

DRAFT



Rockdale Social Plan 2004

Rockdale City Council and University of Western Sydney

هام:

تحتوي هذه الوثيقة على معلومات هامة عن بلدية روكدايل. إذا لم تكن قادراً على فهمها، يرجى زيارة مركز خدمة زبائن البلدية على العنوان التالي: 2 Bryant Street في روكدايل من الإثنين إلى الجمعة بين الساعة ٨،٣٠ صباحاً و ٤،٣٠ مساءً، حيث سيقوم موظفو البلدية بتأمين مترجم لك بكل سرور.

كما يمكنك الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة الهاتفية على الرقم 131 450 والطلب منهم الاتصال ببلدية روكدايل على الرقم 9562 1666 نيابةً عنك.

重要消息

本文件載有關於 Rockdale 市政府的重要資訊，如果您有不明之處，請於星期一至星期五，上午 8 時 30 分至下午 4 時 30 分，前來位於 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale, 市政府的顧客服務中心。市政府的職員會很樂意為您安排傳譯員的服務。

您也可以聯絡電話傳譯服務處，電話 131 450，並請他們代您致電 9562 1666 給 Rockdale 市政府。

Σημαντικό:

Αυτό το έγγραφο περιέχει σημαντικές πληροφορίες για τη Δημαρχία Rockdale City Council. Αν δεν τις καταλαβαίνετε, παρακαλείσθε να επισκεφτείτε το Κέντρο Εξυπηρέτησης Πελατών [Customer Service Centre] του Δήμου στο 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale, Δευτέρα - Παρασκευή από 8.30πμ - 4.30μμ. Το Προσωπικό του Δήμου θα χαρεί να κανονίσει υπηρεσίες διερμηνέων για σας.

Μπορείτε επίσης να επικοινωνήσετε με τις Τηλεφωνικές Υπηρεσίες Διερμηνέων [Telephone Interpreter Services] στο 131 450 και να τους ζητήσετε να τηλεφωνήσουν στο Rockdale City Council στο 9562 1666 για λογαριασμό σας.

Importante:

Questo documento contiene importanti informazioni sul Comune di Rockdale City. Se avete difficoltà a comprenderne il contenuto, recatevi presso il Customer Service Centre del Comune a 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale dal lunedì al venerdì dalle ore 8.30 alle 16.30. Il personale del Comune sarà ben lieto di procurarvi un servizio interpreti.

Potete anche chiamare il Servizio telefonico interpreti (TIS) al numero 131 450 chiedendo che telefoni per vostro conto al Comune di Rockdale City al numero 9562 1666.

Важно:

Ова документ содржи важни информации за Rockdale City Council (Градската општина на Rockdale). Ако не го разбирате, ве молиме, посетете го општинскиот Customer Service Centre (Центар за услуги на клиенти), кој се наоѓа на 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale, од понеделник до петок, од 8.30 наутро до 4.30 попладне. Вработените во општината со задоволство ќе ви организираат да користите преведувач.

Исто така, можете да телефонирате во Telephone Interpreter Services (Служба за преведување по телефон) на 131 450, и да ги замолиме во ваше име да се јават во Градската општина на Rockdale на 9562 1666.

Importante:

Este documento contiene información importante sobre el Rockdale City Council (Municipio de Rockdale). Si no la entiende, le rogamos concurrir al Centro de Servicio al Cliente del Municipio, ubicado en 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale, atención de lunes a Viernes, de 8:30 am a 4:30 pm. El personal del municipio se complacerá en obtener los servicios de un intérprete para usted.

Puede asimismo llamar al Servicio Telefónico de Intérpretes al 131 450 y pedirles que llamen de su parte al Rockdale City Council, teléfono 9562 1666.

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Overview

Purpose

This plan has been written to provide the framework for Rockdale City Council, and community action, to improve the quality of life for Rockdale residents over the next five years, from 2004 to 2009. It provides information about the residents of Rockdale City, outlines some of the key community service issues facing them, and recommends actions Council and/or other agencies should take to address the issues identified.

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (General) Amendment (Community and Social Plans) Regulation 1998, the plan will focus on seven (7) target groups:

- Children
- Youth
- Older people
- People with a disability
- Aboriginal people
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD)
- Women

How the plan was developed

The draft plan

The plan recognises and builds on previous Council efforts to promote community well being and meet its needs through community planning. In many ways the Plan also documents or formalises the outcomes of recent work. The Draft Plan was produced from information and suggestions from a range of sources including:

Consultations with local community service agencies and networks:

In its role as a facilitator and supporter of community services, Council has ongoing consultations with local community agencies and government departments, both individually and collectively. Some of the networks Council is involved in that have contributed to the development of the plan include:

- St George Youth Workers Network
- St George Ethnic Services Interagency
- St George Domestic Violence Committee
- St George Disability Network
- St George HACC Forum
- Kurranulla Aboriginal Corporation
- Metropolitan Land Council
- La Perouse Land Council
- Rockdale City Council Multicultural/Community Harmony Reference Group

Local research conducted or commissioned by community organisations, universities or government departments:

In many cases Council has been involved in the design or overseeing of these studies, which include research regarding:

- Youth recreation
- Social capital
- Youth needs
- Needs of specific migrant groups
- General community needs
- Youth, ethnicity and crime
- Community Safety

Research and consultations undertaken or commissioned by Council:

As part of its general social planning role, Council has undertaken or commissioned many studies

and consultations to identify and document local needs. On some occasions this work has led to the development of plans for particular target groups or issues. For example, the Community Safety Summit held in 2000, and the follow up Safety Forum held in 2001, along with associated research and consultations, informed the development of Council's Community Safety Plan.

Other issues were explored through social research commissioned or undertaken by Council. These include:

- Needs of child care services and playgroups
- Youth needs
- Aged care needs
- Use and future planning of community facilities
- Needs of newly arrived migrants
- Safety issues for women, young and older people

Community Profile

Following the 2001 Census, Council commissioned the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to produce a demographic profile of Rockdale City (Rockdale Community Profile). This comprehensive document includes a detailed analysis of the population characteristics of Rockdale through maps, graphs and commentary, and includes population projections and socio-economic indices.

Council role in community services

As part of its strategic direction to promote a safe, healthy and accessible lifestyle for the community, Council is involved in planning, developing and providing community services.

Social planning forms the basis of Council's involvement in community services and includes:

- Investigating and documenting local needs
- Developing programs to meet needs including pursuing funding sources
- Contributing to State and Federal Government planning processes
- Providing policy advice to Council

- Preparing community profiles
- Initiating new and continuing to improve established partnerships

Council acts predominately as a facilitator for community services rather than a direct provider, which means that most activities are carried out in collaboration with the actual providers of services (mainly community groups) or the agencies funding them (government departments). As most community services are funded regionally there is also a focus on working in partnership with other councils.

Council also has a key role in **supporting and resourcing community service provision** in Rockdale City through establishing and resourcing new models of service provision, assisting with grant applications and providing planning information and professional assistance to local groups. How effective Council is in the latter task is measured every three years through an independently conducted survey of local agencies. According to the latest survey (2000) 87% of agencies classified their contact with Council's community services section as "useful" or "very useful".

Council also provides **financial or in kind support to local community services** through the Community Development Grant Program, donations from the Mayoress Fund, and the provision of meeting areas and purpose built office accommodation for local community service providers. Recently built facilities include the Rockdale Plaza Occasional Child Care Centre, Bexley Community Centre and Moate Avenue (Brighton) Community Centre. Also in relation to financial support, Council plays a key role in providing professional advice and administration for the Rockdale Community Development Support Expenditure Scheme, through which tax on poker machine revenue from local licensed clubs is distributed to community service agencies.

Through the meals service Council plays a minor role in **directly delivering community services** although many of Council's activities contribute to addressing social needs. For example the provision of parks and recreation spaces, providing public infrastructure like cycle ways, providing libraries, and planning the City's development.

As the level of government closest to the community, Council can play an important role in terms of **community leadership and advocacy**. Recent examples have included advocacy regarding the need for improved powers for Police, the preservation of open space in the F6 corridor, and the retention of funding for local migrant services.

Finally, Council has a role in *promoting and resourcing social justice projects in the City* through:

- Ensuring physical and social infrastructure is spread equitably
- Ensuring all residents have a chance to participate in local democracy and in the local planning process
- Ensuring that services are accessible to those who need them
- Assisting those least able to do so to participate more fully in the social and cultural life of the area
- Encouraging the development of community harmony

A copy of Rockdale City Council's Community Services Policy is attached.

Relationship of the Social Plan to other Council Plans

The Social Plan draws from a number of existing plans and policies, including the Community Services Policy, Community Safety Plan, Disability Access Plan and Multicultural Affairs Policy Statement. Actions in the Social Plan will be considered for implementation through incorporation in the Management Plan.



Assessment of previous social/ community plan

In 1999 Council produced a "Community Plan Executive Summary" which discussed Council's commitment to community planning and listed the sources for the human needs assessment. It also contained a "social plan issues matrix" which outlined in point form:

- Local social issues
- How they had been identified
- Relevant target group
- Current or recommended actions to address them.

All of the forty two actions listed have been undertaken, and many were underway at the time the Summary was prepared. Some of the major activities have included:

- Construction of an Occasional Child Care Centre in Rockdale Plaza
- Conducting research into the local factors contributing to the fear of crime
- Replacement of an historically based subsidy program with a publicly advertised Community Development Fund
- Continuation of Council's community development role
- Preparation of an Aboriginal Heritage Study

Although a community profile was attached to the document the Executive Summary did not contain a demographic description of the target groups, nor did it contain a detailed discussion of human service needs of the target groups. These shortcomings have been rectified in the development of the 2004 Social Plan.

Rockdale City Council – Community Services Policy

Adopted 12 September 2001

Introduction

Human services in Australia are primarily funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments, however Local Government also has an established role in providing facilities and services which meet the social, as well as physical, needs of local communities.

The NSW Local Government Act (1993) provides Councils with a mandate to provide a broad range of services, and states in part:

“A Council may provide goods, services and facilities, and carry out activities, appropriate to the current and future needs within its local community and of the wider public, subject to this Act, the regulations or any other law”

Like many councils, Rockdale City Council has had a long involvement in planning for the human service needs of residents, and this role became mandatory with the enactment of the Local Government (General) Amendment (Community and Social Plans) Regulation 1998, which requires Councils to develop a social or community plan and include statements regarding access and equity activities in management plans and annual reports.

Policy Statement

As part of its strategic direction to promote a safe, healthy and accessible lifestyle for the community, Council will be involved in planning, developing and providing community services.

Council recognises that it has a responsibility, which it shares with the State and Federal Governments, for the human service needs of its community. That responsibility includes planning for the provision of community services and facilities required by the community, co-ordination of local services, and community development assistance. Where no other

organisation is in a position to provide required services, Council will consider delivering such services directly, subject to adequate financial arrangements with other levels of Government.

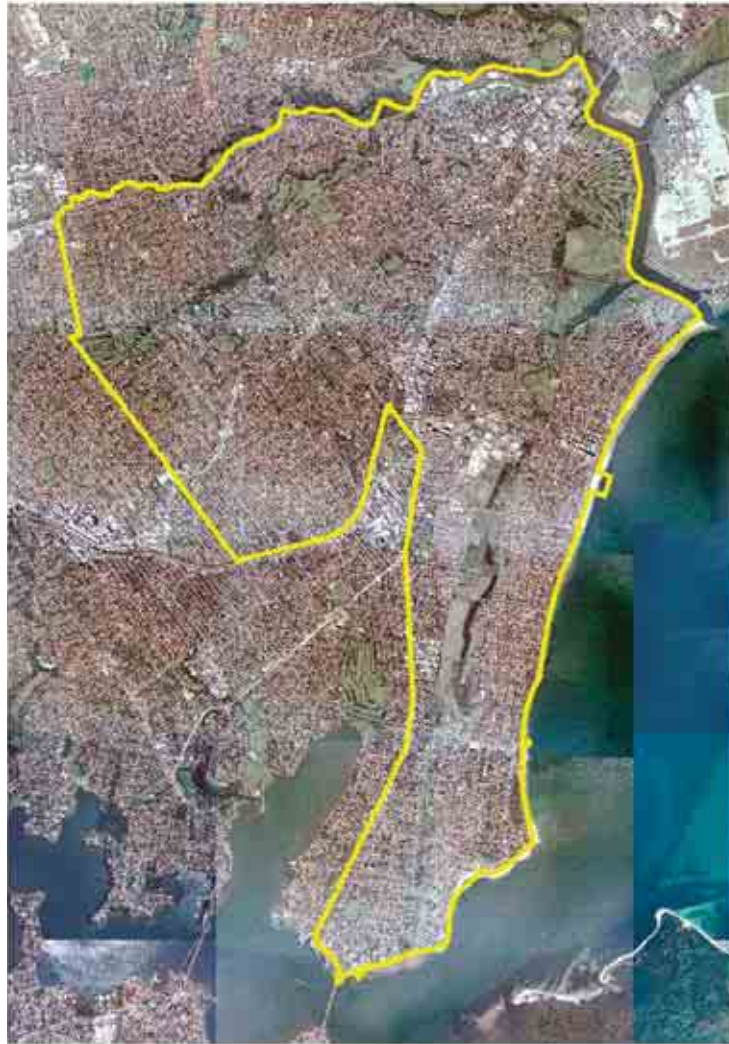
The division of responsibility between spheres of government for the funding and provision of community services should be defined through mutual agreement, and, in relation to Federal and State programs delivered through community groups, adequate ongoing funding should be provided.

Policy Objectives

- To plan and develop a comprehensive range of community services in co-operation and consultation with State and Federal Governments, and community groups for the general well being of the community.
- To plan strategies of community development on the basis of local community needs.
- To regularly assess this need through research and obtaining resident views, and to prioritise the development of services on the basis of relative need.
- To maintain and resource existing community services for the benefit of all residents.
- To promote access to services by disadvantaged residents, and promote maximum utilisation of public facilities and services.
- To provide the necessary administrative, planning and material resources to facilitate the rational provision of community services
- To ensure community participation in the planning, development and delivery of community services.

Rockdale City: Population profile

Rockdale City covers an area of 29.8 Km² and is bounded by Botany Bay to the east, Cooks River to the north and the Georges River to the south. It extends west as far as Kingsgrove.



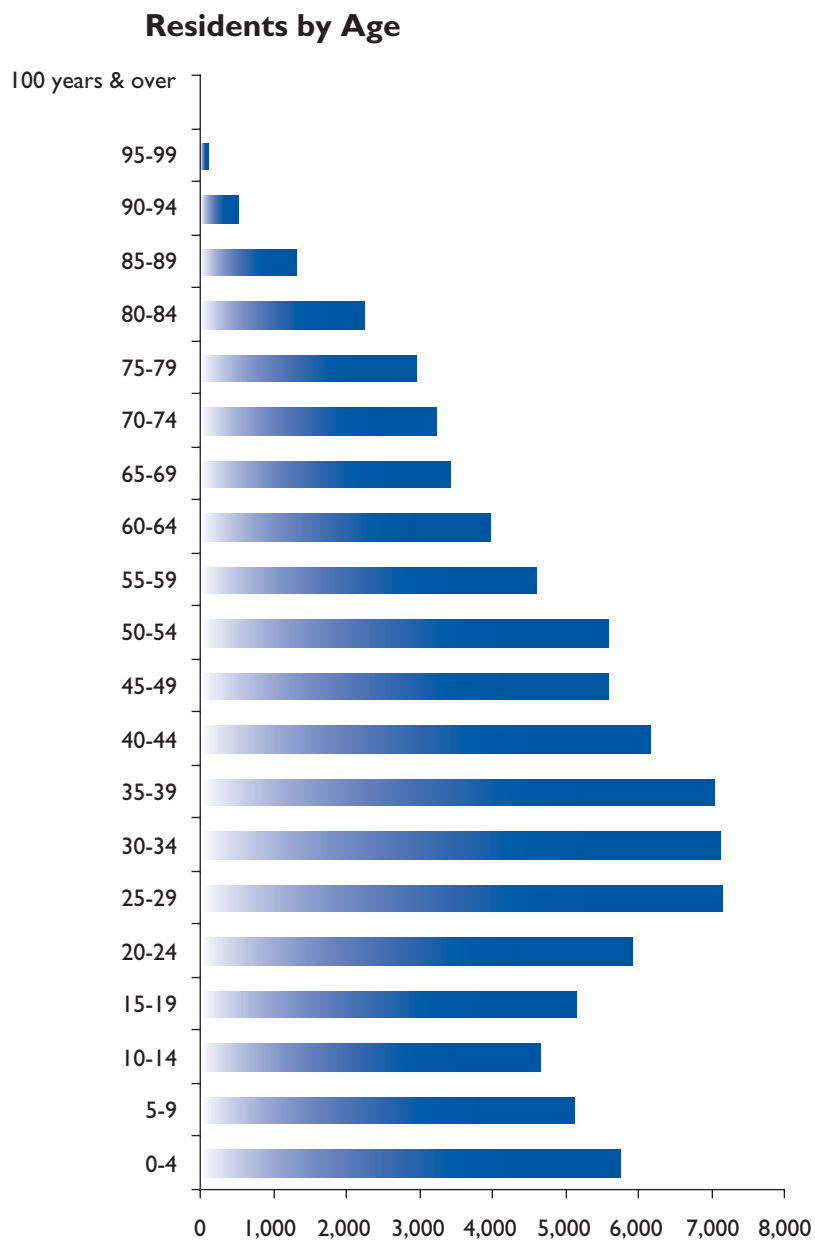
Population characteristics

Selected Rockdale demographics: 2001		
Medians	Rockdale	Sydney Metropolitan Area
Age	37	34
Monthly housing loan repayment	\$1,200 - \$1,399	\$1,200-\$1,399
Weekly rent	\$200 - \$249	\$200 - \$249
Weekly individual income	\$300 - \$399	\$400 - \$499
Weekly family income	\$800-\$999	\$1,000-\$1,199
Mean household size	2.6	2.7

Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Compared to the Sydney Metropolitan Area (SMA), residents in Rockdale are older, and household size is slightly lower. Residents pay equivalent housing costs to the SMA although they earn significantly less, both as individuals and families. Therefore Rockdale residents have higher levels of expenditure in this area, but lower levels of income.

Age distribution of Rockdale residents



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

As the above graph indicates one third of residents are under 24 years of age, 35% of residents are between 25 and 54, and around one in four residents are 55 years or over.

