

SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE POPULATION

Population projections play a critical role in planning for the state's sustainable growth and maintaining Adelaide's reputation as one of the world's most liveable cities.

The projections provide the likely range for population growth and demographic change across the state to 2051. Projections are important because they not only show the potential size and distribution of the future population, but also provide vital information about the future age structure of the population.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, alternative projection series are needed to address future uncertainty and to provide alternative growth scenarios for users. Three projection scenarios (high, medium, and low growth) have been prepared using varied assumptions about the components of growth (births, deaths, overseas and interstate migration).

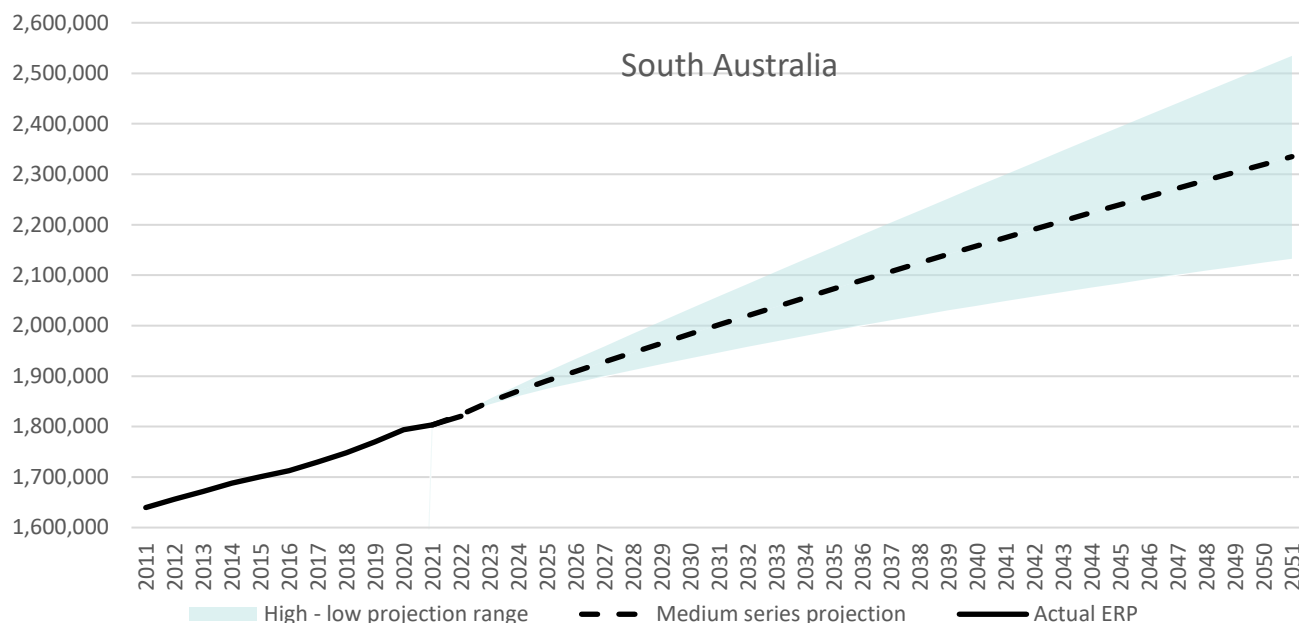
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN POPULATION GROWTH

South Australia's population reached 1.83 million in 2022 and has increased steadily by around 1 per cent per annum over the past 10 years. These projections demonstrate how much our population could grow and change over the next 30 years.

The total projected population increase over the period 2021-2051 across the three projections is 731,000 (high growth), 532,000 (medium growth) and 329,000 (low growth) – Figure 1.

Over the 30-year period the average annual growth rate for the high projection is 1.4% and 1% for the medium.

