

# Research matters

ISSN: 1448-6881

ISSUE 59 SEPTEMBER 2011

## INSIDE

- Travels with a Yellow Satchel – An account of being a Census Collector 2
- A quarter of a million Victorians not in the labour force would like to work 2
- 457 Visas in Victoria 3
- Planning Scheme Histories – Industrial Land Zoning 4

## The Household Size Puzzle

Like interest or exchange rates, average household size is one of those statistics where the second decimal place really matters. How we occupy dwellings has a critical impact on the number of dwellings we need now and in the future. Melbourne currently has a population of just over four million who are living in one and a half million occupied private dwellings with an average household size of around 2.64.

Average household sizes have been declining for the last hundred years or more. The consequence of this is that we have had to add to the dwelling stock at a faster rate than the population growth rate. So as we make projections of future dwelling needs, assumptions about average household

size are critical. A Melbourne of five million people would need 155,000 more dwellings if the average household size dropped to 2.44, compared with if it stayed at 2.64.

Household size is influenced by many factors. Historically, the decrease in household size has been attributable to a combination of lower fertility rates (i.e. smaller sized families), ageing populations (greater proportions of empty nesters and old singles), affluence (which allows people of all ages to choose to live by themselves)

and changing social standards (such as choosing to be single or not have children).

Possible recent increases in household size could be attributed to the baby bounce (the slight increase in fertility), to economic austerity and high housing costs, and to that old chestnut that provokes mirth around barbecues and column metres in the press about children staying in the parental home longer. There is nothing new about this last point. The household relationship data published in the last five censuses shows that since at least the mid 1980s, a twenty-something year old is increasingly likely to remain living with his or her parents. The reasons cited are increasing length of education, high tertiary education costs, delayed entry into full time employment and delayed partnering and family formation. In this time, the average household size has declined suggesting the march of ageing and affluence has outweighed these other factors.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) biennial reports on household income and income distribution (catalogue 6523.0) include data showing the average household size increasing in 2007–08 and 2009–10 compared to 2005–6. Prior to 2005–6, there was a constant decrease. But the ABS does add a warning in a footnote that says time-series comparisons are questionable owing to the introduction of new methodologies.

If the average household size has stopped decreasing, then we are seeing a break in a long term trend. But comments about this are at best premature as the evidence provided by recent data is inconclusive. The facts about trends in average household size and about trends in household formation and dissolution will come out when the 2011 census results are published in the later half of 2012.



**Figure 1: The Groves family, 1959**

The Herald & Weekly Times Limited.

# Travels with a Yellow Satchel

## – A first hand account from a Census Collector

On my manager's recommendation and after talking to our Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) out-posted officer, I put in my application to be a Census Collector for the 2011 Census. It was a great way to gain insight into Census data that I do not usually get through using the data at work. But in retrospect, I did not fully realise the sheer amount of hard work the job required to contribute to such a worthy cause.

I was one of eight Collectors for parts of Hawthorn and Kew. The majority of the group had taken on the job for extra money and only one had been a Collector last Census, so we of course had a lot of questions for her!

As the only frequent user of Census data, I took every opportunity to remind my fellow Collectors about the importance of dwelling type classifications. Some of my area's residents however, were more concerned as to whether their house shares a wall with the neighbour as this may have an effect on how their house is priced in the market.

Some of the challenges of the job included: carrying a very heavy bag full

of forms; finding my way in surprisingly dark streets and front yards, and then getting people to actually answer their doors. While the ABS makes provision for access to secure apartment buildings, I often relied on kind and understanding residents to gain access to flats.

Receiving text messages from the ABS that households had submitted their eCensus form was particularly satisfying, especially if those households required a few yellow card reminders to do so.

Technology could have assisted some of the processes, such as planning the route for delivery and collection. Replacing the unwieldy Collector Record Book with an electronic device, could also enhance

data quality and the Collector's quality of life.

My time as a Census Collector has made me aware of the great diversity of people and homes, existing within such a small part of the city. Flats of varying vintages had a particularly diverse range of households, and detached houses certainly do not always have traditional families living in them.