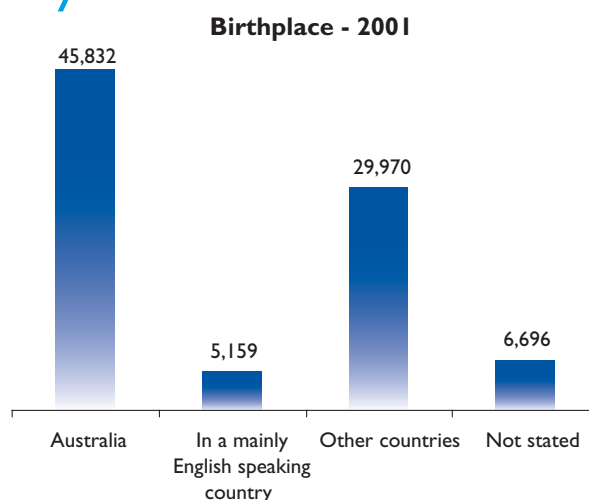
Ages of Rockdale residents in a metropolitan context

Age group	Number	Proportion of total	SMA proportion
0-4 years	5,754	6.56%	6.63%
5-9 years	5,131	5.85%	6.75%
10-14 years	4,655	5.31%	6.60%
15-19 years	5,157	5.88%	6.78%
20-24 years	5,910	6.74%	7.01%
25-29 years	7,156	8.16%	7.81%
30-34 years	7,123	8.13%	8.00%
35-39 years	7,029	8.02%	7.91%
40-44 years	6,167	7.04%	7.59%
45-49 years	5,595	6.38%	6.83%
50-54 years	5,600	6.39%	6.42%
55-59 years	4,606	5.25%	4.88%
60-64 years	3,963	4.52%	3.81%
65-69 years	3,426	3.91%	3.16%
70-74 years	3,227	3.68%	3.01%
75-79 years	2,962	3.38%	2.53%
80-84 years	2,245	2.56%	1.67%
85-89 years	1,319	1.50%	0.91%
90-94 years	510	0.58%	0.34%
95-99 years	111	0.13%	0.09%
100 years & over	12	0.01%	0.01%

Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Compared to the SMA, Rockdale City has an older population: there are proportionally fewer residents under 19 years of age, and proportionally more residents over 55 years of age.

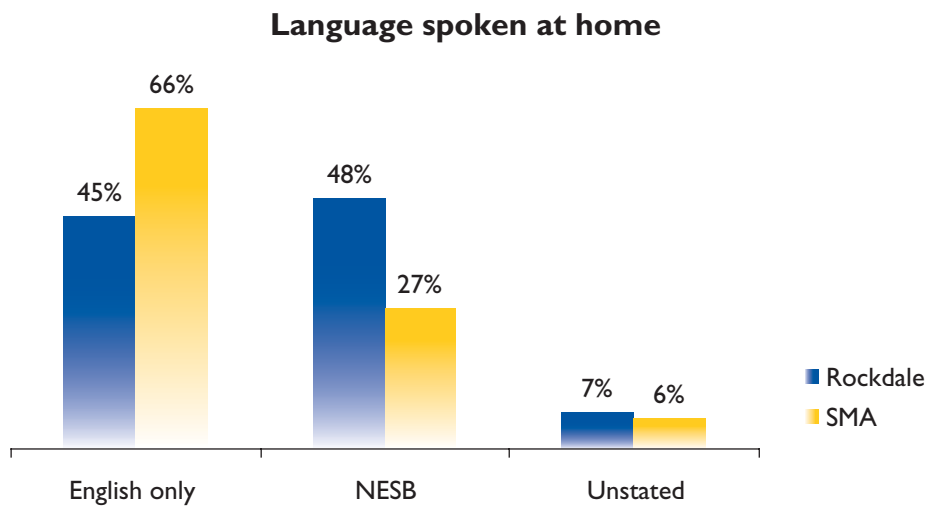
Cultural diversity



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

As the above graph demonstrates, Rockdale City enjoys greater cultural diversity than the SMA: around one in three Rockdale residents were born in non-English speaking (NES) countries. For the SMA it was one in four residents at the last Census.

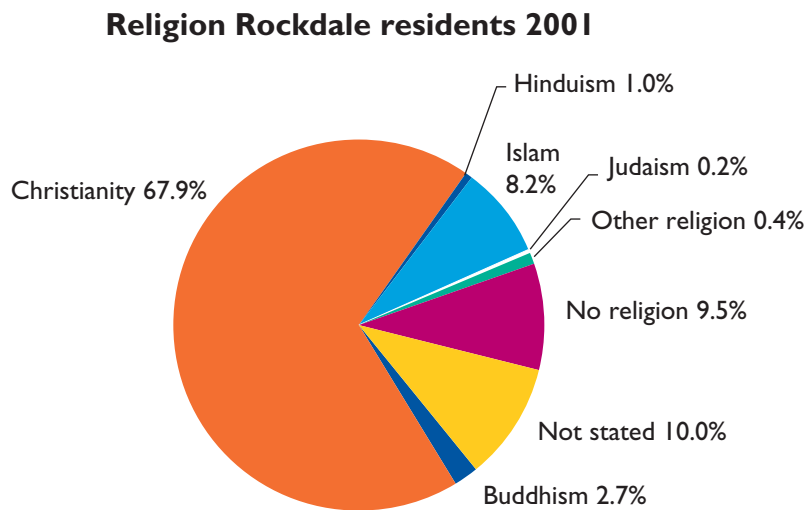
Languages spoken at home



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

A more precise measure of cultural diversity is language spoken at home. As can be seen from this graph, the proportion of residents speaking a language other than English in Rockdale far exceeds levels for the SMA.

Religion

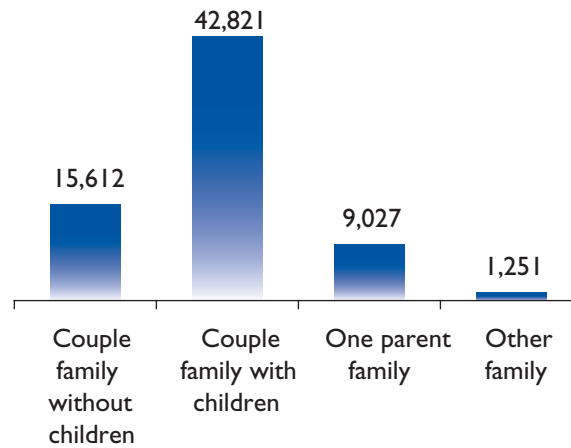


Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Around two-thirds of Rockdale City residents identify as Christians, 16% as members of non-Christian religions, and almost one in ten stated that they have no religion. Ten percent of residents did not state their religion at all.

Family structure

Family type by number of people 2001

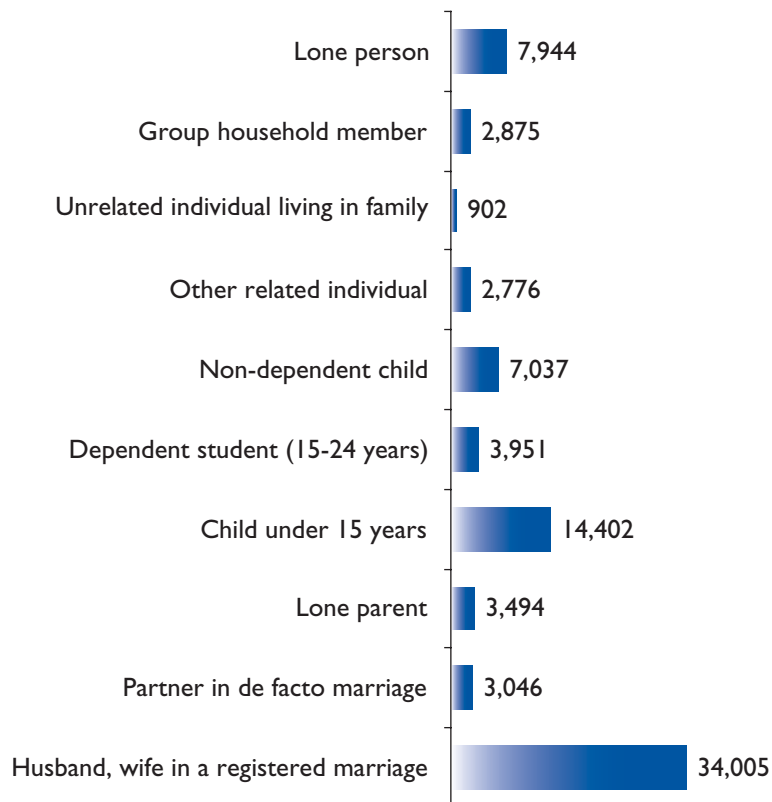


Source: ABS, 2001 Regional Profile.

The above graph indicates the number of people (68,000) living in families in Rockdale City. 62% of people in families live in a couple family with children, and 9,000 people live in sole parent families.

Household structure

Relationship in household, 2001

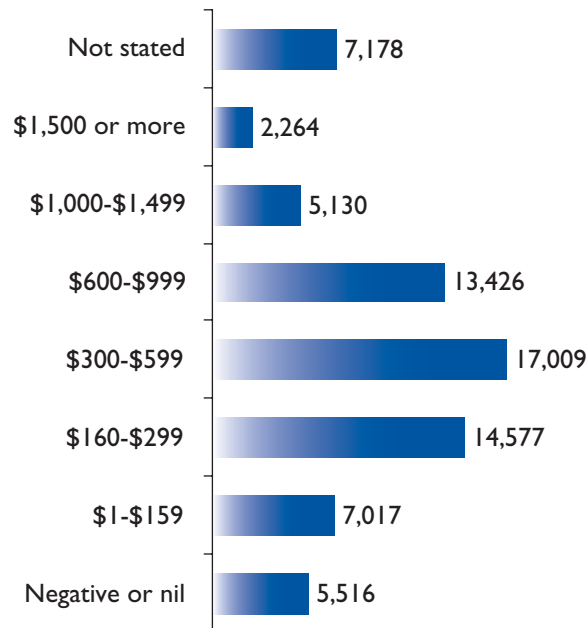


Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

The above graph demonstrates how households are organised in Rockdale City. Some noteworthy patterns are the fact that almost 8,000 people live alone, just under 3,500 people are lone parents, more than 2,500 people could be described as extended family, and close to 3,000 people live in group households.

Income

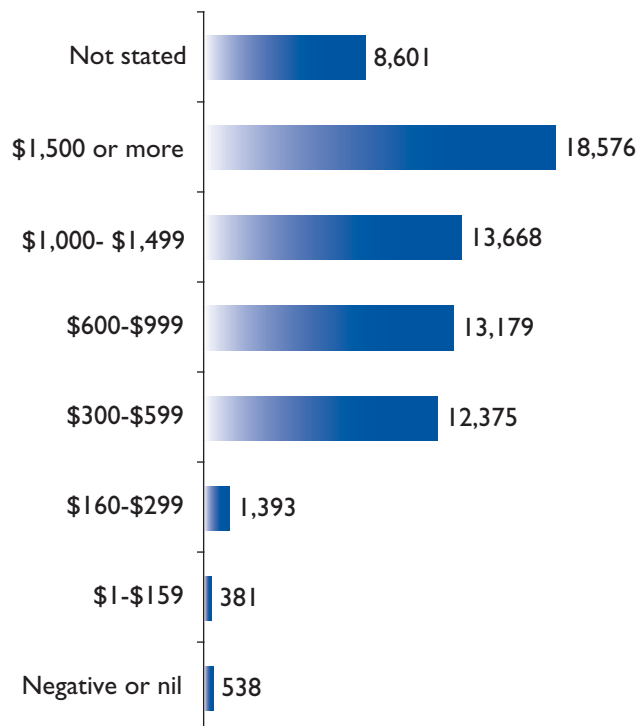
Individual weekly income



Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

Income levels for residents of Rockdale City are below levels in the SMA. 38% of residents earn under \$300 per week, 10% earn \$1,000 or more.

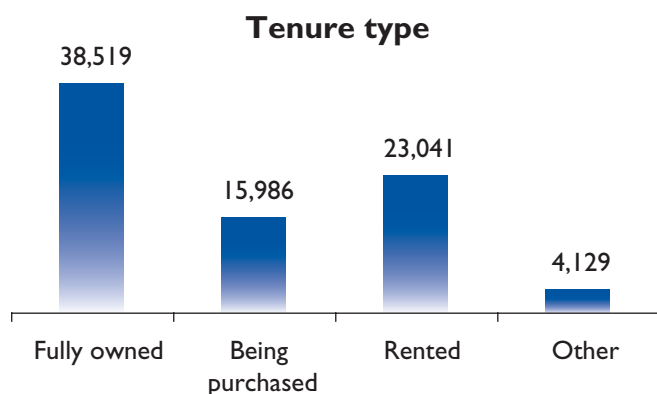
Family income 2001



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

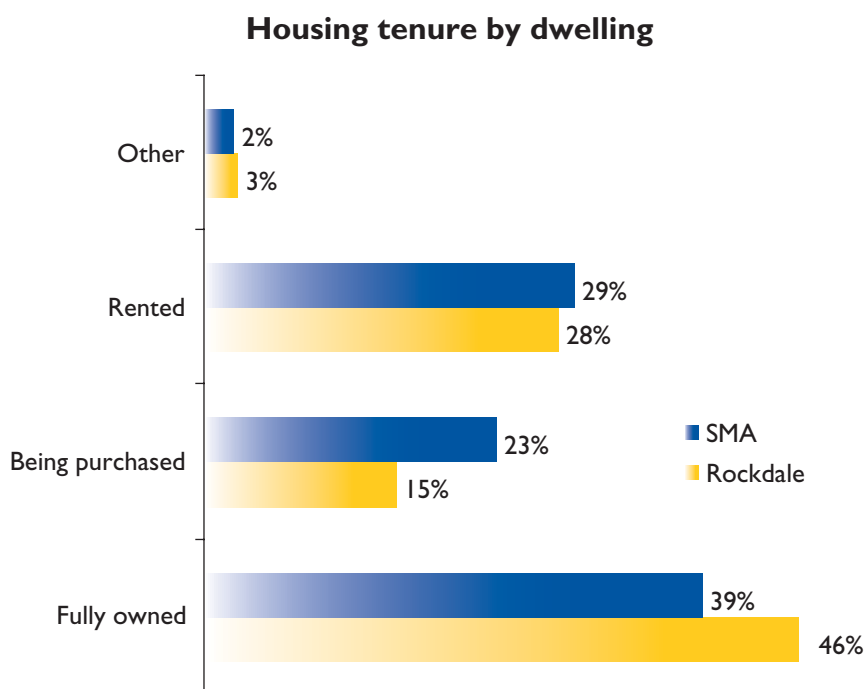
Median family income is also well below the SMA. 20% have a family income of less than \$300 per week, while 47% earn \$1000 or more per week.

Housing



Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

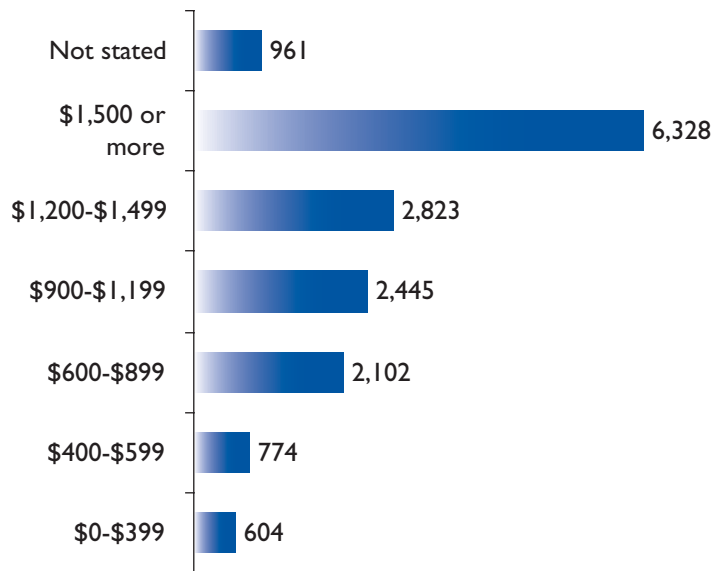
The above graph shows the tenure type of the homes residents live in: almost 30% of residents live in a rented home, 47% in a fully owned home, and another 20% in a home currently being purchased.



Source: ABS, 2001 Population of Census and Housing.

The above graph shows the tenure on each house in Rockdale (compared to the SMA), rather than, as in the previous graph, the tenure of the home each person lives in. Rockdale City has more fully owned homes, less homes being purchased, and slightly less being rented than the SMA as a whole.

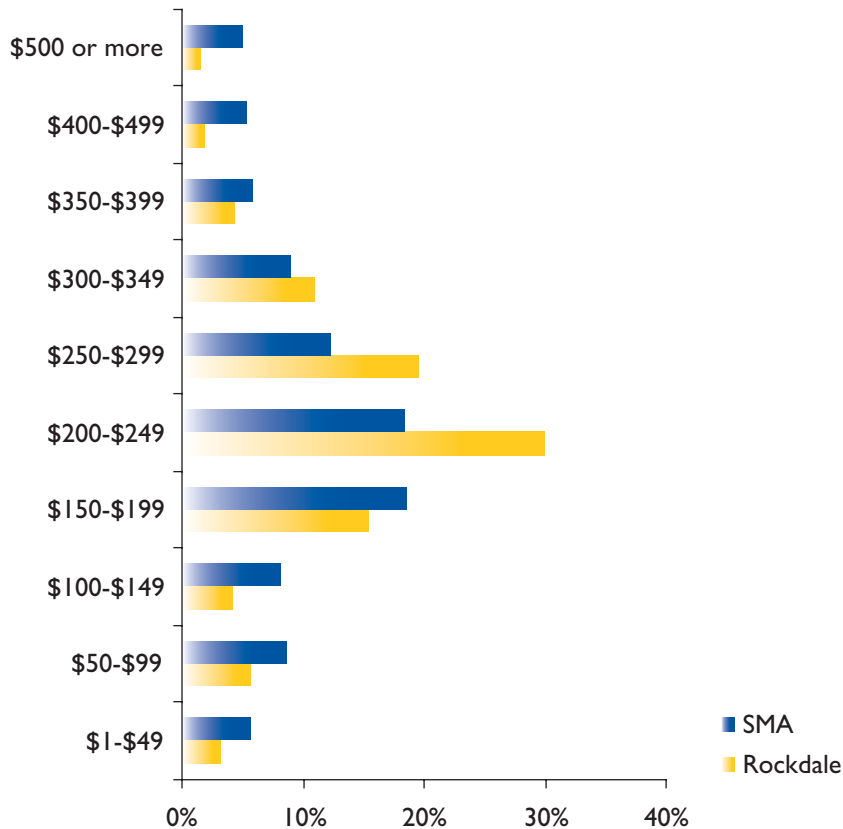
Housing loan repayments (monthly) 2001



Source: ABS, 2001 Regional Profile.

Monthly housing loan repayments are at the same median as the SMA. 40% of housing currently being purchased requires repayments of \$1,500 a month or more.