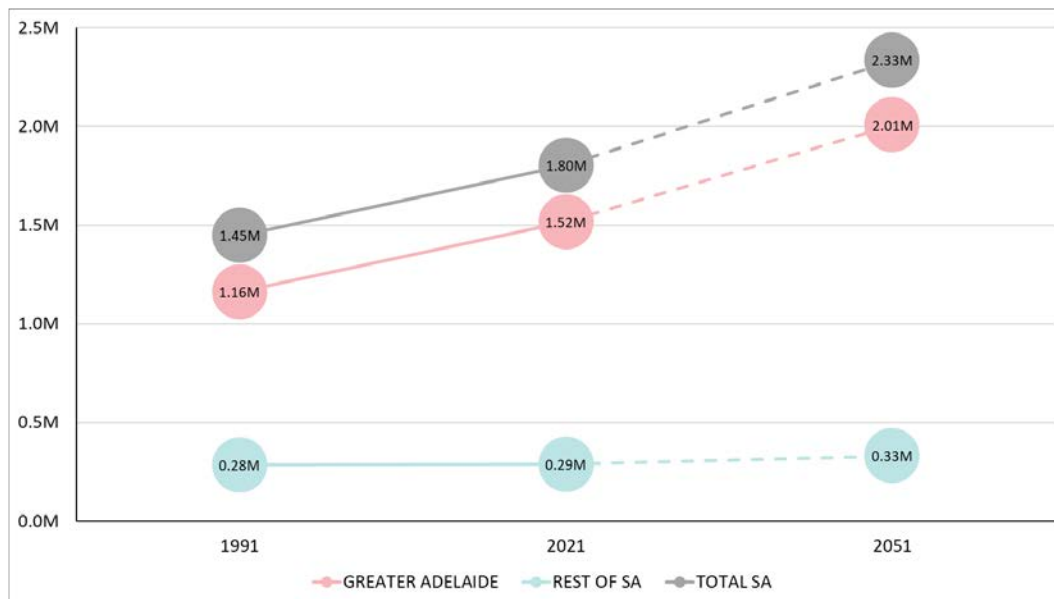
Figure 1: Projected population growth, South Australia, 2021-2051



Greater Adelaide accounts for 84% of the State's population (1.52 million). Figure 2 shows historical (past 30 years) and projected (next 30 years) population growth for Greater Adelaide and country South Australia.

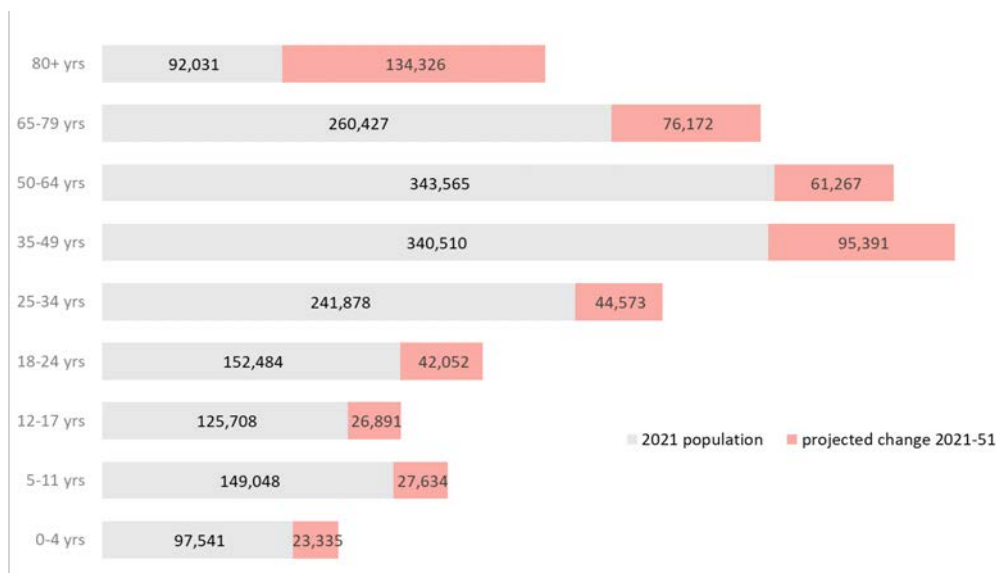
Greater Adelaide’s population is projected to increase by 490,000 (medium growth) and by 670,000 (high) over the next 30 years. Over the same time the population of country South Australia is projected to increase by 42,000 (medium) and by 59,000 (high).

Figure 2: Historical and projected growth - Greater Adelaide and Country SA, medium projection



The current and future age structure of the population is an important consideration when planning for future services and infrastructure. Figure 3 shows the population in 2021 and the projected change from 2021 to 2051, for different age cohorts.

Figure 3: Population change by age groups, 2021-51, medium projection



Some key points to note include:

- ‘Active retirees’ (65-79) are projected to increase by 30% to 337,000 by 2051.
- The ‘older population’ (80+ years) could increase by 146% to nearly 227,000 by 2051.
- The infant population (0-4 years) and school age populations (5-17 years) are not projected to grow significantly due to declining birth rates.

REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH

Population projections for the sub-regions of Greater Adelaide and country SA provide fundamental information to meet future infrastructure, housing, health and education needs (refer to Map 1 for regions).