In the end, although Census data is invaluable to the work of Spatial Analysis and Research, my experience as a Census Collector has shown me that it does not necessarily convey the richness and variety of people's lives into which I have had a brief insight.



Figure 2: The yellow satchel and forms



Figure 3: Collector record book

## A quarter of a million Victorians not in the labour force would like to work

In December 2010, 41% (250,400) of Victorians not in the labour force (and not on long-term unpaid leave), indicated they would like to return to or start work, according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

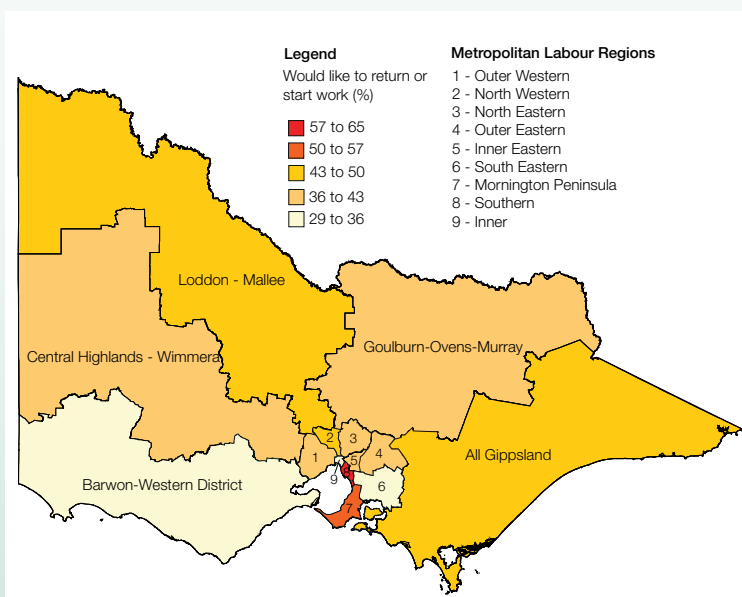
The ABS found that the availability of flexible working arrangements was a key requirement for a majority (83%) of these Victorians, to ensure that work would fit in with family and social commitments.

Part-time work or job-sharing was the flexible working arrangement preferred by 49% of respondents. Additionally, 26% wanted flexible start and finish times, 24% would like to have more convenient access to the workplace (including working from home), and 18% said they needed appropriate child care facilities.

The most commonly reported reasons for not seeking work (by those who had previously worked for pay and who would like to return to work) were personal ill health, disability, injury, pregnancy or to have children (49%). Others believed no work was available, were engaged in studies (12%), or were caring for others (11%).

Further details can be found in *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility*, Victoria, Dec 2010 (cat. no. 6210.2).

Figure 4: Persons not in the labour force, who would like to return to or start work (by Labour Force Regions) – Not including persons on long-term unpaid leave



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

# 457 Visas in Victoria

Spatial Analysis and Research (SAR) has been analysing data from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to understand the distribution of 457 Visas in Victoria, which is important in the monitoring and analysis of Victoria's labour market. The 457 Visa, officially known as the *Temporary Business (Long Stay) (Subclass 457) Visa*, provides a mechanism for employers to fill specific skilled positions in Australia on a temporary basis. This can vary in length from one day to four years. Secondary visas are (generally) granted to their dependants and allow them to be eligible to work and study in Australia. This article looks at what industries primary 457 Visa recipients are working in, where they locate to in Victoria, the positions they hold, and from which countries they originate.

## What industries use 457 Visas?

Over the last two years there has been a 36% increase in 457 Visas granted for positions within Victoria. In 2010/11 there were 11,510 primary and 9,370 secondary applications granted for Victoria, equating to 23.2% of the Australian total grants.