Weekly rents 2001

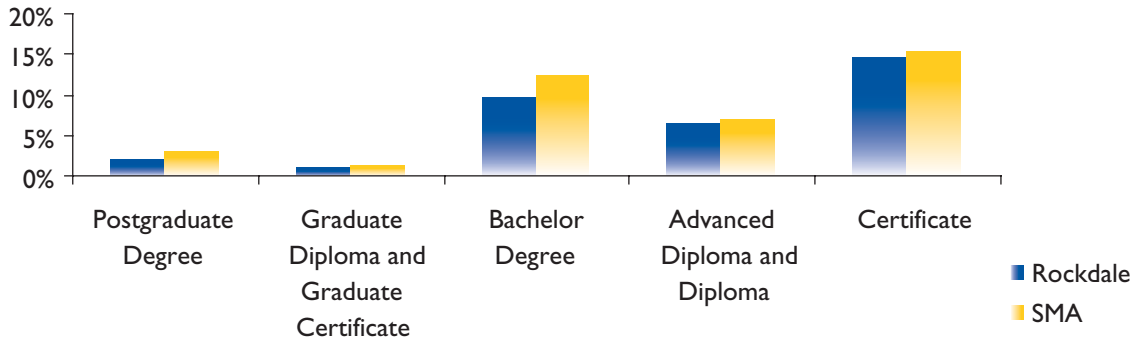


Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Median weekly rents in Rockdale City are in an equivalent range to those for the SMA as a whole. However, as this graph demonstrates, there are fewer rents in the higher range, and less in the lower ranges, in Rockdale City, when compared to the SMA.

Qualifications

Qualifications 2001

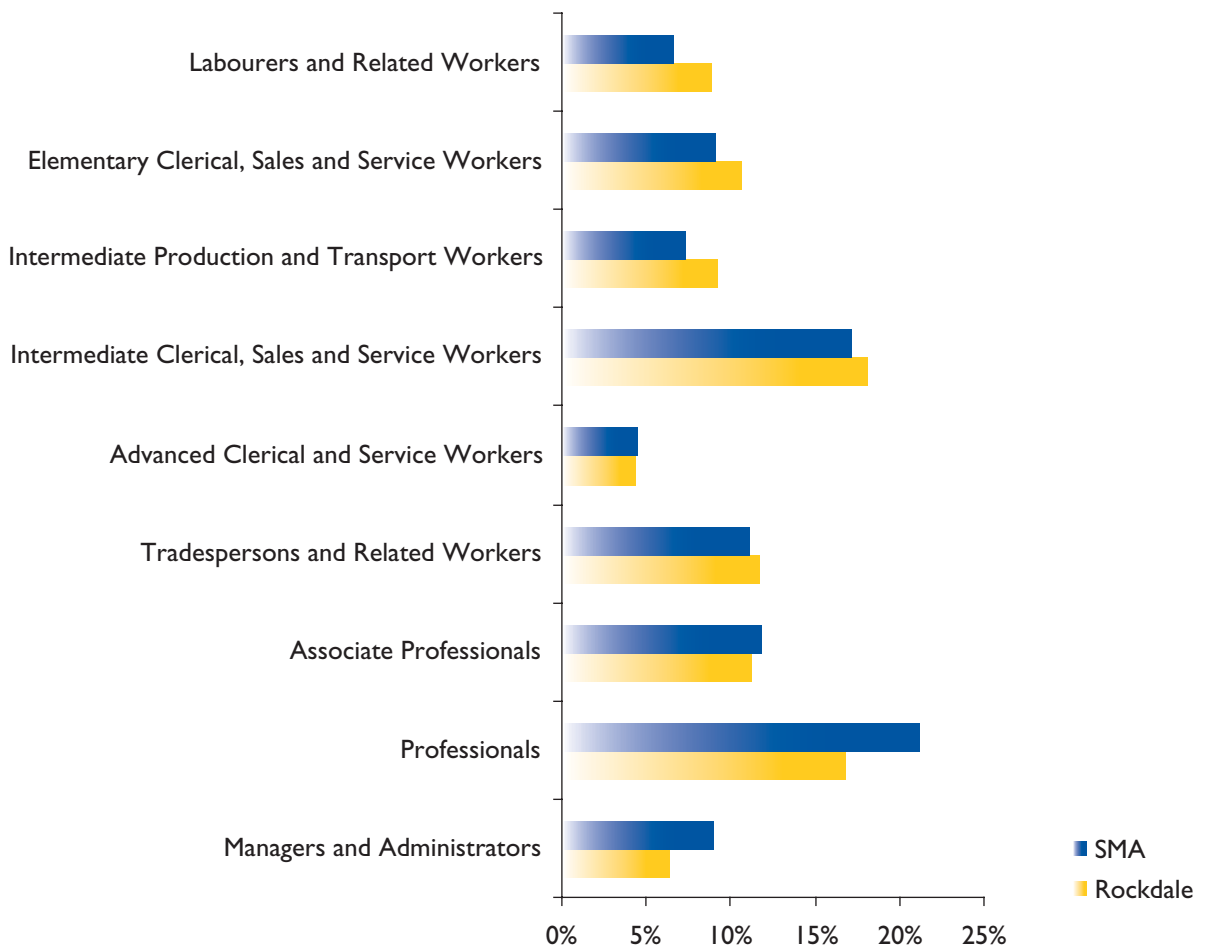


Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Rockdale City residents are less qualified than SMA residents. More than 52% of Rockdale residents are without post school qualifications, as opposed to 49% of the SMA.

Occupations

Rockdale Occupations

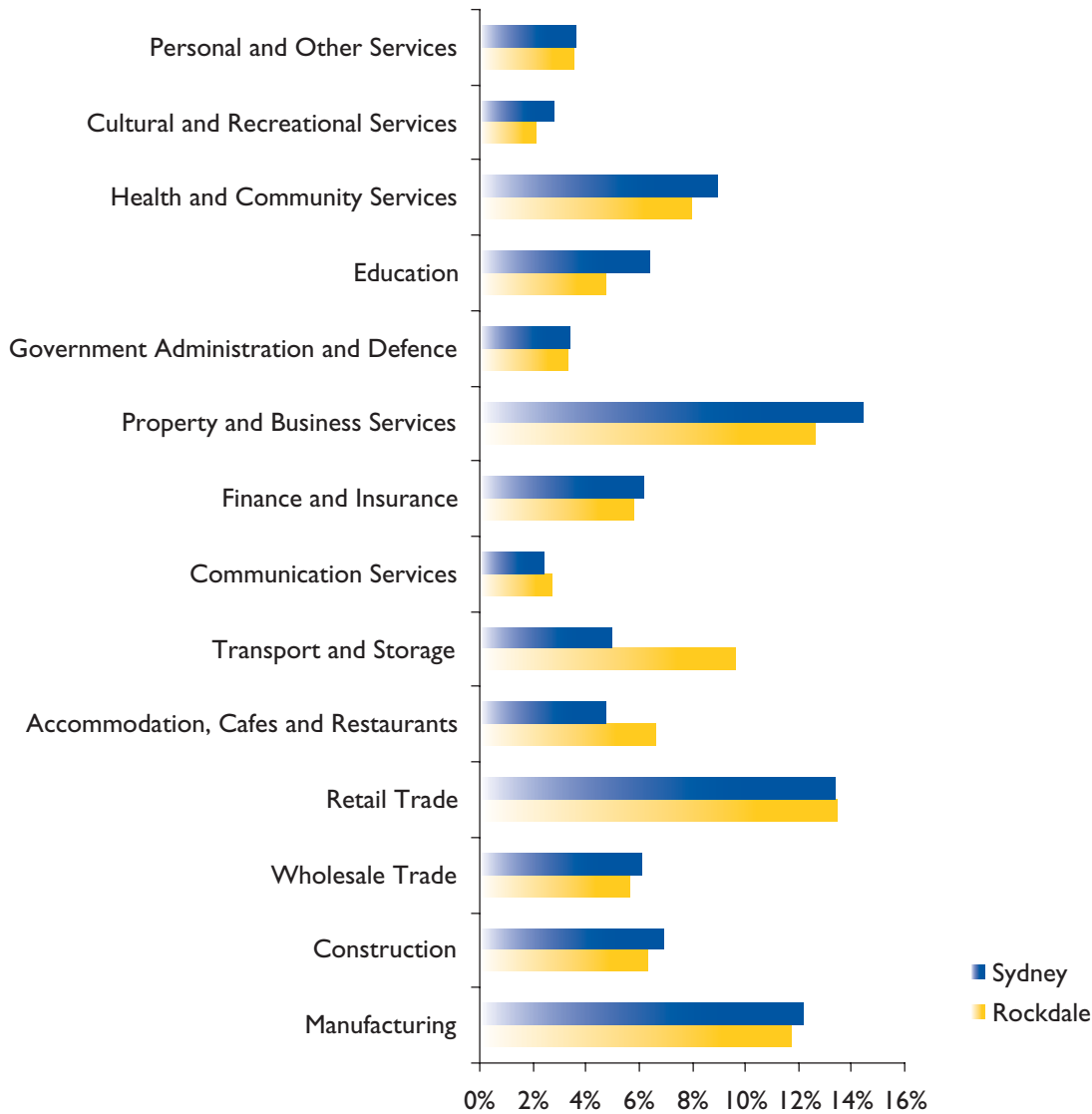


Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

As this graph demonstrates, Rockdale residents less often work as professionals and managers, and more often as trades people, and at intermediate and elementary levels in the workforce.

Employment

Employment industry



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

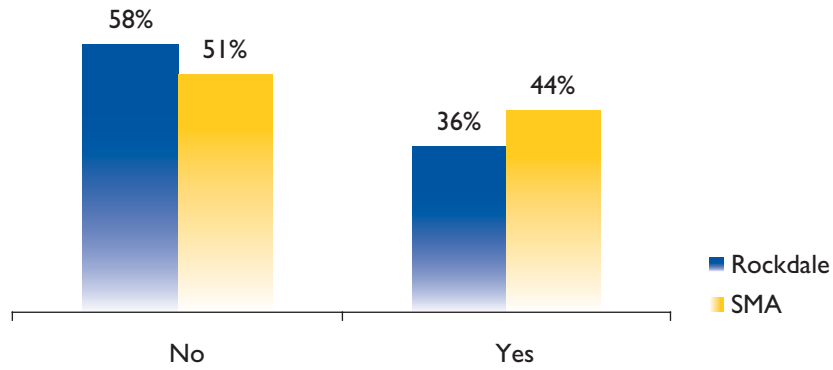
Rockdale City residents, compared to the SMA, are significantly less well represented in the industries of Property and Business Services, Education, Health and Community Services, and Cultural and Recreational Services.

Residents are more often represented in Transport and Storage and Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants.

On the whole Rockdale residents are less likely to be working in 'knowledge industries' where many analysts see future jobs growth in Australia.

Information technology access

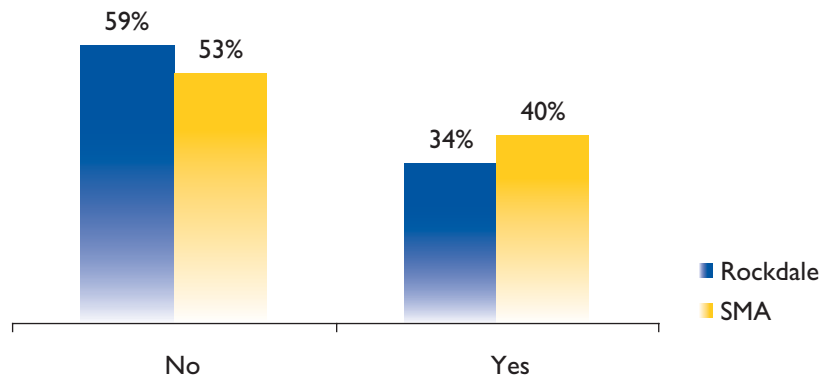
Computer use at home



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Rockdale residents have significantly lower levels of computer use than the SMA. This can impact on preparedness for employment and education, and in particular on levels of IT skill, a prerequisite for many career paths in today's workforce.

Internet use



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Rockdale residents also have significantly lower levels of Internet access. Use and understanding of the Internet have implications for education, employment, access to services, social isolation, and community building.

Population summary

Understanding demographic characteristics of Rockdale residents is one necessary perspective in providing a framework for Council and community action to improve the quality of life for Rockdale residents. When looking at residents of Rockdale City as a whole, and in comparison to SMA residents, the following are the distinctive demographic findings:

- Rockdale has an older population when compared to the SMA.
- Rockdale has a slightly lower household size.
- Rockdale has far greater cultural diversity than the SMA.
- Rockdale has a majority of Christian residents, although with other significant non-Christian, and non-religious groupings also.
- Around 68,000 people live in families, around 20,000 people do not live in families.
- Both family and individual income medians in Rockdale City are below SMA levels.
- Rockdale residents enjoy more full home ownership, but have proportionally less residents currently buying their own home than the SMA.
- Rockdale residents pay the same median level of housing costs as residents of the SMA.
- Rockdale residents are less qualified than SMA residents.
- Rockdale residents are less likely to work as a professional or manager; more likely to work as a tradesperson or labourer, or intermediate or entry-level worker.
- Rockdale residents are less likely to be employed in knowledge industries.
- Rockdale residents have lower levels of information technology use and access.

Target group:

Children

Definition

This chapter examines relevant issues for children in Rockdale City. Children can be identified through Census material by age. For the purposes of this document children are defined as those residents between the ages of 0 and 11 years of age. Except where otherwise indicated, all data will refer to this age group.

Population profile

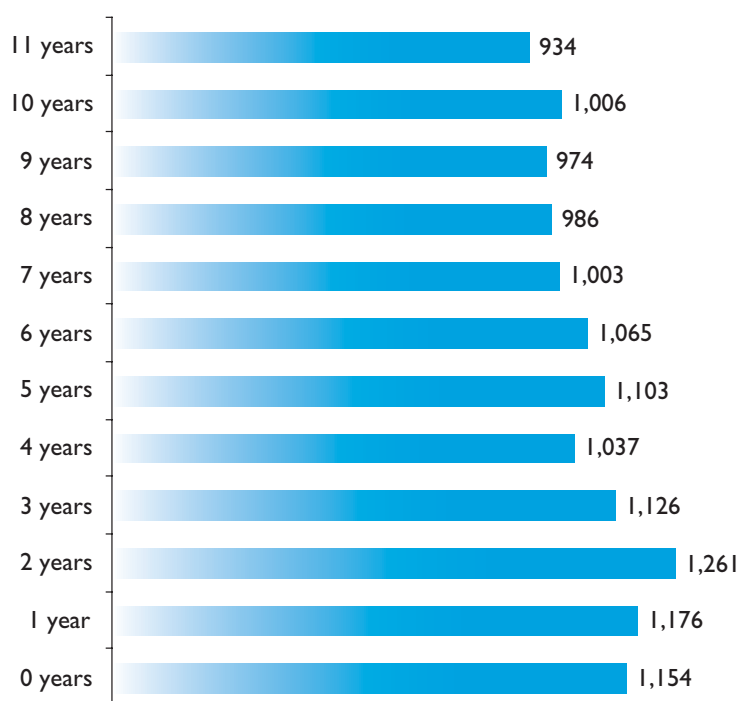
Children have particular needs, both in terms of service requirements and in their ability to access services. These are, in turn, affected by such things as: age; gender; socio-economic status of parents; country of birth; family's CALD characteristics; English language proficiency; length of time in Australia; available family support; and experiences in Australia, brought with them from their country of origin, or handed down to subsequent generations in Australia.

Gaining a detailed understanding of the needs of children in our community is important in order to be able to provide services for all residents, to promote a safe, healthy and accessible lifestyle for the whole community, and to distribute resources with regard to equity. It is also important to gain an understanding of the needs of children because, as minors, their ability to look after their own interests is limited. Services available to children also impact significantly on the life of the children's family.

There were 12,825 children between the ages of 0 and 11 living in Rockdale, according to Census figures for 2001.

Prevalence of Children in Rockdale City

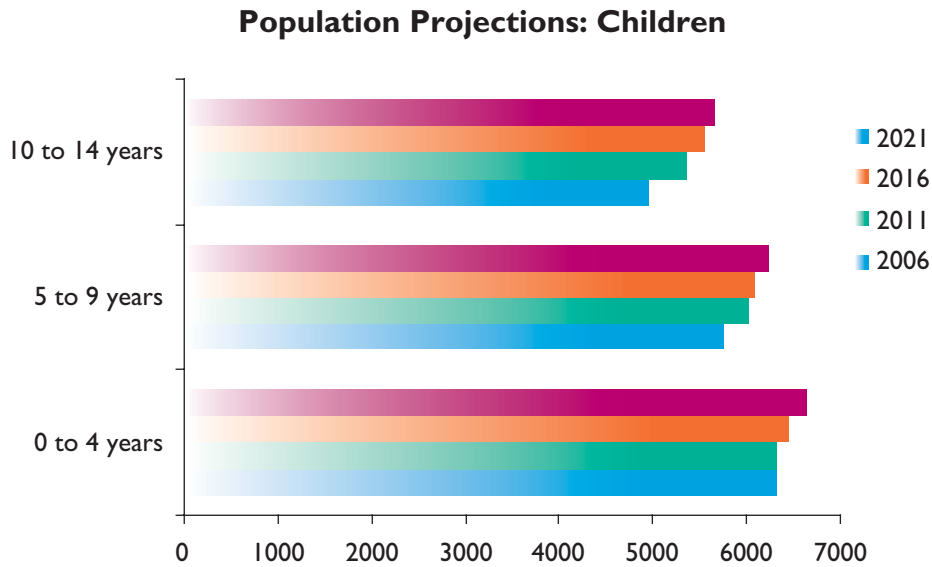
Children in Rockdale 2001



Source: ABS, 2002 Rockdale Regional Profile.

Children made up 14.6% of the Rockdale population in 2001. The above graph shows these residents by age. There were more children five years and under in Rockdale, than those aged six to eleven years.

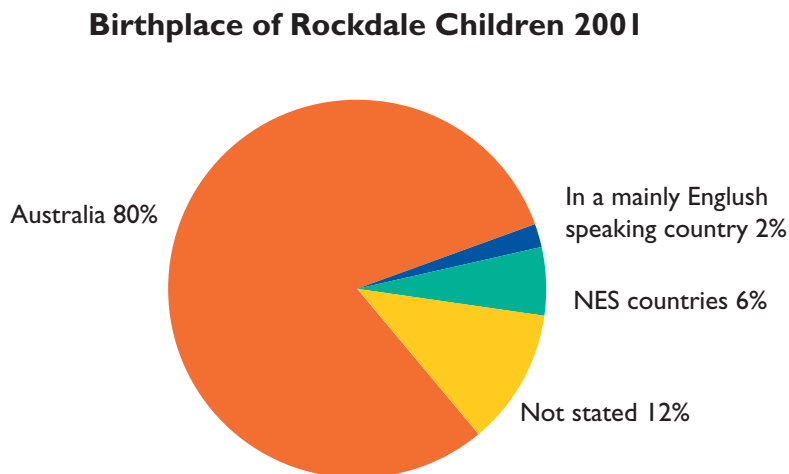
Population Projections



Source: ABS, 2002 Rockdale Community Profile.