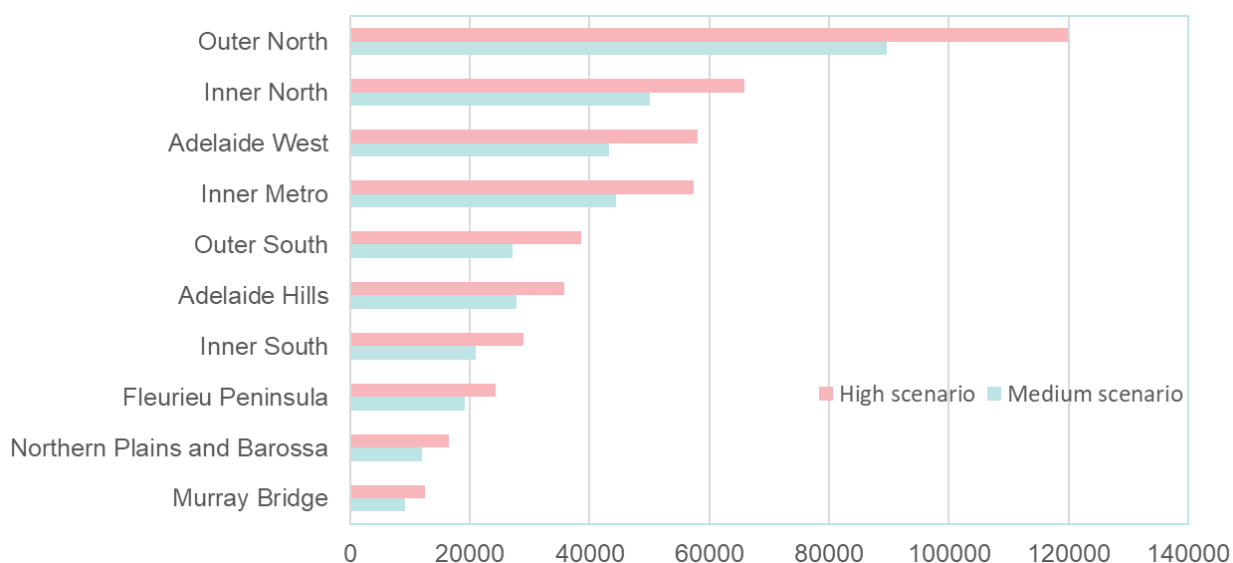
In addition to the underlying demographic characteristics, sub-regional population projections are informed by a range of different information sources including; current and predicted housing activity, land supply and development trends (i.e., small scale infill, greenfield), significant economic developments (especially in the country areas) and planning policies.

The projection horizon for the sub-regions is only 20 years due to the greater uncertainty around the future size and spatial distribution of growth across South Australia.

Greater Adelaide

Within Greater Adelaide there are 10 sub-regions, including the Murray Bridge local government area. Figure 4 shows the projected population change for each of these sub-regions between 2021 and 2041, for both the medium and high projection scenarios. The highest growth is projected for the Outer North region with up to 120,000 additional people over the next 20 years.

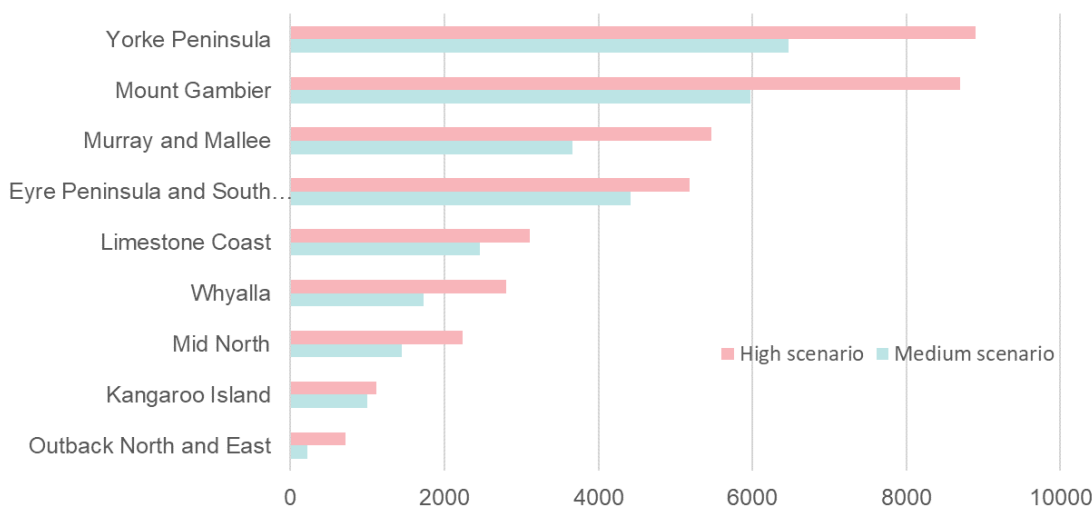
Figure 4: Projected total population change 2021-2041 by region, Greater Adelaide



Country South Australia

Country South Australia is made up of 9 sub-regions. These sub-regions were created to enable a more detailed assessment of potential population growth impacts based on key economic development projects (i.e., Whyalla). Figure 5 summarises population change by sub-region for country SA with the highest growth projected in both Yorke Peninsula and Mount Gambier.

