components of Change by Age
- Northland’s Movers and Stayers
- Population Ageing
- Age and Ethnic Structure
- Summary

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Components of Change by Component Flow

Using New Zealand’s first ‘demographic accounting model’ (Jackson & Pawar 2013), the broad components of Clutha’s population change can be broken down into their underlying flows. Figure 3 shows that between 2008 and 2013, Clutha’s population experienced zero net change (this represents an improvement over the net losses of 850 and 350 experienced respectively across the 1991-1996 and 2001-2006 periods). Underlying the 2008-2013 situation, the district experienced a natural increase of 442 persons, fully offset by an estimated net migration loss of the same number. The natural increase component was in turn comprised of 1,084 births partially offset by 642 deaths. The estimated net migration loss was comprised of a ‘known’ (net internal and net permanent and long-term international [PLT]) migration loss of around 334 persons, along with a further net loss of 108 persons, being the difference between the ‘known’ migration component and the overall net migration loss. Drilling down, the net known migration loss comprised of a net internal loss of 249 accompanied by a net PLT loss of 85. Underlying these flows again were internal arrivals (+2,340) and internal departures (-2,589), and international PLT arrivals (+609) and international PLT departures (-694).

The overall picture indicates migration is stabilising, by comparison with past trends. Data for the 1996-2001 and 2001-2006 periods are available on request.

Clutha’s Movers and Stayers

Data from the 2013 Census indicate that around 67 per cent of those enumerated as living in the Clutha District on census night 2013 (March 5th) had been living there in 2008. The single-largest group of arrivals (6.6 per cent) had not been born in 2008, while those who were ‘not elsewhere included’ or ‘living elsewhere in New Zealand but not further defined’ accounted for 5.0 and 4.9 per cent respectively. Dunedin accounted for the next largest group of arrivals at 3.9 per cent, followed by ‘overseas in 2008’ (2.8 per cent), Southland District (1.3 per cent), Gore (1.0 per cent), then Auckland (0.9 per cent).

The single-largest group of those who had been living in the Clutha District in 2008 but were living elsewhere at the 2013 Census were found to be living in the Dunedin (6.6 per cent) followed by Southland District, Central Otago, Gore, and Invercargill (respectively accounting for 1.3, 1.3, 1.2 and 1.1 per cent of leavers). It should be noted that people overseas at the time of the census cannot be enumerated and are thus ‘missing’ from these data, as are ‘other contributors to change’ on the arrivals map.

The patterns have been remarkably consistent over the past four censuses, with the exception of Queenstown-Lakes, which played a more prominent role as a destination of leavers across the 1991-1996, 1996-2001, and 2001-2006 periods, and Auckland, which was also a prominent destination for leavers across the 2001-2006 period.

Between 2008 and 2013, Clutha experienced a modest net migration gain of young families.

Population Ageing

As elsewhere, declining birth rates, increasing longevity, and—in Clutha’s case—net migration loss, are causing the population to age structurally. Between 2011 and 2031, numbers at 0-14, 15-24, 40-54 and 55-64 years are projected to decline, and those at all ages 65+ years to increase. Fig 4 shows that the trends for Clutha are not that different from those for either the Otago Region or total New Zealand. Clutha can expect to have more elderly than children by 2021, the same as Otago, but five years earlier than for total New Zealand.