The above graph looks at projections for children aged 0 years to 14 years of age. In 2001, 18% of residents were aged 14 years and under. The number of children in Rockdale aged 14 years and under is projected to increase to more than 18,500 residents by the year 2021. This is an increase of 3,000 children in this age range between 2001 and 2019.

Birthplace of children



Source: ABS, 2002 Rockdale Regional Profile.

10,323 children residing in Rockdale in 2001 were born in Australia. The other major English speaking country of origin for children was New Zealand, and China was the main NES country of origin.

Birthplace of Parents

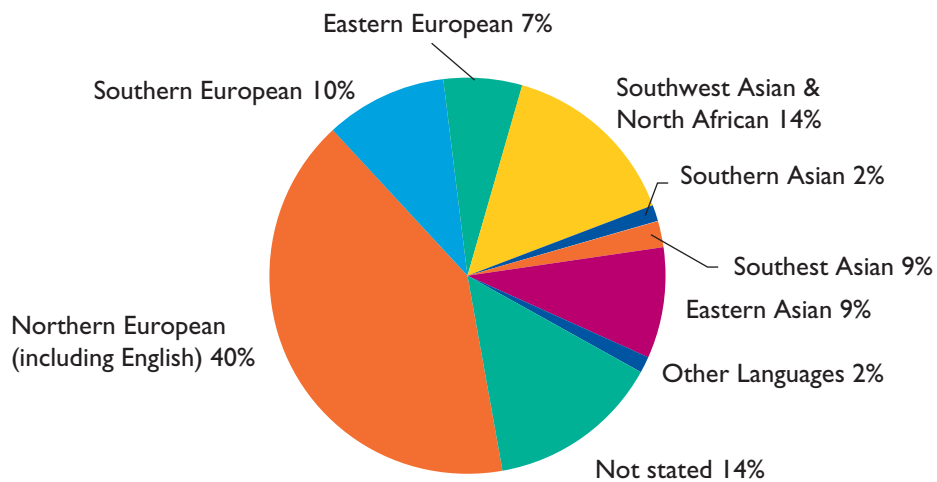
In this section children will be defined as those aged under 15 years, instead of 0 to 11 years. This change of definition is due to the data sources available for 'birthplace of parents'.

Of the 12,233 Australian-born, Rockdale residents aged under 15 years in 2001, 42% (5,139) had parents who were both born overseas. A further 4,026 Australian born children had parents who were both Australian born, representing 33% of all Rockdale children.

In most areas of Rockdale City, children with overseas born parents exceeded the number of children with Australian born parents.

Languages spoken at home

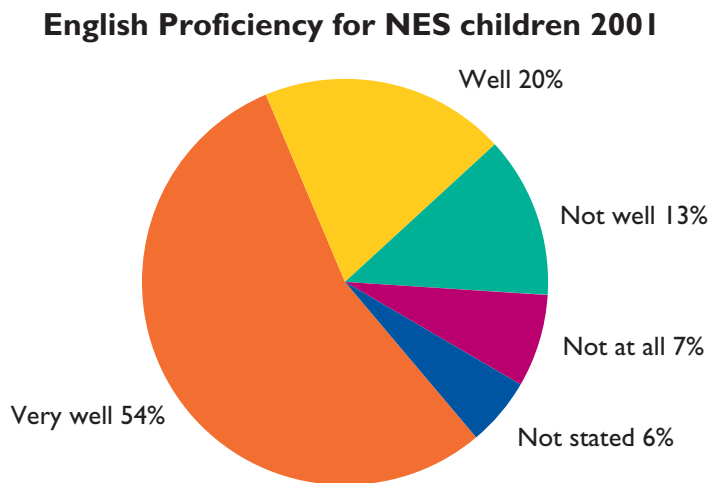
Languages spoken at home - Children 2001



Source: Rockdale Regional Profile 2002

Around four out of every ten children in Rockdale spoke English at home (16 German speaking children were also included in the result for Northern European languages). Lebanese (1,881), Chinese languages (1,117), and Greek and Macedonian are the main non-English languages spoken at home by Rockdale children.

Proficiency in English for NESB children

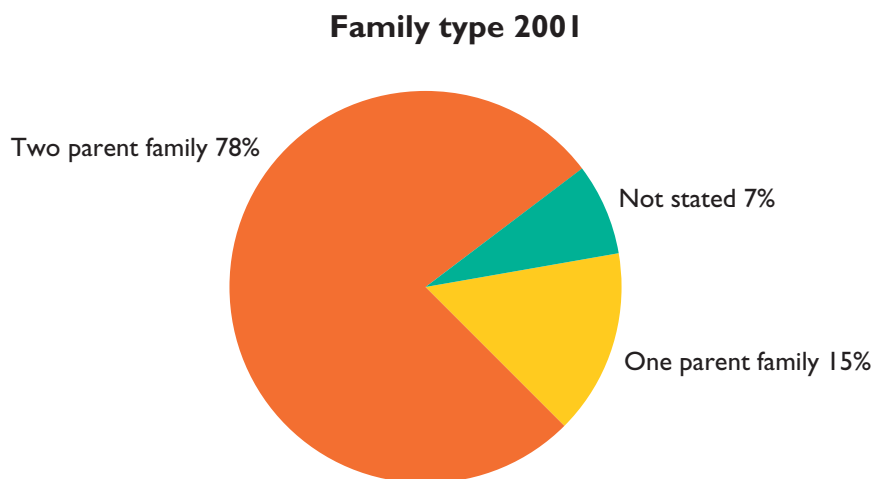


Source: Rockdale Regional Profile 2002

Almost three quarters of NESB children spoke English well or very well. However, 20% (1,159) could either not speak English well or not at all.

The group particularly affected by low English language proficiency was the '0 to 4' age group where about 50% of NES children did not speak English well, or not at all.¹ Of those aged five years and over about 10% still had low English language proficiency. Children with lower English language skills often start school at a disadvantage.

Family Type



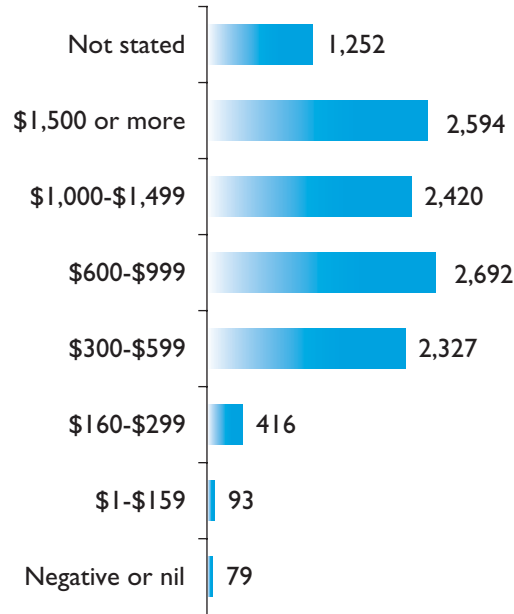
Source: ABS, Rockdale Regional Profile 2002.

The majority of children (9,900) lived in a two-parent family and just under 2,000 lived in a one-parent family in 2001.

¹ ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

Income

Income 2001 Families with children

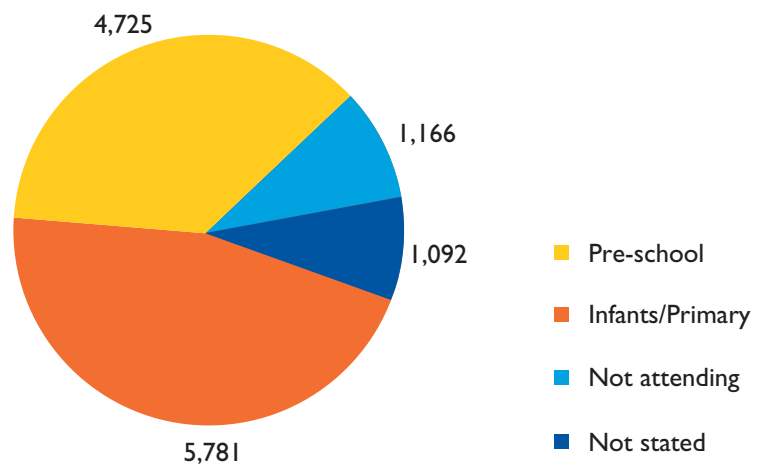


Source: ABS, Rockdale Regional Profile 2002

A quarter of all Rockdale children are living in families with an income of less than \$600 per week. Around 5% of all children live in a family with a weekly income of between zero and \$299.

Education

Attendance at an educational institution ages 0 to 11

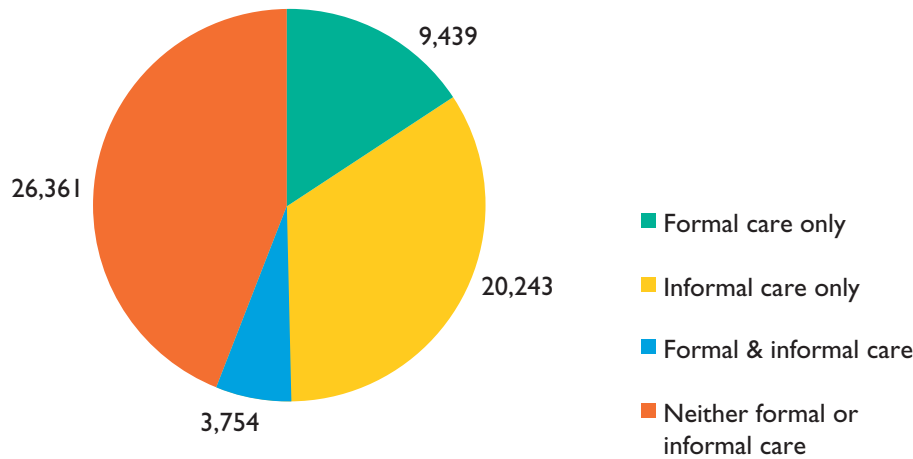


Source: ABS, Rockdale Regional Profile 2002.

37% of Rockdale children are not attending pre or primary school. These children may be attending child-care, or being cared for at home until school age.

Childcare arrangements

Childcare arrangements 1999

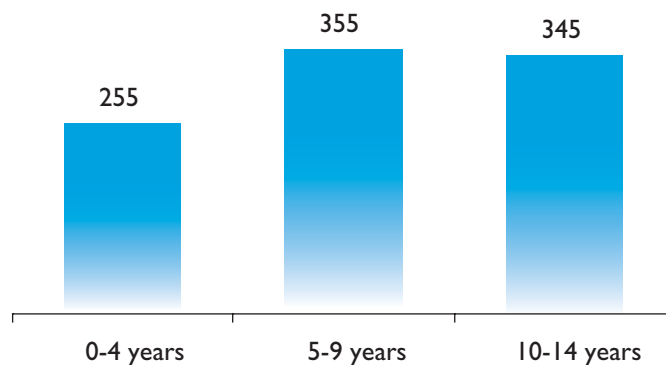


Source: ABS, Rockdale Regional Profile 2002.

The above graph is based on data for the St George Region (the LGAs of Hurstville, Kogarah, Rockdale and Sutherland). Over 26,000 children (defined in this study as those under 12 years of age) were not accessing childcare of any kind. While some of this number may not be in need of child-care, others will be on waiting lists for child-care. Waiting lists for child-care in Rockdale will be discussed later in this chapter.

Children with a disability

Children with a disability 1998



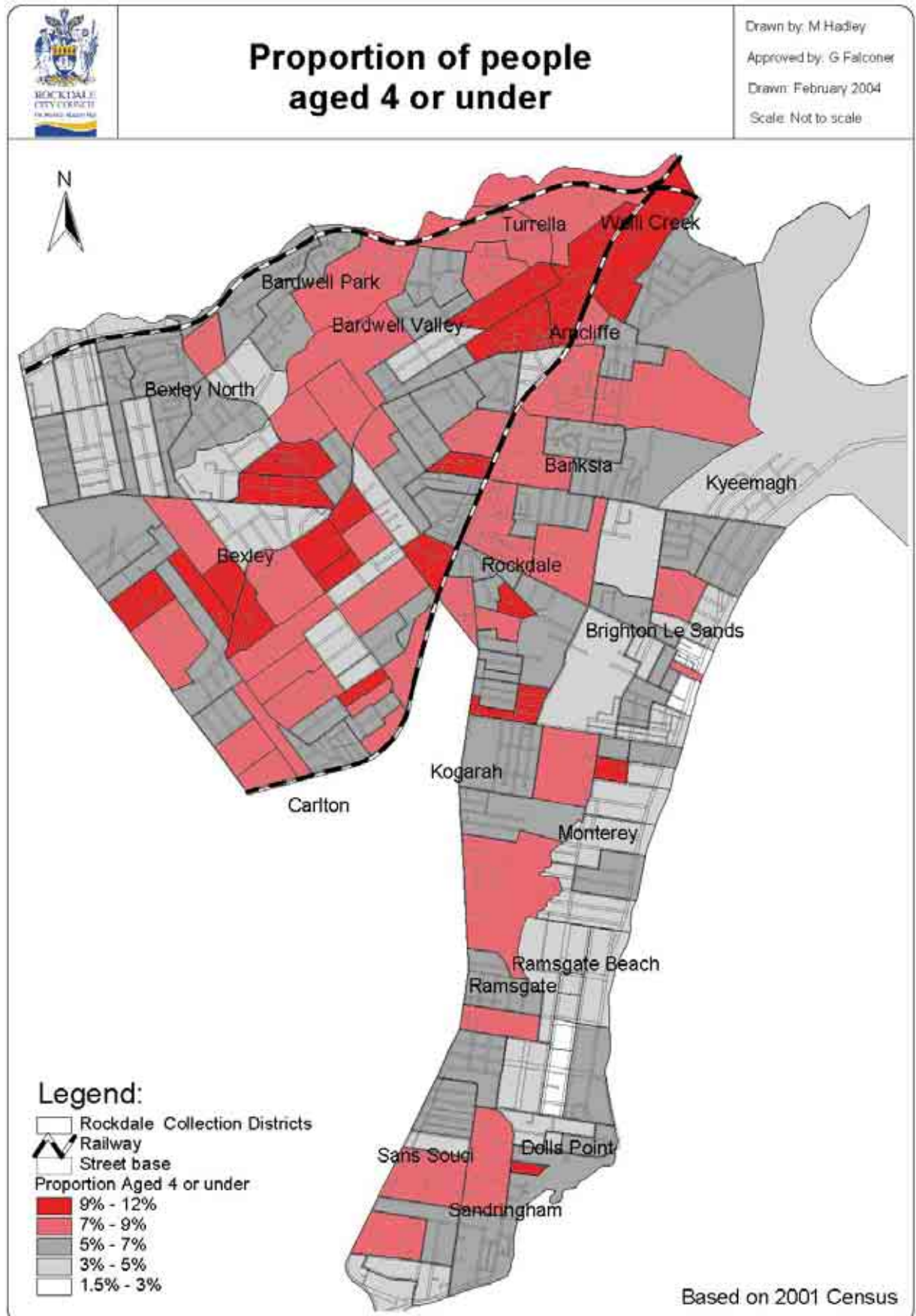
Source: ABS, Rockdale Community Profile 2002

There were 955 Rockdale children (0 – 14 years of age) with a disability in 1998; representing 6% of all disabled residents in Rockdale City.

A total of 210 residents (aged 11 years and under) accessed disability services across the local government areas of South East Sydney (Botany Bay, Hurstville, Kogarah, Randwick, Rockdale, South Sydney, Sutherland Shire and Lord Howe Island). As there are over 600 disabled children in this age group in Rockdale alone, services for disabled children are obviously significantly under supplied in the area.

Location of children in Rockdale

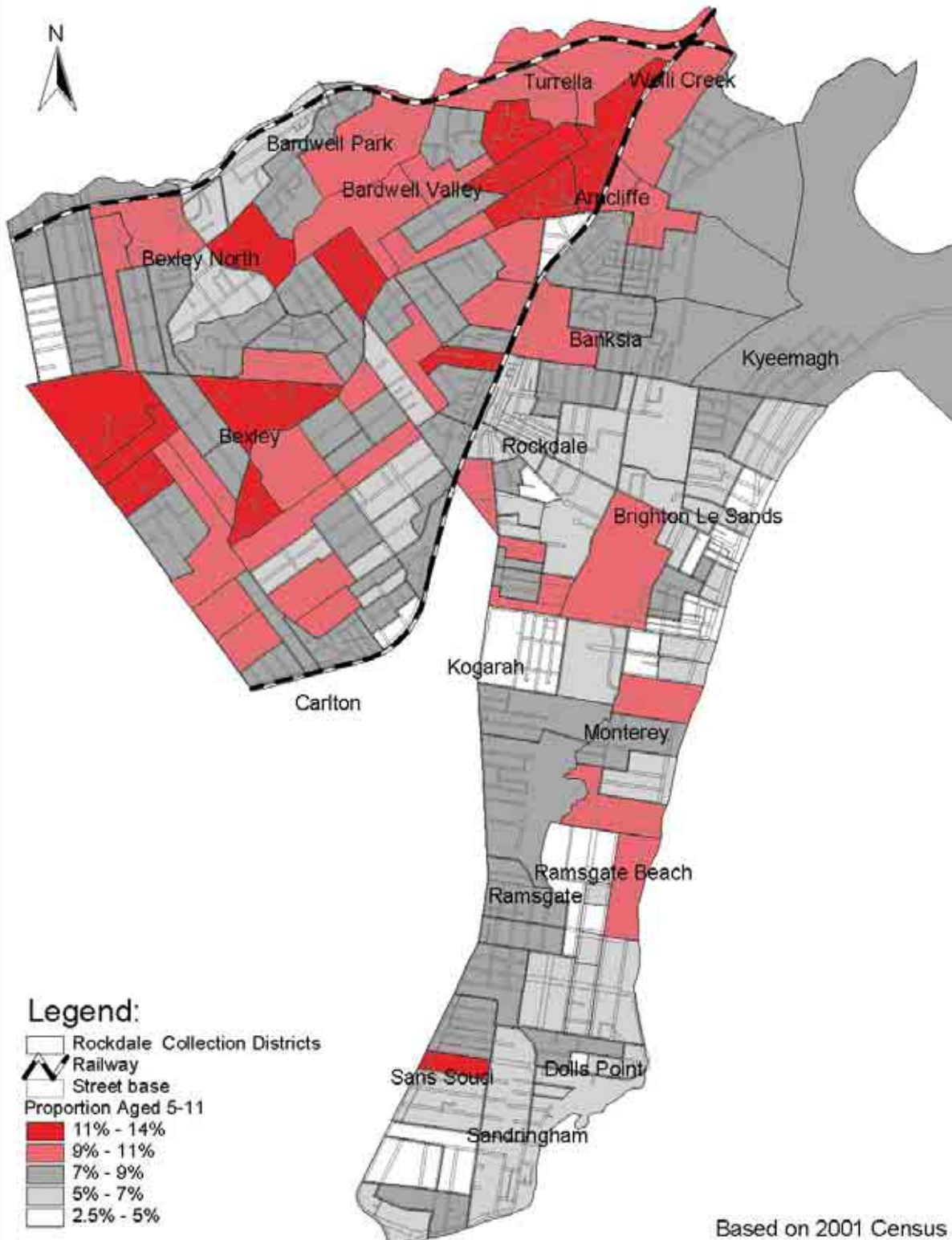
The majority of children live in the north west of Rockdale City, which includes the suburbs of Turella, Bexley, Rockdale and Arncliffe.