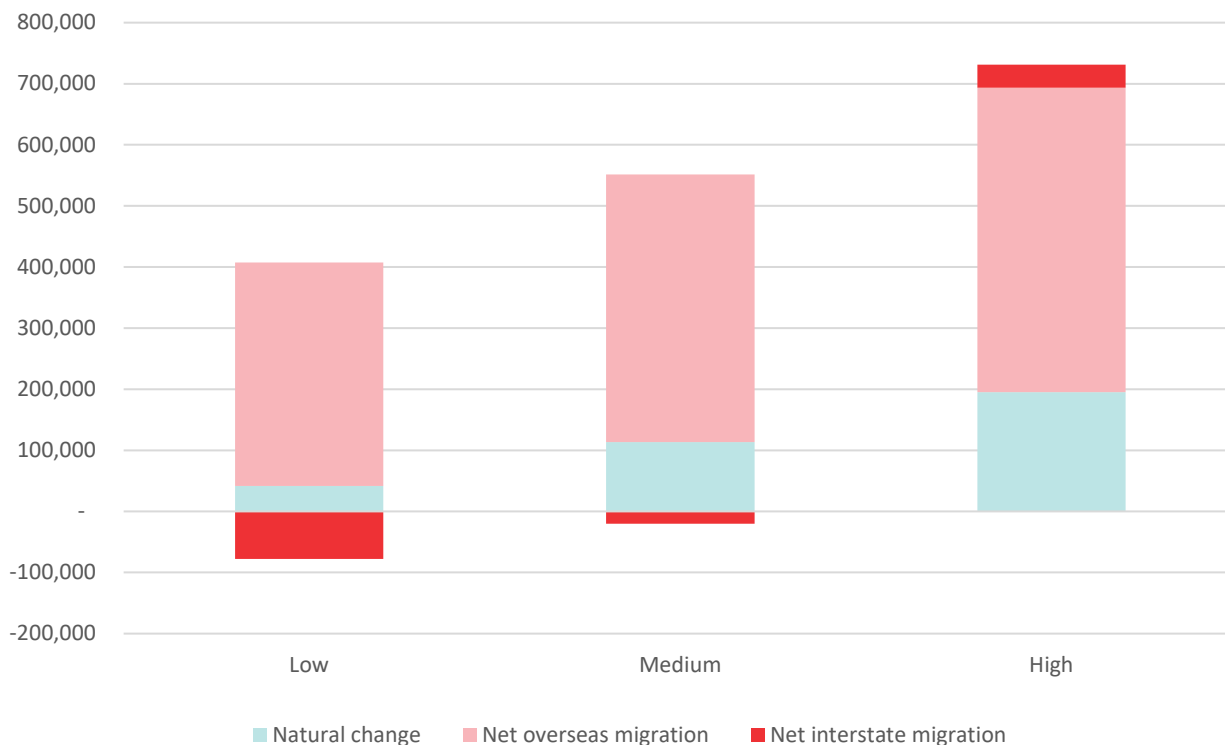
Figure 5: Projected population change 2021-2041 by sub-region, Country SA



KEY ASSUMPTIONS

Population projections are driven by future assumptions about the components of population change: overseas and interstate migration, and natural increase (the difference between the number of births and deaths). Figure 6 summarises projected growth by component over the next 30 years for the high, medium and low growth scenarios.

Figure 6: Projected population change 2021-2051 by growth components – High, Medium and Low growth



For detailed information about the population projection assumptions and results please refer to the report: [Population Projections for South Australia and Regions – 2021 to 2051](#).

LOCAL AREA PROJECTIONS

Local area projections focus on smaller geographies such as local government (68 areas) and Australian Bureau of Statistics SA2s (172 areas). These projections follow on from, and are concordant with, the state and regional population projections for 2021 to 2051 released in June 2023.

Local area projections (SA2 and LGA) are based on the medium series population projection for each region and will cover a 20-year projections horizon from 2021-2041. These projections will be completed by October 2023.

MAP 1: Population projection regions, South Australia, 2021