In 2010/11 the top five industries for 457 Visa recipients in Victoria were:

- Health Care and Social Assistance (1,930 visas granted and 17% of Victorian recipients)
- Information Media and Telecommunications (1,400 and 12%)
- Rental Hiring and Real Estate Services (1,160 and 10%)
- Education and Training (850 and 7%)
- Other Services (1,560 and 14%)

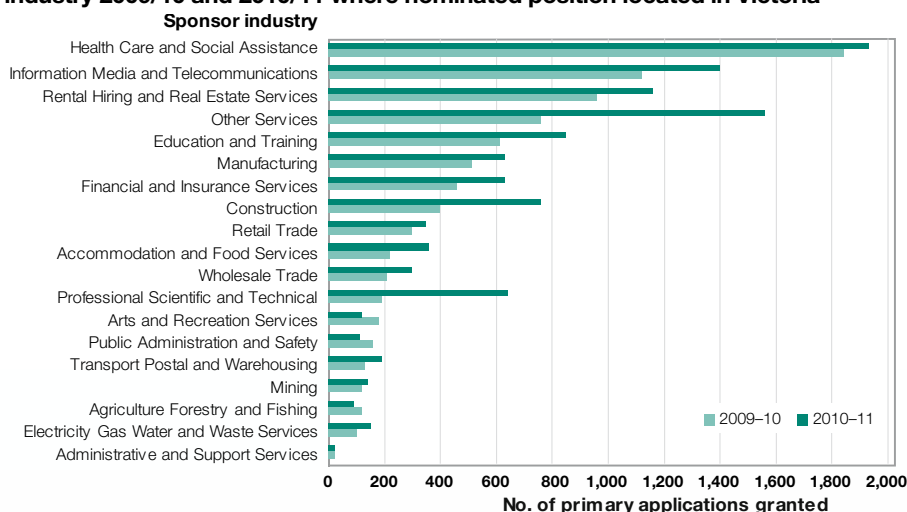
## Distribution within Victoria

As shown in Figure 6, a high proportion of visas granted (92%) were for positions located in metropolitan Melbourne, with more than 60% of these in the inner Melbourne statistical subdivision. Service and knowledge based industries were highly centralised in the inner city, while the Health Care and Social Assistance industry accounted for the most visas granted for positions in regional Victoria.

## Occupations and salaries

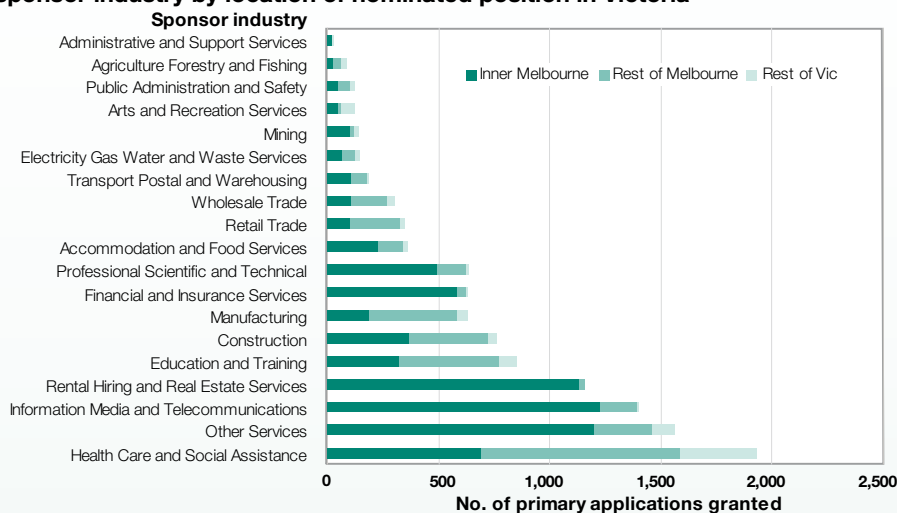
Consistent with the 457 Visa being a skilled labour program, the base salaries are around 20% higher than average Australian ordinary time earnings. The average base salary in 2010/11 for Victorian 457 Visa positions was \$80,000 (national \$86,800). In Victoria, base salaries ranged from \$133,500 for positions in the Mining Industry, to \$54,200 for Accommodation & Food Services. The top fifteen occupations (as shown in Figure 7) account for 41% of all 457 Visas granted in Victoria for 2010/11. Most of these occupations are in IT, medical or business management.