Proportion of people aged 5 to 11 years

Drawn by: M Hadley
 Approved by: G Falconer
 Drawn: February 2004
 Scale: Not to scale



Based on 2001 Census

Population summary

When considering how best to service children in Rockdale City the main points that arise from an examination of demography are:

- There are approximately 13,000 children in Rockdale, making up around 15% of the resident population.
- Over the next two decades the number of children is predicted to increase.
- 80% of children were born in Australia, 6% were born in an NES country.
- A majority of children have parents who were born overseas.
- A majority of children speak a language other than English at home. Lebanese, Chinese languages, Greek and Macedonian are the major languages.
- 730 Rockdale children do not speak English well, and a further 429 do not speak English at all. The majority of these residents are in the 0 to 4 age group.
- 3,000 Rockdale children live in families with an income of less than \$600 per week.
- Around 2,000 Rockdale children live in a single parent family.
- There are approximately 1,000 children, 14 years and under, with a disability in Rockdale.
- It is estimated that 4 out of 10 children (11 years or under) do not access childcare.

Council's Role

Council plays an important role in the support and the facilitation of childcare services within Rockdale City. New formal childcare centres require Council planning approval, and Council provides land and buildings for some existing centres. For example, currently buildings are supplied to five Childcare Centres at nominal rent: one Long-Day Care Centre (Turella Childcare Centre), three Pre-schools (Jack and Jill Kindergarten, Arncliffe Pre-School and Sans Souci Pre-School) and one occasional care centre (Rockdale Plaza Childcare Centre). Council buildings are also the

venue for two local out of school hours (OOSH) care programs. Through its grant program Council has also provided financial support to other OOSH programs and playgroups.

Rockdale Council provides services for children generally through a range of parks and recreational areas, hiring sporting fields free of charge for junior sporting activities, providing land and buildings at nominal rent to four early childhood centres (staffed by Area Health Service) and land to Scouts and Guides. Also, Council has a junior library service and conducts a road safety program with a specific focus on children.

Council also undertakes social planning and plays a support role for groups through researching the needs of those groups, and assisting the planning of other government departments.

How Children's issues in the area have been identified

As part of Council's broader role in researching and documenting community services' needs in the City a study was conducted of children's services needs, in particular the issues around child care. This included:

- A survey of childcare providers: 22 surveys were sent to Long Day Care Centres, with 18 returned; 8 surveys were sent to Pre-schools, with six returned; and 6 surveys were sent to OOSH Centres, with 5 returned (Simon, 2003).
- Interviews on a range of children's services issues with staff from Council and other agencies which included:
 - The Family Day Care Coordinator (FDCCD)
 - The Family Assistance Office (FAO)
 - The Department of Community Service (DOCS)
 - The St George Backstop Family Support Service (BFSS).
- Material from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Relevant local and national research studies.

Discussion of local children's issues

Lack of child-care places

There is a major level of unmet need for child-care in Rockdale City. In particular there is a need for care of the 0 to 2 age group, OOSH places, and pre-school places.

The Federal Department of Family and Community Services estimated in July 2002 that there was demand for 1,270 Long Day Care places in Rockdale City, however the Department was only funding 771 Long Day Care places and 300 Family Day Care places at that time, leaving a deficit of approximately 200 places.² In addition, four out of ten children (ages 0 to 11) do not access childcare in the St George - Sutherland region, potentially some 5,000 children in Rockdale.³ A sizeable proportion of the group are on waiting lists for childcare places.

The lack of childcare places was further evidenced by the results of a recent survey of childcare providers.⁴ Only eight of the eighteen Long Day Care Centres participating in the survey catered for the 0 to 2 age group, and they indicate the average wait for a place is up to two years. The Family Day Care Scheme, which is the major provider of 0 to 2 care also has an extremely long waiting list.

There is also a high level of unmet demand for Pre-Schools (all Pre-Schools have waiting lists, some extremely long) a situation exacerbated by the recent closure of a community based Pre-School. Interviews with providers indicated that many residents would prefer Pre-School over childcare, but due to shortages are not able to access places, and new residents are disadvantaged due to long waiting lists. The lack of Federal Government subsidies, inadequate funding, and difficulties in attracting staff were also issues impeding the development of new Pre-Schools.

OOSH Centres report similar problems. Three of the five centres surveyed had waiting lists and all reported a rising demand for services. They also reported that budget restraints for the community

organisations sponsoring OOSH care programs were an issue. The Department of Family and Community Services estimates there is a demand for 708 before and after school care places, and 376 places for vacation care, a total of 1,084 places for school aged childcare. However, the Department of Family and Community Services only funds 590 places.⁵ The development of additional OOSH care services is also hampered by the difficulties all centres have in relation to financial viability, and by a lack of suitable venues.

The Family Day Care Scheme has a waiting list of over 350 children. It also reported problems such as the lack of awareness from potential carers about the scheme, which could be addressed through increased publicity and advertising. The other issue potentially affecting the Family Day Care Scheme is the planned funding reductions to the Scheme's coordination unit, which provides support and training to carers.

The reasons for this shortage in childcare are complex. In relation to Long Day Care, which is primarily provided in Rockdale through the private sector, issues include the difficulty in attracting and keeping tertiary trained staff, which is mandatory for compliance with staff to child ratios for childcare centres in NSW. Six out of sixteen Long Day Care Centres mentioned problems attracting and keeping trained teachers.

The staff to child ratios are greatest for children under the age of 2 years, and in conjunction with additional requirements for baby change areas, bottle washing etc, represent a financial disincentive for centres to offer care for 0 to 2 year olds.

Council approval processes are another potential impediment. As well as licensing approval from the State Government, childcare centres also require approval from Council. Difficulty gaining this approval was mentioned by some centres participating in the survey as an issue impeding the development of new childcare places. Some centres indicated that Council's Development Control Plan for childcare centres was outdated, that applications took too long to process, and that parking requirements were not clear. To address this issue a new Development Control Plan was adopted by Council in November 2003, and its effect will need to be monitored.

² Department of Family and Community Services, written advice 2002.

³ The ABS Childcare Survey 1999.

⁴ Simon, 2003.

⁵ Department of Family and Community Services, written advice 2002.

Implications: Adequate access to childcare impacts on the ability of parents to provide for families, engage in the workforce, and by implication, impacts on the economic and social life of the community. These findings reinforce the importance of Council continuing its current level of support.

There is a need for strategies to increase the number of places available for the 0 to 2 years age group. This could involve support for the local Family Day Care Scheme, through which the majority of 0 to 2 year places are provided, and monitoring the impact of the revised Council planning controls for childcare centres.

The availability of Pre-School and out of school hours care services is hampered by current funding levels, and Council needs to continue to monitor this situation and advocate for improvements.

The possible reduction in funding for the Family Day Care Scheme's co-ordination unit, which provides support and training to carers is a matter of concern in relation to both availability and quality of care.

Affordability of child care

The affordability of childcare was also an issue raised in many of the service responses, particularly for Pre-Schools. This issue can be traced back to the way childcare is funded and the changes to funding since 1996. Means tested Commonwealth subsidies for childcare are not available for Pre-School, which is funded entirely at the state government level.

All Pre-Schools in the survey raised the problem of affordability. Affordability threatens the viability of Pre-Schools, which are increasingly unable to compete with Long Day Care Centres due to the subsidy disparity.

A range of childcare funding cuts implemented by the Federal Government have also impacted on the affordability of childcare in Rockdale. A significant amount of research, by both government and independent studies, has clearly demonstrated that families' options and accessibility to childcare are severely limited as a result of funding cuts and fee increases.⁶

There is evidence of families reducing their usage of childcare, or withdrawing their children from care as the gap between funding and costs has been passed on to them. Parents are increasingly looking for alternatives, such as informal care arrangements or multiple services, as full-time care becomes less affordable. The quality of care provided to children is then compromised. Directors report that in many cases NESB families have paid for other family members to come to Australia to care for children, or have sent their children to live with family overseas.

Implications: Access to affordable childcare is important for the financial well being of families. If childcare is too expensive parents may have to withdraw from the workforce to care for children, which places strain on the family economy, particularly when housing is so expensive in Sydney. As a quarter of all Rockdale children live in a family with an income of less than \$600 per week⁷ the affordability of childcare is likely to be an important issue for many families.

Special needs support staff

The survey also revealed that thirteen Long Day Care Centres, all six Pre-Schools and all five OOSH centres cater for children with special needs such as ADD, slow learners, NESB and ESL. Whilst funding is available through the Commonwealth Government for the employment of dedicated special needs teachers, centres reported difficulty in attracting and keeping skilled staff. This is in addition to the problem of recruiting tertiary qualified staff.

Implications: As a majority of children in Rockdale are from a CALD background, qualified staff with special needs skills are important for the area.

CALD children's services

Appropriate children's services are needed to cater for CALD children and parents, in Rockdale City. Children, parents and grandparents (who commonly play a key role in children's upbringing) need bi-lingual services, knowledge about the availability of children's services, and culturally appropriate services.

⁶ NUS Child Care Campaign Kit 1998

⁷ ABS, Rockdale Community Profile 2002.

In 2001, 429 children in Rockdale City did not speak English at all and 729 children did not speak English well.⁸ NESB children without good English language skills are likely to start their education at a disadvantage. This indicates a specific need for children's English services in a community where a majority of families are from an NESB.

Implications: Equal access to children's services for CALD groups is both an equity issue in Rockdale and a practical response to creating a strong, local community. Reaching children, and their parents, with services at an early stage creates a bond between Council and CALD residents. The benefits of providing these services can be seen when CALD residents develop better language skills and have better education and employment outcomes. See the CALD chapter for a discussion of the relationship between access to services and employment outcomes.

Recreation services

Children's social and physical wellbeing is improved through recreation, especially as obesity is a major health problem for children in Australia. In general, young people tend to be more physically active than older groups in the community, but they are not as active as their age cohort from twenty years ago. To address this issue the NSW Government released a report in 2001 titled "Creating Active Communities; Physical Activity Guidelines for Councils" in which young people were identified as a priority group. The report suggested young people should be encouraged to continue with physical activity whether it is an organised event or informal recreational pursuits such as skating.

Council conducted a study into the need for a skate park in 2001.⁹ The study quoted from an ABS study (2000) into children's participation in cultural and leisure activities that found that participation in skating activities was 20 % for 5 year olds and peaked at 39% for 8 year olds. As a consequence of the study, Council has resolved to construct a skate park as part of the redevelopment of Bicentennial Park.

To encourage informal recreation, Council has adopted a target of providing unstructured play equipment at a catchment radius of 500 metres, with larger play units no further than 1000 metres apart. Formal recreation is encouraged through a fee policy under which Council does not charge junior sporting groups for use of sports fields.

Although the needs of local residents are taken into account in the management of local parks, the recreation needs of the community, including children, have not been formally investigated and documented to date. A comprehensive recreation/open space study is planned for 2004 to address this issue.

Implications: Council is a major provider of recreation through open space, sports fields, and the junior library. To ensure its actions are informed by community need, a comprehensive recreation/open space study is required, and will be undertaken in 2004. The provision of recreation facilities impacts on the health of children in our community, in an age when children are increasingly pursuing sedentary leisure activities. Formal recreation activities are also important for social and community building. A lack of recreation services can also impact on family resources.

⁸ ABS, Rockdale Community Profile 2002.

⁹ Searle 2001.

Recommended Actions

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Time frame
1: Unmet demand for child care places	1.1 Council to continue its current practise of charging peppercorn rental for non-profit child-care centres built on Council land.	Manager- Leisure Services	Ongoing
	1.2 Council to provide promotional support to the Family Day Care Scheme through its publications.	PRM	As required
	1.3 Council to monitor the impact of revised Development Control Plan for child care centres.	Manager – Urban Planning	Ongoing
2: Quality and affordability of child care	Council to advocate in relation to funding for Out Of School Hours care, Pre-Schools and Family Day Care.	Manager – Community and Environmental Planning	Ongoing
3: Recreation	Needs of children to be addressed in forthcoming recreation/open space study.	Manager-Leisure Services	June 2004

Target group:

Youth

Definition

In this report young people are defined as those residents between 12 and 24 years of age.

Population profile

Prevalence of young people in Rockdale

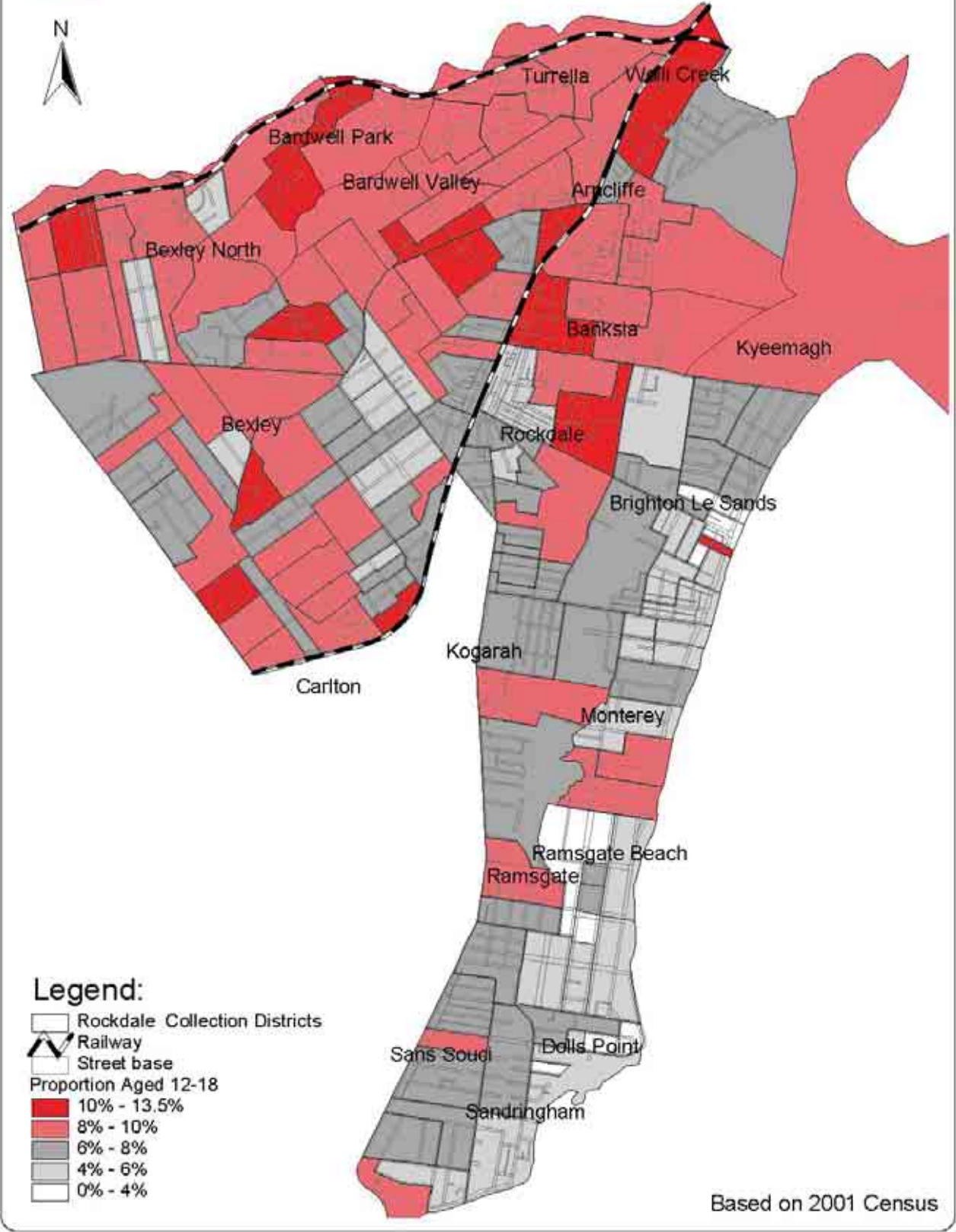
In 2001, according to Census results, there were 13,800 Rockdale City residents in the 12 to 24 year old age group, which represented just under 16% of the total Rockdale population. As will be discussed below, a high proportion of young residents are also from CALD backgrounds. Young people's needs are also affected by: gender; employment; access to, and information about, services; and levels of education.

Gaining a detailed understanding of this significant part of the Rockdale community is important for understanding how best to service and reach young residents. The equitable distribution of resources is important if all residents are to feel part of the Rockdale community. There is typically a significant degree of alienation among young people in both urban and rural areas in Australia which impacts, among other things, upon social harmony, and perceptions of safety for both young and older community members. It is therefore important that young people in Rockdale feel part of the local community, and that their needs are addressed by Council.



