

Australia Hits 22 Million on 1st October 2009

McCrindle Research analyses the details behind this new benchmark, and Australia's record-breaking population growth.

22,000,000 on 01/10/09

Australia's population reached 22 million at 2.02pm (and 37 seconds!) on Thursday 1 October 2009.

Doubling the population

Australia's population reached 11 million in 1963 and so it has taken 46 years to double to 22 million. The global population has been doubling at a similar rate, hitting 3.5 billion in 1968 and forecast to reach 7 billion in 2012, a period of 44 years.

"Australia is experiencing the perfect storm of population growth. Over the last 12 months we've had our biggest ever population increase - a record 406,083 people. This was comprised of the highest ever birth numbers (almost 300,000), the lowest ever death rate (just over 6 per 1,000 people) and the highest ever net overseas migration numbers" explains Mark McCrindle.

40 million in 40 years

It was on June 29, 2007 – just over two years ago – that Australia hit 21 million. At this current growth rate (1 million extra people every 27 months), Australia will reach 40 million people by 2050. This is well beyond the forecasts of a decade ago. In 1998 the Australian Bureau of Statistics forecast a national population by 2051 of 23.5 million, up to a maximum of 26.4 million. In 2007 the forecast for mid-century was updated to 29 million. The latest forecasts have our population breaking 35 million by 2050 however if our current growth rates remain constant then Australia will actually exceed 40 million by mid-century.

"While an annual population growth rate of 2% doesn't sound huge, it is twice the forecast of a decade ago (around 1%) and equates to a population increase equivalent to one new Canberra or three new Darwin's per year" states Mark McCrindle.

22 million of 6.8 billion

With the current world population estimated at 6.8 billion, Australia's population represents a mere 0.3% of the global population.

Largest city vs. fastest growing city:

1 in 5 Australians are Sydneysiders (20.5% of our national population) with Melbourne not far behind (18.1%) while Brisbanites comprise 10.5% of our population. Although Perth is our fastest growing city, it is only our 4th

largest and contains 7.7% of our population. While Melbourne (4.0 million) continues to grow at a faster rate than Sydney (4.5 million), it has not held the top spot since 1901. Is our 22,000,000th little Jack or Mia?

Based on probability our 22 millionth Australian will be a baby boy (there are 105 males born for every 100 females) named Jack (the current most popular baby boy's name) but it could be a baby girl named Mia (the current most popular baby girl's name nationally) born to a 31 year old mother and a 33 year old father (the median age of all parents has been rising). Jack or Mia will grow up with at least one sibling and while Jack can expect to live past his 79th birthday, Mia will on average live to 84. And by the time our 22 millionth celebrates their 21st Birthday, our national population will be 31 million (in the year 2030).

Sources: McCrindle Research, ABS
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Particularly with the increasing costs of living, and economic instability, the willingness to pay for environmental sustainability has been reduced:

"It is difficult to make any change which incurs extra cost when interest rates are already biting into families at present."

(Survey respondent, September 2008)

"We have consistently found in research over the last two years that when it comes to spending more for environmental reasons 1 in 5 Australians will resist paying anything extra and 1 in 5 will bear a significant cost. It is the other 3 in 5 that waver and need a compelling case if they are to be convinced" stated Mark McCrindle. "To win the hearts, minds, and wallets of this group will take more carrot than stick. The challenge is to offer structures without burning off the enormous environmental good-will that has been generated across the community."

Women and Ys leading community change

80% of men and 98% are convinced climate change is real. 2 in 5 men are prepared to pay more for environmental reasons compared to nearly 4 in 5 women, and one-third of men and half of women are prepared to "make lifestyle changes" for the planet.

More Gen Y females than Gen Y males are prepared to "do all they can" to save our planet – 63%, compared to 58% of Gen Y males. Almost 100% are prepared to pay "a bit more", compared to 75% of Gen Y males.

"Older Australians are a little harder to convince when it comes to climate change as they have lived through other perceived crises which never fully eventuated- from the cold war to the Y2K "bug" to bird flu" writes Mark McCrindle. "They have a broader life-context within which to place the current discussion compared to younger Australians who see this as the issue of their time, defining their generation and impacting their future".

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