**Figure 5: Number of subclass 457 Visa primary applications granted by sponsor industry 2009/10 and 2010/11 where nominated position located in Victoria**



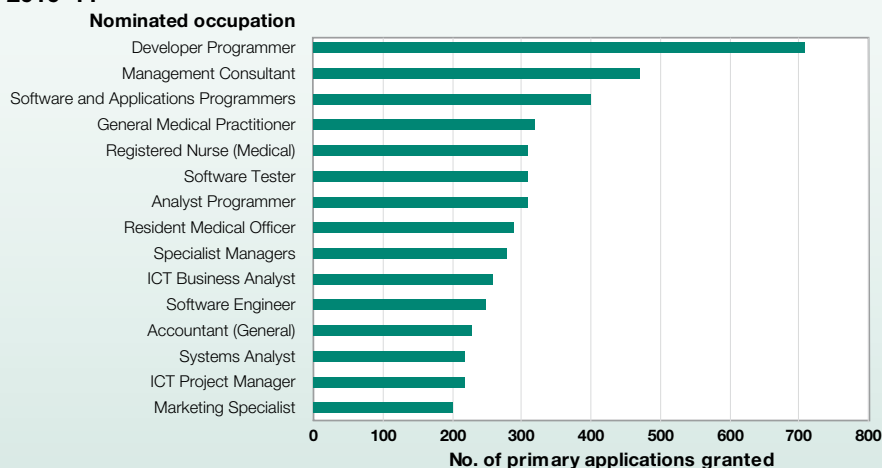
Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Subclass 457 State/Territory summary report 2010-11 to 30 June 2011, p41.

**Figure 6: Number of subclass 457 Visa primary applications granted by sponsor industry by location of nominated position in Victoria**



Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2011 special data request (BE4308.01)

**Figure 7: Top 15 nominated occupations for primary 457 applications granted in 2010-11**



Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Subclass 457 State/Territory summary report 2010-11 to 30 June 2011, p41.

# Planning Scheme Histories – Industrial Land Zoning

Since the introduction of the new format planning schemes in 1998, local and state governments in Victoria have been recording the histories of our spatial data records.

In this time, there have been over 10,000 planning scheme amendments. Of those, 2,300 have been mapping amendments that have affected the zones and control overlays of many Victorian local government areas. These data provide a wealth of spatial information for agencies to analyse. In Figure 8, industrial land zoning data and industrial classifications have been used to determine how much land has been zoned from industrial to residential. This is important in assessing how much brown field redevelopment has occurred in Melbourne over the past 10 years.

The rezoning database indicates that since 2001, more than 400 hectares of industrial land has been rezoned for residential purposes. The database serves as an important tool in understanding what role land recycling has in providing for varying residential capacities and the amount of land that has been rezoned out of industrial uses.

It also helps clarify how regulatory zoning changes over time and how these changes in zonings relate to state and local planning policies.

The data also provide valuable insights into other important spatial information such as: how much zoned recreation space has been created; how much land we are allocating for residential purposes, and the changing location and types of business zones over time. These data contribute to building an evidence-base for planners to make informed decisions and ensure that our land use changes are tracked in detail over time.



**Figure 8: Examples of former industrial zoned sites now currently zoned residential, image locations as follows in clockwise order: Cardinia, Mornington Peninsula, Maribyrnong and Kingston.**

**Source:** Urban and Employment and Sustainability Analysis team in the Department of Planning and Community Development

Published by Spatial Analysis and Research, a branch in the Department of Planning and Community Development  
1 Spring Street Melbourne  
Victoria 3000  
Telephone (03) 9208 3000

September 2011

© Copyright State Government of Victoria 2011

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

Authorised by the Victorian Government, Melbourne

Print managed by Finsbury Green  
Designed by Judy Bennett Design  
29 Yorkshire Street, Richmond

This publication may be of assistance to you but the state of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequences which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Editor: Nardia Smits.

Email: [spatialanalysis.research@dpcd.vic.gov.au](mailto:spatialanalysis.research@dpcd.vic.gov.au)

Internet: [www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/research/urbanandregional](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/research/urbanandregional)