Proportion of people aged 12-18 years

Drawn by: M Hadley
Approved by: G Falconer
Drawn: February 2004
Scale: Not to scale

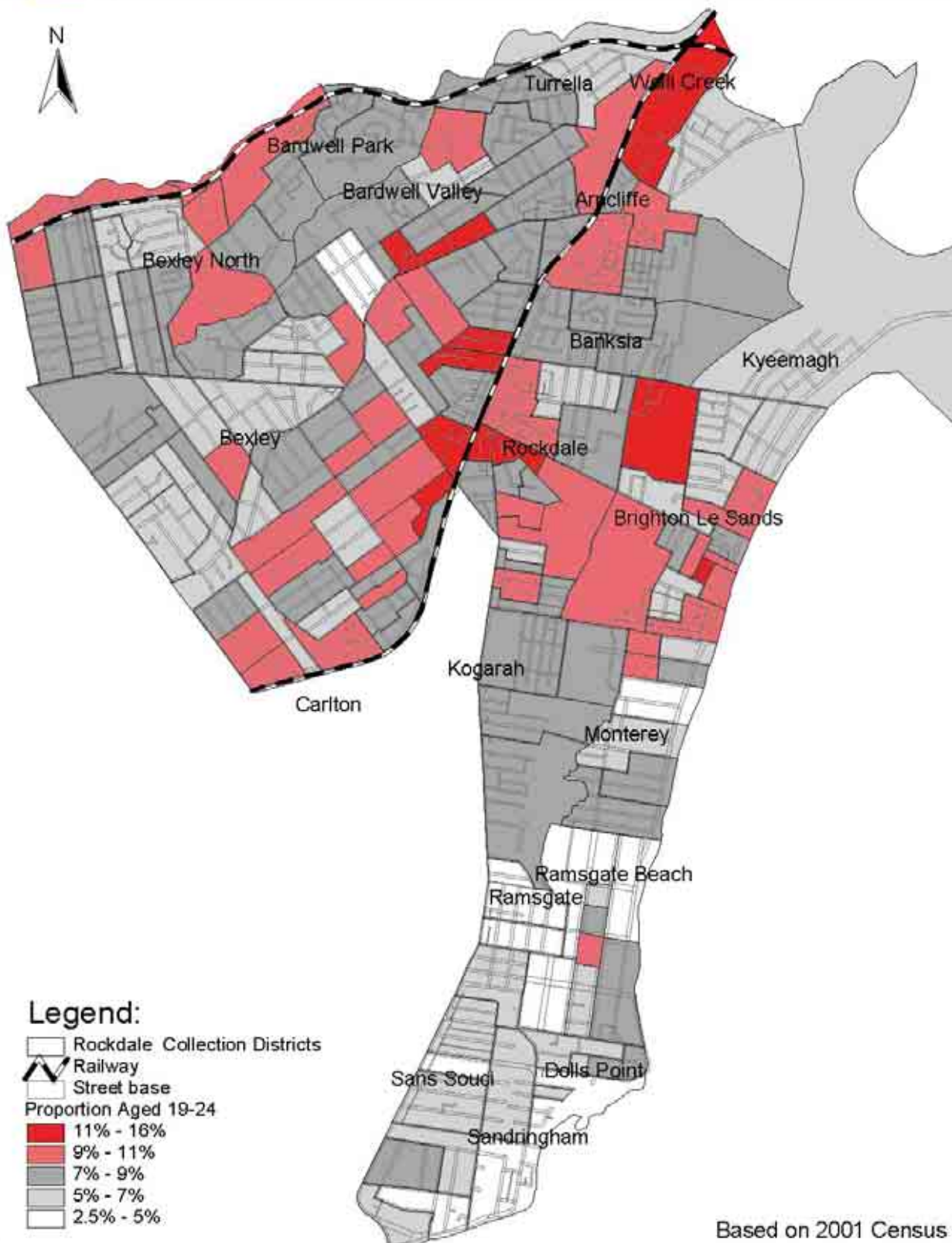


Based on 2001 Census



Proportion of people aged 19-24 years

Drawn by: M Hadley
 Approved by: G Falconer
 Drawn February 2004
 Scale: Not to scale



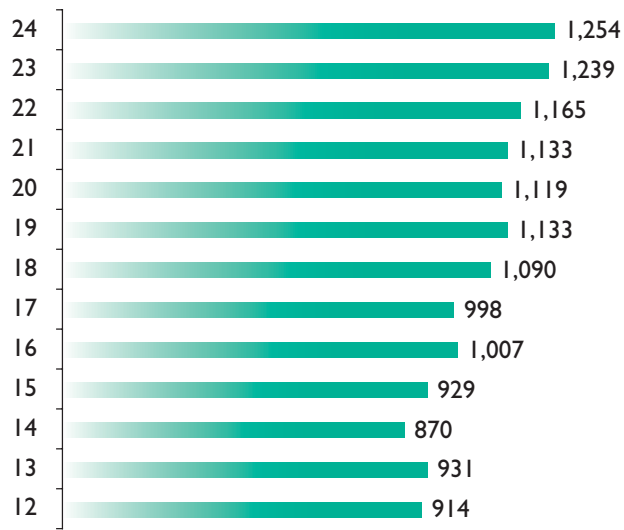
Legend:

- Rockdale Collection Districts
- Railway
- Street base
- Proportion Aged 19-24**
- 11% - 16%
- 9% - 11%
- 7% - 9%
- 5% - 7%
- 2.5% - 5%

Based on 2001 Census

Age distribution

Youth population by age, 2001

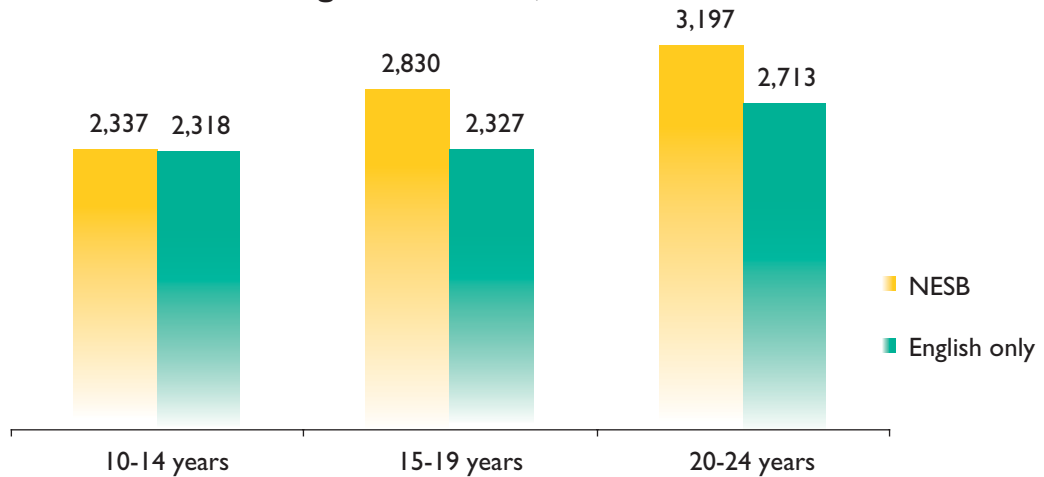


Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

As the above graph demonstrates, in 2001, 42% of Rockdale's young people were between 20 and 24 years of age (5,910 residents) and 37% were between 15 and 19 years of age (5,157 residents).

Youth and CALD

Age distribution, 2001

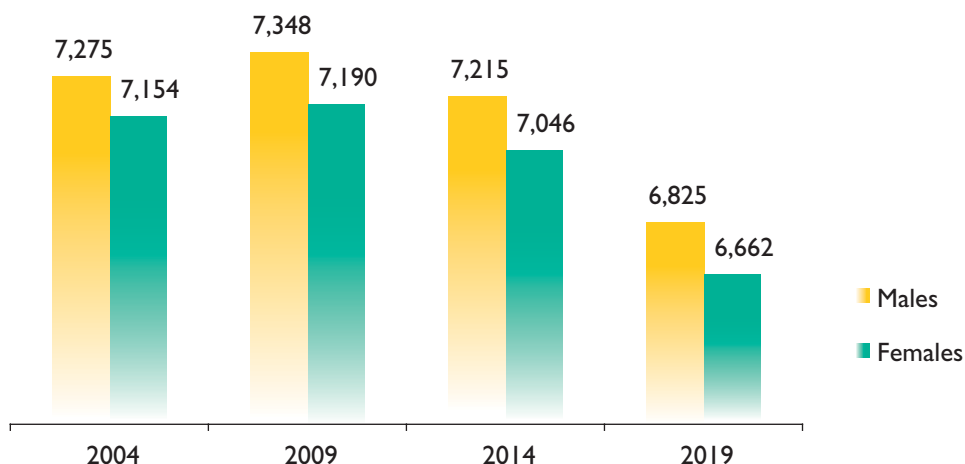


Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

53% of residents (8,364) aged between 10 years and 24 years of age come from a CALD background in Rockdale.

Population projections

Population projections, ages 12 - 24 years

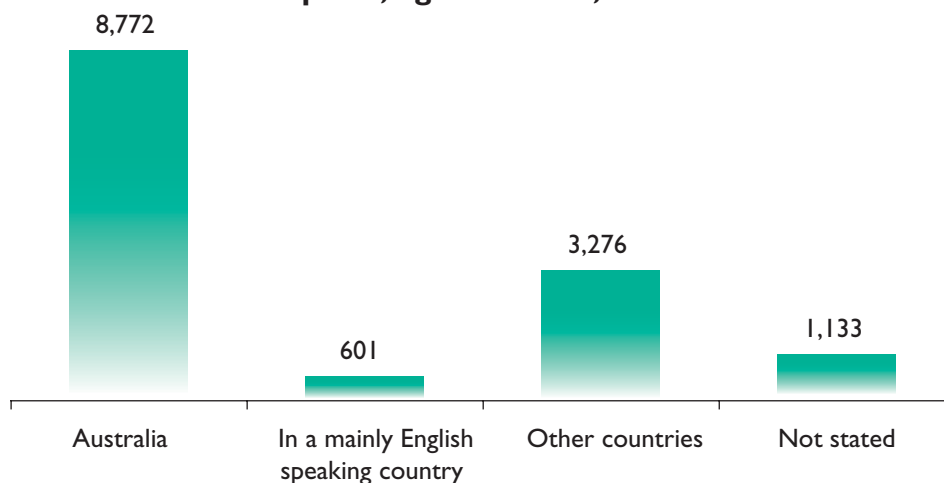


Source: ABS, 2002, Rockdale Community Profile.

Population projections until 2021 indicate an increase in the number of Rockdale residents aged between 10 and 24 years of age, to around 18,000 residents.

Place of birth

Birthplace, ages 12 to 24, 2001



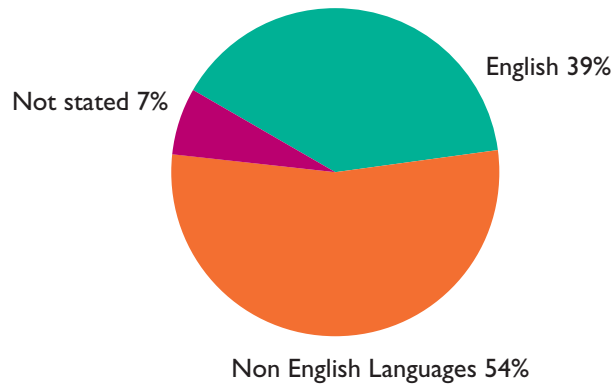
Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

24% of Rockdale's young people were born in a country where English is not the main language, 64% were born in Australia. Of overseas born young people China, New Zealand, Lebanon and Hong Kong were the most frequent birthplaces.¹⁰ In addition, more than half of the Australian-born Rockdale youth had parents who were both born overseas.

¹⁰ ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

Language spoken at home

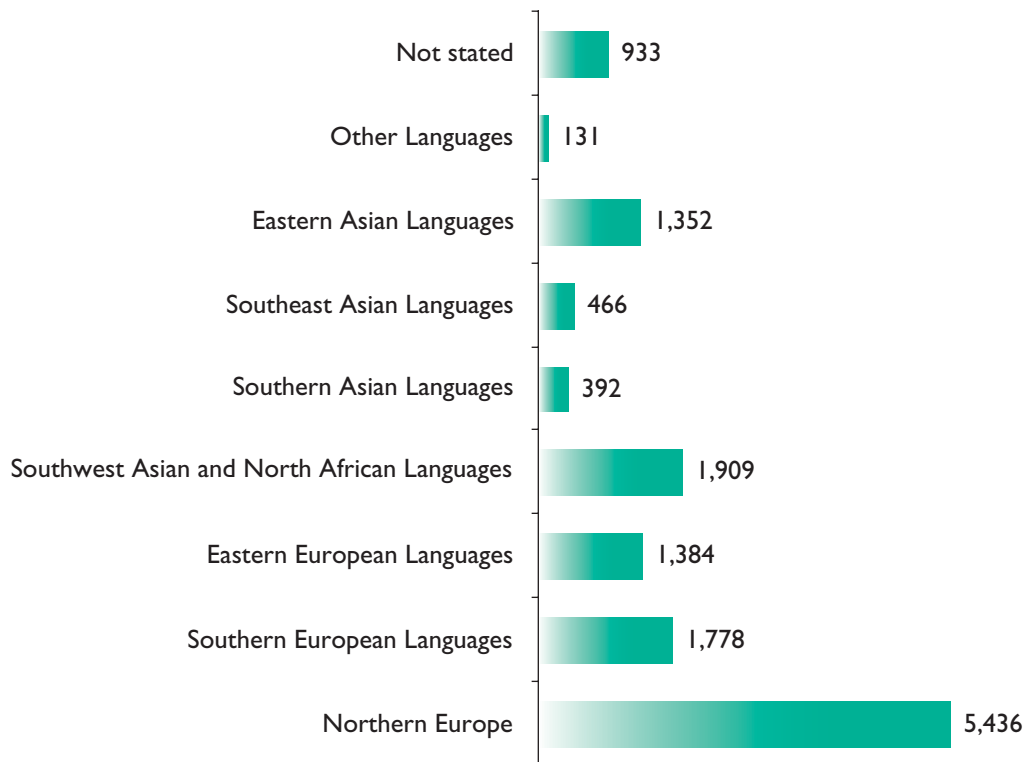
Languages spoken at home by Rockdale youth



Source: ABS, 2001 Population of Census and Housing.

Almost 7,500 residents between 12 and 24 years of age speak languages other than English in their homes.

Youth NESB, 2001



2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Rockdale's young people speak languages from all over the world: 39% speak languages from Northern Europe (except for a small number these are all English speakers); 23% speak other European languages (such as Greek and Spanish); 16% speak languages from Eastern, Southeastern and Southern Asia (for example Mandarin and Cantonese); and 14% speak languages from Southwest Asia (for example Arabic), and North Africa.

The most commonly spoken languages were, in order: English, Arabic, Chinese languages (Mandarin and Cantonese), Greek and Macedonian.¹¹

¹¹ ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

Youth and family income

The youth age group spans the transition periods between school and work, and a time, generally speaking, of growing independence. Residents in this age group are, for the most part, still dependent on family income, particularly for those aged 12 to 18 years. Those aged 19 to 24 may be characterised by growing incomes and independence but, relative to other age groups, their income is still lower, and unemployment higher. Young residents are among those in our community with the least resources and this situation is compounded when family resources are also low.

A total of 416 families with children and young people had a weekly income of less than \$600 in 2001, just over 20% of all families with children. In addition, almost one in five Rockdale families with children and young people are single parent families, which typically have lower incomes.¹² Also, one in four families with children and youth in Rockdale City had both parents, or if a single parent family the only parent, not employed¹³. This statistical data indicates that a significant proportion of Rockdale's young people are likely to have little access to family income and may be experiencing significant levels of poverty within the family.

Youth Income 2001



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

The incomes of young people are also the lowest for any age group in Rockdale. Youth income is impacted by such things as: entry-level work conditions; the increasing casualisation of the labour force; youth award wages; juggling work and study; and a lack of experience and qualifications. Across Rockdale City, 17% of young people were attending university or other post-secondary education.¹⁴ As can be seen, 20 to 24 year olds have higher levels of income than 15 to 19 year olds, where one in three residents in this age group have nil income.

In 2001, youth unemployment levels were significantly higher than for the total population. For the 15 to 19 year old age group, 13.8% of the labour force were unemployed in 2001. For the 20 to 24 year old group, 9.3% were unemployed at that time. For Rockdale's total labour force unemployment was at 6.3%.¹⁵ Youth unemployment in Rockdale is also higher than for both the St George region and the Sydney Metropolitan Area.¹⁶

¹² ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

¹⁵ ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

¹³ ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

¹⁶ ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

¹⁴ ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

Population summary

When considering how best to service Rockdale's youth needs, the following demographic points are important to remember:

- There were 13,800 residents in Rockdale between 12 and 24 years of age in 2001.
- A majority of Rockdale's young people were born in Australia, although the majority of this group had parents who were not born in Australia.
- One in four of Rockdale's young people were born in a predominantly non-English speaking country.
- A majority of Rockdale youth come from NES backgrounds, while 39% speak only English at home.
- Rockdale's young people speak languages from many parts of the world, with the most frequently spoken languages being English, Arabic, Chinese languages, Greek and Macedonian.
- Local young people have higher unemployment relative to other age groups, and lower income.
- Both a lack of resources, and poverty, are likely to affect a significant proportion of young people.

Council's Role

Council plays an important role in the support, provision and facilitation of services and facilities relevant to youth. This includes its extensive role in providing public infrastructure such as parks and playgrounds, a junior library, transport planning, land use planning, recreation planning and advocacy in areas of concern to young people.

In addition, Council is also involved in planning, developing and providing community services, usually in partnership with community organisations and government. Council is an active member of the St George Youth Workers Network, and currently provides a facility in Bay Street that houses a number

of local youth and family projects. Council has also funded a number of projects for young people through its Community Development Grant Program.

How Youth Issues in the Area have been identified

Issues concerning Rockdale youth have been identified in the following ways:

- "South East Sydney: Better Futures Youth Regional Plan". Workshops held in June 2003 (SES, 2003).
- "Girl Power: Social Action & Access Project", May 2002. Participation of 120 girls under 18 years (GP, 2002).
- "Migrant Issues and Needs In Rockdale", 2002. Fadilla Masri (Masri, 2002).
- "Gangs, Crime, and Community Safety: Perceptions and Experiences in Multicultural Sydney", September 2002. Partnership project with UTS and Council (UTS, 2002).
- "Boys and Young Men Violence Prevention Project", 2002. St George Youth Workers Network (StGYWN, 2002).
- "Creating Better Communities: Social Capital Creation in four Communities", Sydney Uni ARC/Benevolent Society (Hampshire, A and Healy, K, 2002).
- "Reving Around Rockdale Report", 2001, Debbie Osgood. 40 auto industry professionals and 50 car enthusiasts were consulted in this report (Osgood, 2001).
- "Youth Family Support Project Needs Assessment", 2001, Department of Community Services (DOCS, 2001).
- "Arabic Speaking Youth Report", 2001, Ghada Hijazi. 300 students, 200 parents and 50 teachers were consulted in this report (Hijazi, 2001).
- "Skate Park Research Study", 2001, Rebecca Searle (Searle, 2001).
- "Machismo - Alternative Action for Boys, 2000 – 2001". 500 male students 11 to 19 years participated in this program (MAAB, 2000).

- “Rockdale City Community Safety Summit”, 2000. 100 participants took part in the summit (RCCSS, 2000).
- “Perceptions of Community Safety”, 1999, Ari Motek. Consultation with 167 residents in 8 focus groups informed this report (Motek, 1999).
- “Up Front Forum – Youth Week 1998”. 30 local young people attended a five-day training course and delivered a presentation to local, state and federal representatives (YW, 1999).
- “The Youth Recreation Plan” 1998, Debbie Osgood. 200 young people and 150 parents were consulted in the production of this Rockdale Council report (Osgood, 1998).
- “Police and Community Training Project”, 1998 – 2000. This 30-month project aimed at improving relations between local police and youth. 400 students and 250 adults participated (PCTP, 2000).
- “Graffiti Solutions Project”, Rockdale, 1998, Debbie Osgood (Osgood, 1998b).
- St George Youth Network monthly meetings and project consultations.

in other areas such as Arncliffe (with staff and funded programs).

The need for community awareness of youth needs was noted, in particular for NESB youth.¹⁸ There also needed to be acceptance from all residents, in particular from older generations, that young people had a right to access public places.

There was an expressed need for recreational facilities such as a skate park,¹⁹ more green space available for soccer (which is hugely popular) and a ‘hang out’ area for social gatherings. There was a need for free, structured recreational opportunities, which correlates to the lack of resources this age group typically experiences.

Ethnically specific youth services are also required in Rockdale where 55% of young people come from an NES background. Bilingual youth workers are needed, in particular for Arabic speaking youth,²⁰ which is the biggest single language group of children and young people in Rockdale.²¹ Culturally appropriate recreational opportunities are also needed, such as a women-only swimming facility and/or women-only hours of operation at pools. Services and programs need to consider CALD groups, and consult with them, at the design stage. For example, planning is needed to help girls access structured recreational programs, which may otherwise be designated off limits by parents. Programs offering homework help may be more appropriate for particular cultural groups, than social activities.

Implications: One way community harmony is created is through a sense of inclusiveness. Growing up in an inclusive community, where public resources are available to be used by all, creates a strong community and a sense of connectedness. Alienation of young people, and negative feelings toward youth, are common in Australia. One way to enhance community belonging is to ensure services reach young people, including youth from CALD backgrounds, for this group has fewer resources than other age groups.

Supporting CALD young people flows on to benefit their extended families, especially by informing others how to access services and resources.

Discussion of Youth issues

Facilities and services

The availability of facilities and services, and youth access to services, were frequently mentioned concerns in Rockdale consultations with young people, and youth services workers. All research projects found that St George is under resourced in state youth services funding, compared to other parts of Sydney.¹⁷ Many reports expressed the need for additional funding, and upgrading of facilities, such as a better-resourced youth centre, and youth facilities

¹⁷ Osgood, 2001.

¹⁸ Hijazi, 2001.

¹⁹ Searle, 2001.

²⁰ Hijazi, 2001.

²¹ ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

Safety

Various safety issues were reported by Rockdale's youth, including the fact that young people can be victims of crime but rarely report incidents. They are perceived more often as being the perpetrators of crime despite statistical evidence to the contrary.

The safety of young women and girls in public space, and when using public transport, was a concern.²² Road safety, in particular the road safety of non-motorists, was also reported.

Sexual stereotypes were also seen as a safety issue and there was an expressed need for self defence classes. There was a need for girls-only recreation opportunities because it was felt that boys take over the venue in shared areas.

Domestic and family violence was also reported, in a number of consultations, as a major issue.²³ Violence in schools, bullying for example, was also a concern and according to one report was in some cases related to domestic violence in the home²⁴ and also connected to truancy from school.

Racial stereotypes were also reported as a safety factor and the need for cultural and community harmony was suggested.

Implications: A lack of safety, or perceived safety, has a large impact on community life, including commercial, civic and cultural life. It is important that a safe environment be created for all, and that individuals who are dealing with violence in either family or institutional settings are supported by the community.

Transport

Problems with transport also emerged as an issue through consultations. Young people felt transport in Rockdale was unreliable, dirty and unsafe. A particular concern was for school transport, both private and public, where a regional approach across neighbouring LGAs was needed to include the journeys high school students make. There was also an issue for school children when accessing buses after school hours, for example, on the way home from extra curricula activities (such as sport or extra classes). They reported finding drivers who would not stop for them, or accept free school bus passes.

Alternative transport forms were also used by school children, including cycling, walking and skateboard riding, and these choices need to be included in environmental and transport planning. Young people strongly voiced the need for safe, city wide, alternative transport such as separate cycle ways, skate parks and pedestrian priority areas.

Transport is a particular issue for high school students because there are relatively long distances between young peoples' family homes and the public high schools that they attend, as well as transport gaps. The bulk of Rockdale's increasing population of adolescents and children is concentrated in the most northern suburb of Arncliffe. This suburb also has the highest proportion of non-English speaking families.

While the area is well served by public primary schools the transition to secondary education is fraught with transport, cultural, social, economic and inter-generational difficulties.

The majority of young Arncliffe males attend Hurstville Boys High, which is seven railway stations away from their homes. Moorefield Girls High School at Kogarah attracts the majority of young females who reside in Arncliffe.

Implications: Transport is a crucial factor in access of services, in particular for young people who are big users of public transport, particularly on weekends and outside of peak times. Age and income factors mean that young people are often exclusively reliant on public transport to be able to access services. A lack of transport between young people and essential services such as schools places financial strain on families and can put students' safety at risk.

Youth image

Concerns were also raised about the impact of negative youth images upon young Rockdale residents and the community as a whole. For example, young people tended to be stereotyped as potential criminals rather than citizens, although crime rates for youth were in fact lower than for the population as a whole.²⁵ Stereotypes included those directed at young drivers and car enthusiasts, and Arabic speaking youth in Rockdale.

²² GP 2001.

²³ GP 2001; Osgood, 2001.

²⁴ MAAB, 2001.

²⁵ There were only 56 court appearances for residents aged 10 to 17 years of age in 1999/2000.

Focusing on negatives rather than positives was also reflected in state and federal government funding mechanisms by often exclusively targeting "youth at risk" rather than meeting the mainstream life stage needs of young people, for example through safe and fun programs for young people to socialise, relax, etc.²⁶

Teenagers believed that older age groups were the most likely to perpetuate racial and generational stereotypes and that younger people were more understanding, accepting and proud of their community's cultural diversity.²⁷

Implications: A negative youth image impacts on employment and educational outcomes, community harmony, and youth self esteem. It has social, economic and emotional costs.

Employment and education

A lack of access to educational opportunities is a major issue for young people and their families in Rockdale City, and has been reported in all consultations conducted in the last few years. Around one in five young people in Rockdale had a post school qualification in 2001, however, a lower proportion of young people were qualified at the bachelor level than in St George and the Sydney Metropolitan Area.²⁸

Problems with education included truancy, bullying, and racism in schools, communication difficulties between parents and schools, and the expense of continuing education. In addition, it has been claimed many teachers have little understanding of cultures outside their own experience, and prejudice and targeting was felt to occur, in particular toward Arabic speaking and South Pacific Islander youth. Many South Pacific Islanders and Arabic speakers felt that most teachers did not respect their culture nor understand economic and other access problems, migrant families endured. This observation has statistical validity when we consider that CALD residents have lower incomes than non-CALD residents (see CALD chapter).

A number of studies have also reported a lack of job satisfaction for a significant number of NESB youth (for example, Spanish and Macedonian youth, in the Macedonian Youth Report, 1998) and that, generally, males tended to experience greater pressure to continue further study than females.²⁹ Arabic speaking young people felt discriminated against in terms of employment, and experienced much higher levels of unemployment. In 2001 the unemployment rate for Lebanese born people was 16.5% in Rockdale, while for all residents it was only 6.3%.³⁰

Implications: Employment and education outcomes have a huge impact on youths' futures and settlement in Australia, and on future generations. Strategies to address educational and employment difficulties experienced by local youth would increase local family income, increase social harmony and have flow-on income benefits.

Communicating with Young People

30% of Rockdale City's population is under 24 years old, and the majority median group is made up of their parents. Planning for the provision of services for young people and their families' needs should therefore be a City priority. Well-informed planning requires that social groups are able to readily input and access feedback throughout the consultation process.

The extent to which young people can and will make positive contributions is a product of how much respect, opportunity and support they receive from the community in which they live.

²⁶ YW, 1998.

²⁷ YW, 1998.

²⁸ ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

²⁹ Masri, 2002.

³⁰ ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

Recommended Actions

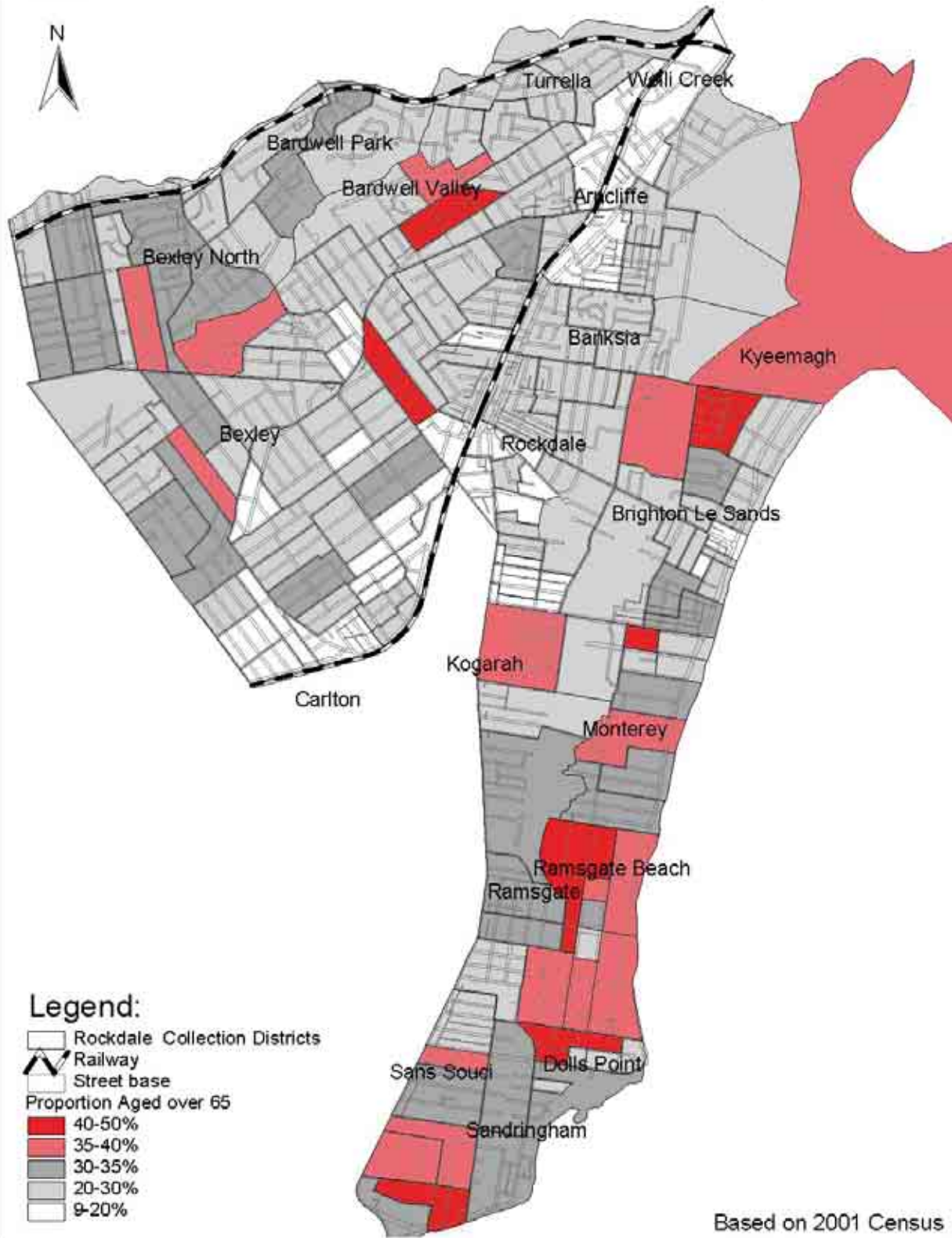
Issue	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
1: Facilities and Services for young people, youth and family services	1.1 Ensure that youth and family service facilities are included in the planning of the City.	MUP	Ongoing
	1.2 Ensure that major residential developments provide safe, user friendly, recreational and social areas for young people.	MUP	Ongoing
	1.3 Centrally locate youth and family facilities as close as possible to public transport interchanges, sports fields and / or libraries to optimise the access of users.	MCEP	Ongoing
	1.4 Support the planning, development, establishment and continued improvement of community services targeting young people in Rockdale.	CSP	Ongoing
	1.5 Continue to provide and maintain designated youth sites or facilities for both structured and unstructured leisure activities.	MLS, MCEP	Ongoing
	1.6 Provide a skate park as part of the redevelopment of Bicentennial Park.	MLS	2005
2: Communication with young people	2.1 When research and studies involve City planning consultation, specifications need to include that young people and youth advocates be directly consulted.	All staff engaging consultants	Ongoing
	2.2 Directly engage young people in communication, representation and participation in decision-making.	CSP	Ongoing
	2.3 Develop a communication strategy that ensures accessibility, relevance and inclusiveness for young people. e.g.- > website pages/forums > encourage Council, school and student joint projects > target parents through council website > promote local events, services and activities to young people.	EM	
	2.4 Promote inclusiveness and improve student understanding of Local Government, community ownership, planning processes, participation, civics, citizenship and responsibilities.	EM, PRM	
	2.5 Further develop partnership projects between Council and local schools.	CSP, EP, EPO	Ongoing
	2.6 Encourage and train young people to participate in consultative processes.	CSP	December 2004
	2.7 Include above recommendations in Council's Communication Strategy.		

3: Employment and training	3.1 Participate in Work Experience, Student Placement and Graduate Employment schemes.	MHR	Ongoing
	3.2 Provide community development expertise to acquire, establish and support non-profit vocational programs for young people.	CSP	Ongoing
	3.3 Advocate to state and federal government the training and employment needs of local young people. Currently, non-academic, disadvantaged school leavers require priority resources.	CSP	Ongoing.
4: Transport	4.1 Plan for improving and promoting the walking and cycling environment.	MTIS	Ongoing
	4.2 Advocate and apply for funding resources to increase the number and extent of separated cycle ways in the City.	MTIS, MTS	Ongoing
	4.3 Advocate for equitable and fair access to public & private transport, e.g. transport providers paid on evidenced service delivery.	MTIS	Ongoing
	4.4 Promote compulsory and proper use of seat belts and child restraints.	RSO	Ongoing
5. Safety	5.1 Participate in relevant state and federal campaigns that promote community harmony and violence prevention.	CDO, CSP	Ongoing
	5.2 Deliver relevant and accessible Road Safety education to young people.	RSO	Ongoing
	5.3 Increase integrated school, family and community based support to young people who are negotiating the transition from primary to high school.	CSP	Ongoing
	5.4 Support the development of projects educating young people in protective behaviour.	CSP, MCES	Ongoing
	5.5 Ensure that all Council staff working with children have undergone the "Working With Children Check".	MHR	Ongoing
	5.6 Ensure that the requirement to undertake the "Working With Children Check" is stated in the Essential Criteria of the position's Job Description and any relevant advertisement for recruitment.	MHR	Ongoing
6: Youth Image	6.1 Support local projects promoting a positive image of young people.	CSP	Ongoing



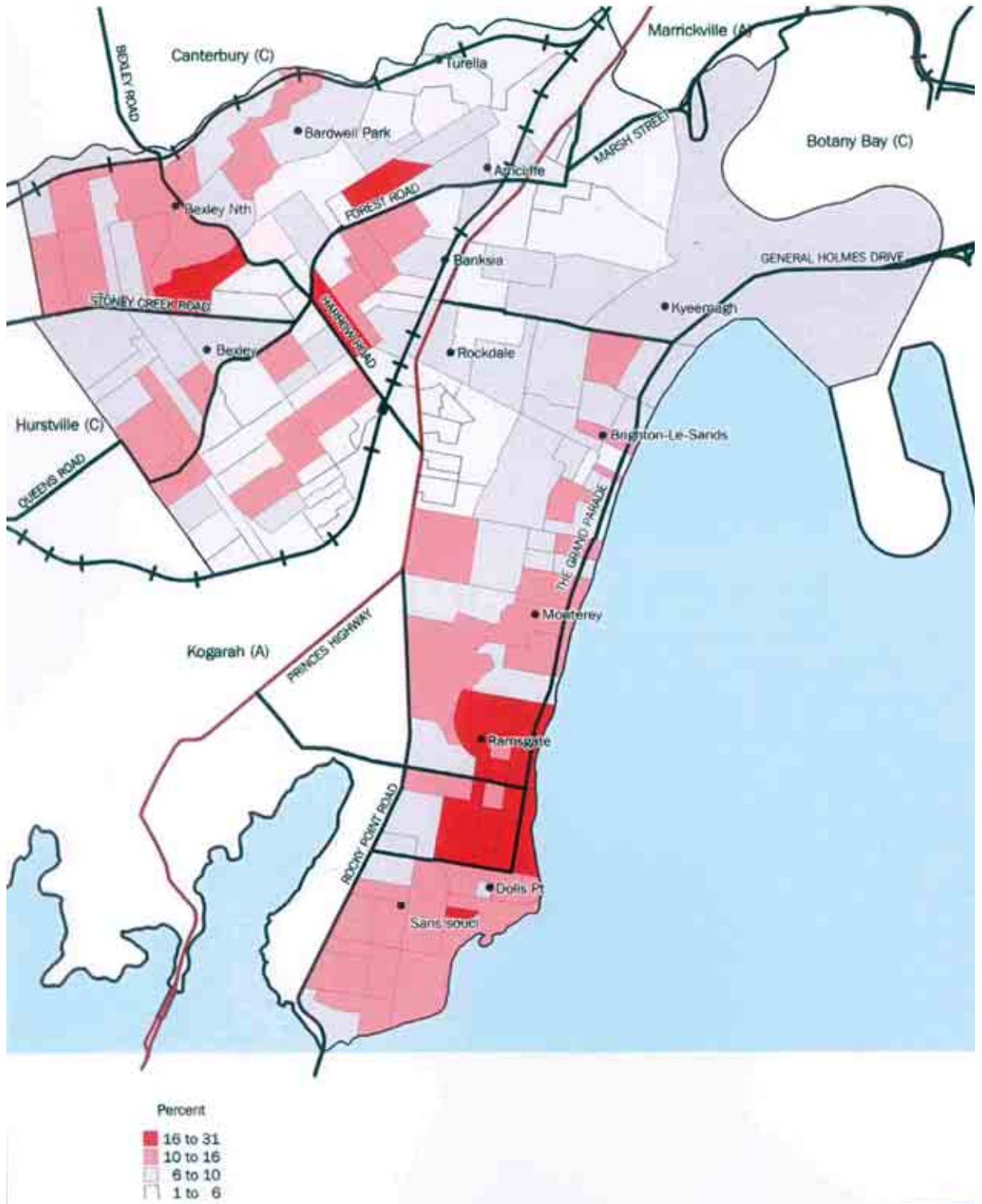
Proportion of people aged 65 or over

Drawn by: M Hadley
 Approved by: G Falconer
 Drawn: February 2004
 Scale: Not to scale





Map 7 - Persons aged 75 years and over As a percentage of total population



Rockdale City, like other parts of Australia, has an increasingly aging population. However, ABS estimates indicate that in the future the elderly population in Rockdale will increase at a greater rate than other parts of Sydney.³¹ Over the 10 years to 2001 the total aged population in Rockdale has increased in number, as the table below demonstrates.

Estimated residential population	1991		1996		2001	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Ages 55 to 64	8,610	9.8	8,480	9.5	9,134	9.9
Ages 65 to 74	8,110	9.2	7,560	8.5	7,059	7.6
Ages 75 and over	6,360	7.2	6,900	7.8	7,533	8.1
Total	23,080	26.2	22,940	25.8	23,726	25.6

Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

A distinctive feature of Rockdale's older population is its cultural diversity. Understanding the diversity of the aged population is important as each different CALD group has particular needs, both in terms of service requirements and in their ability to access services, which are in turn affected by age, gender, socio-economic status, country of birth, English language proficiency, length of time in Australia, available family support, understanding of the Australian system, and experiences brought with them from country of origin, or handed down to subsequent generations in Australia.

Gaining a detailed understanding of this part of our community is therefore crucial in order to be able to provide services for all residents, to promote a safe, healthy and accessible lifestyle for the whole community, and to distribute resources with regard to equity.

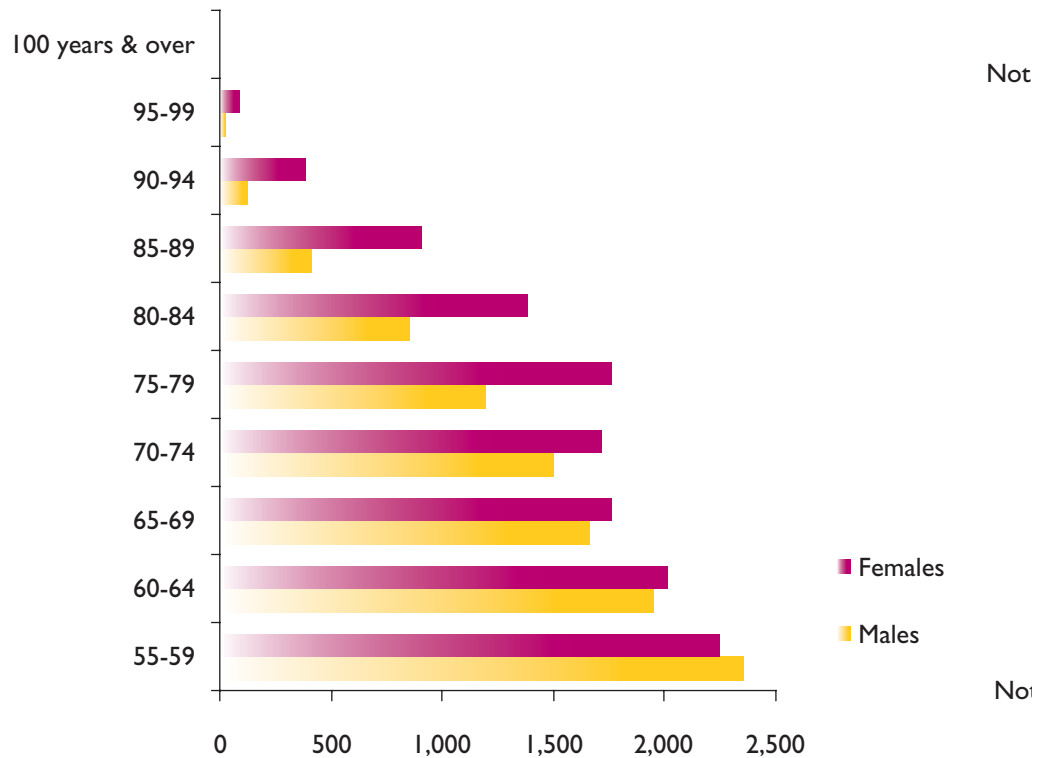
Within Rockdale City the suburbs of Sans Souci, Ramsgate, Dolls Point and Sandringham had the highest concentrations of residents aged 65 years and above in 2001. In these suburbs this age group represented 23.4% of the population. The suburbs of Brighton-le-Sands, Monterey, Kyeemagh, Bexley North and Kingsgrove also had higher proportions of residents in the 65 years and over age group than other parts of the City.³²

³¹ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

³²ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

Age distribution of older residents

Older people by age, 2001



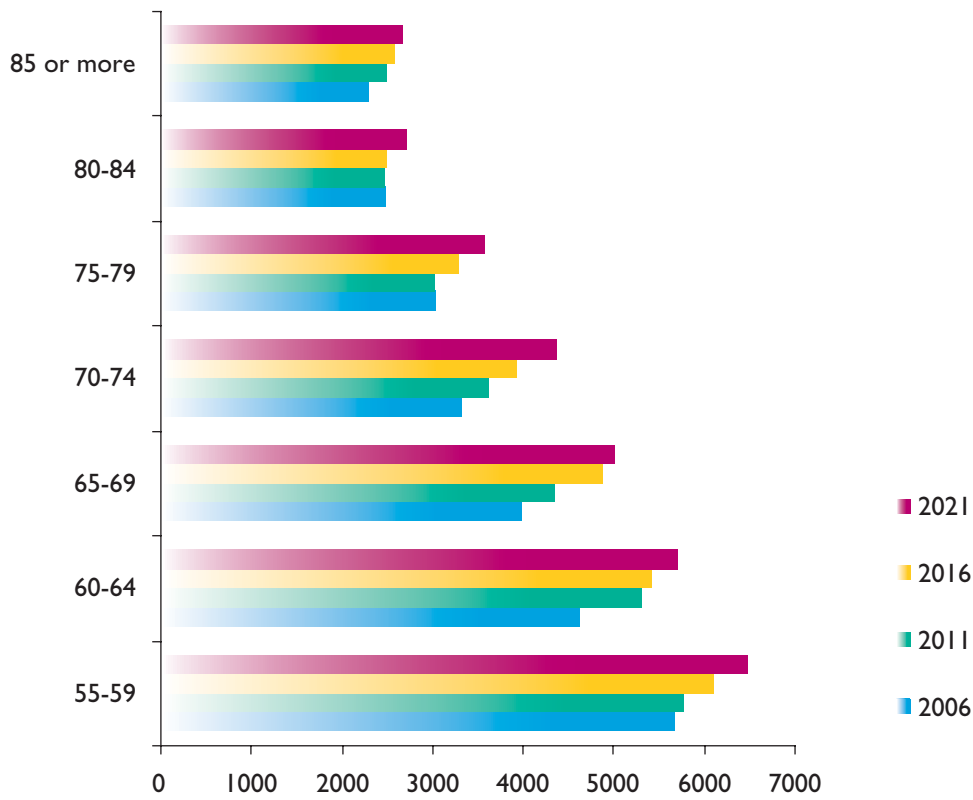
Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2001.

The above graph represents residents in Rockdale, 55 years and over, in 2001. This age group represented 26% of the total Rockdale population, residents 65 years and over accounted for 16% of the total population.

In 2001 there were 10,094 men in the 55 and over age bracket (5,791, 65 years and over) and 12,287 women (8,021, 65 years and over). Women made up 55% of all residents aged 55 years and over, men 45%.

Population projections

Population projections Older people

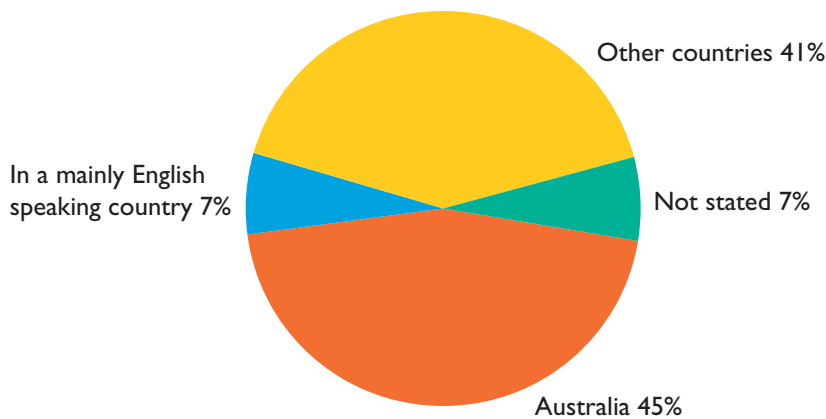


Source: ABS, 2001 Community Profile.

According to projections from ABS, residents aged 55 years and over will increase by 7,000 in 2021, to 30,500. Women will be a majority in all age groups.

Country of birth

Birthplace - older people



Source: ABS, 2002 Rockdale Regional Profile.

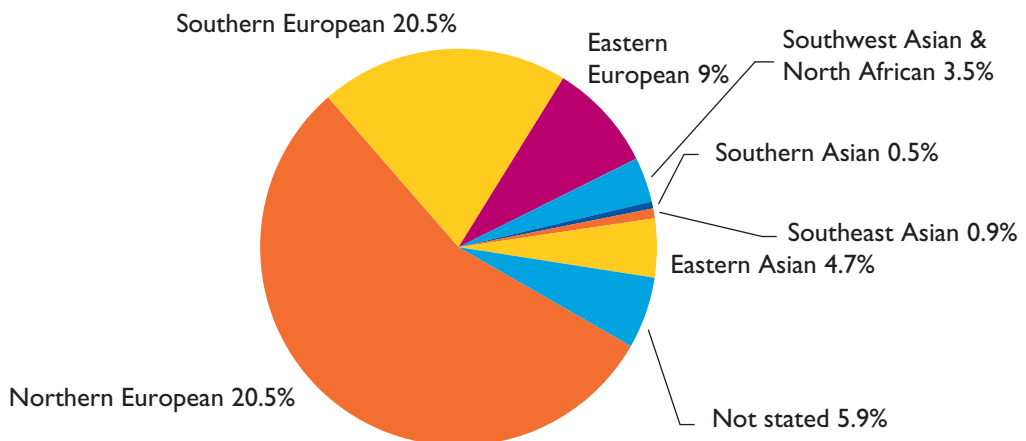
More people (55 years and over) were born overseas in Rockdale, than those born in Australia. 41% were born in NES countries, or 4,600 residents. This number is likely to be higher as it is likely that a significant proportion of residents who did not state their country of birth in the 2001 Census (7% of all older people) would also have been born in an NES country. The table below gives the main countries of birth for older Rockdale residents, in descending order of number of residents.

Country of birth	55-64 years	65 – 74 years	75 and over	Total
Australia	2,880	2,703	4,497	10,080
Greece	1,116	793	241	2,150
Macedonia	653	386	163	1,202
United Kingdom	415	226	463	1,104
Italy	351	420	274	1,045
China	294	313	190	797
Egypt	215	196	126	537
Lebanon	246	115	56	417
New Zealand	124	48	43	215

Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

Language spoken at home

Language spoken at home older people 2001

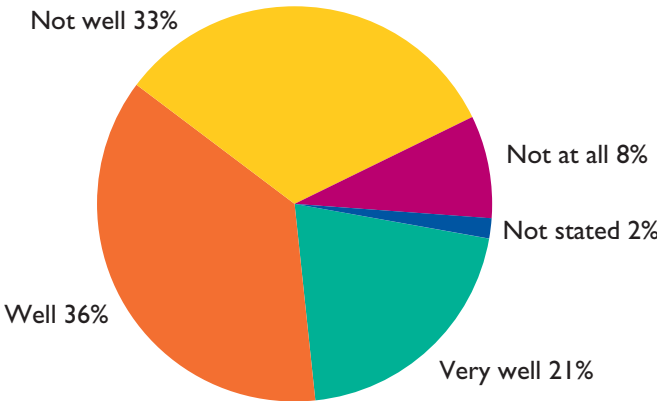


Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

Around 40% of residents aged 55 years or over (or 8,700 residents) come from an NESB. After Northern European languages (including English), languages from Southern Europe (for example Italian, Greek and Spanish) are most frequently spoken at home by seniors.

English Language Proficiency

NESB older people - English proficiency

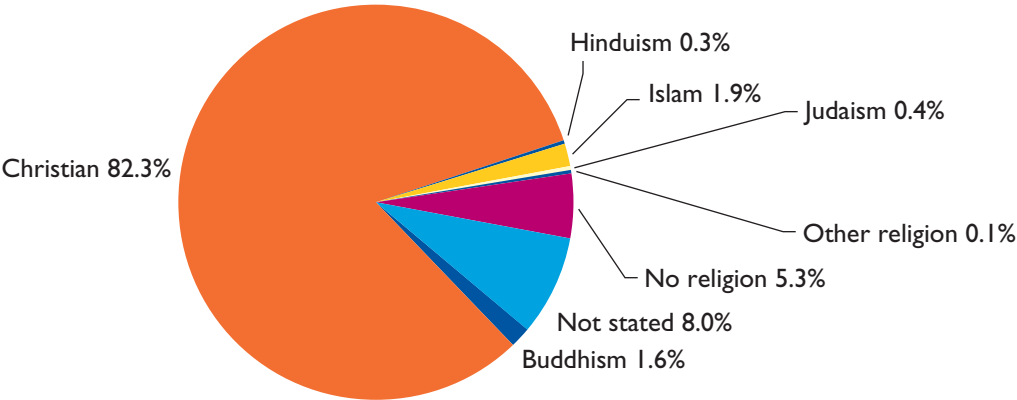


Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

A total of 3,622 residents (41%) over the age of 55 do not speak English at all, or do not speak it well. 60% of these residents (2,140) are female.

Religion

Religion - older residents 2001

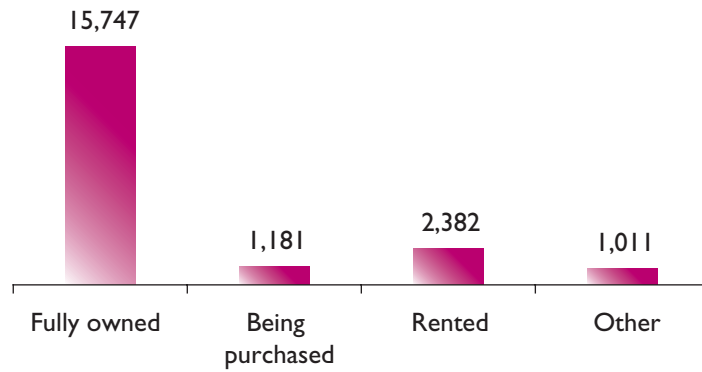


Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

Residents aged 55 years and over in Rockdale are predominately Christian. 423 older residents are Islamic and 364 Buddhist.

Housing

Tenure type - older households

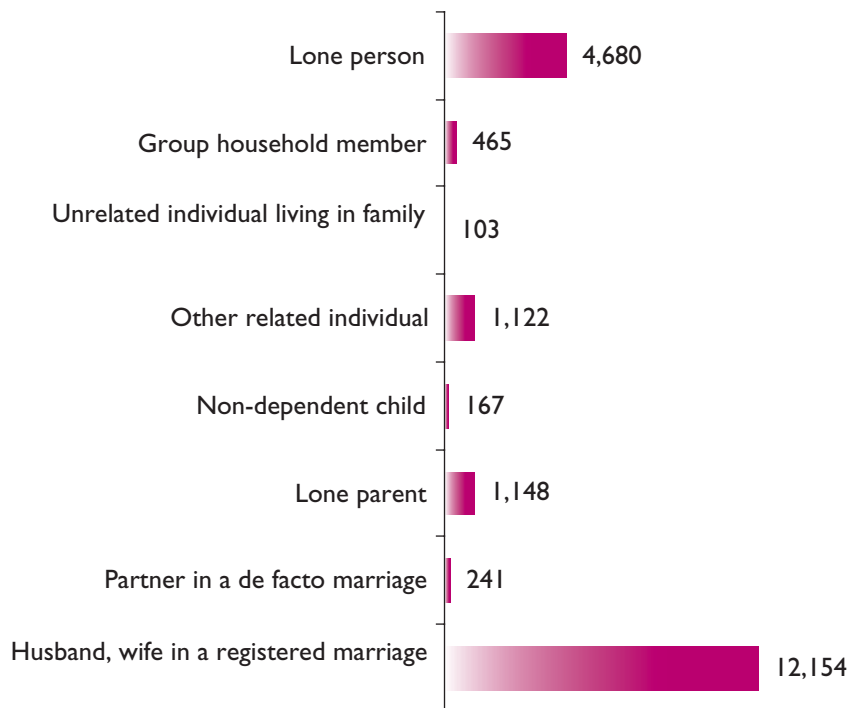


Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

The above graph indicates the tenure type of households where an older person lives. While 77% are in fully owned homes, 12% of people aged 55 years or over are renting.

Relationship in household

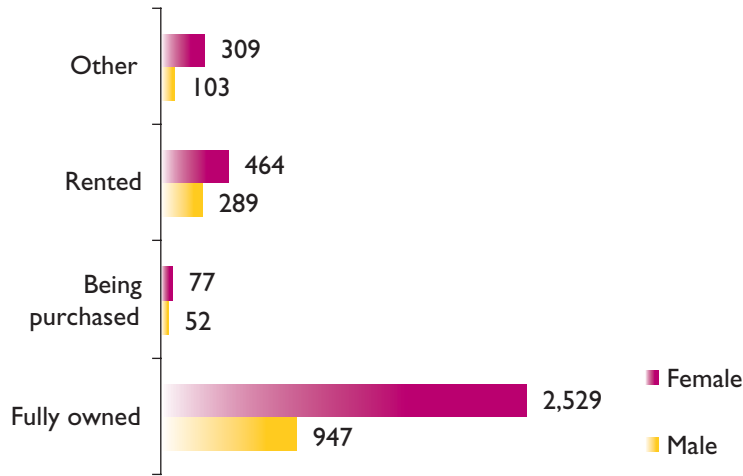
Relationship in household older people



Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

61% of residents 55 years and over live in a registered marriage while 23% live alone.

Tenure type lone person household

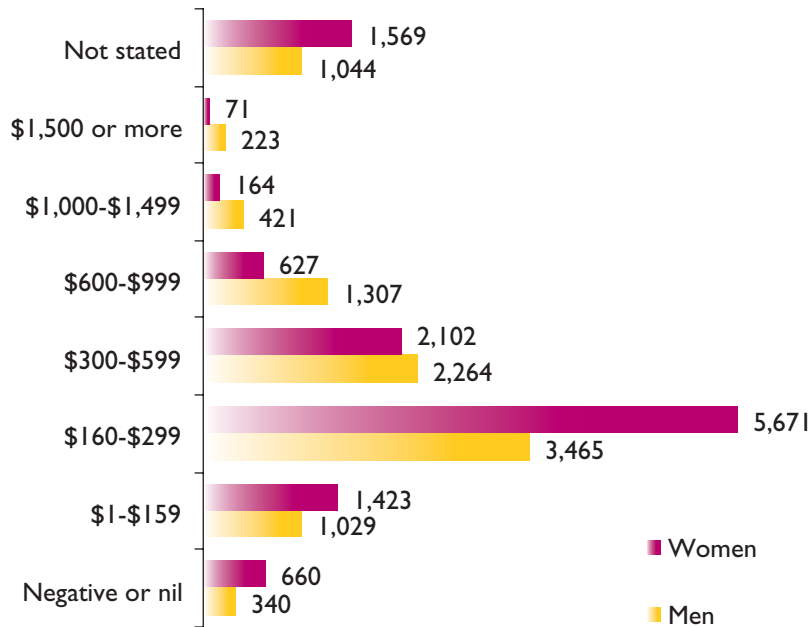


Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

71% of older residents living alone are women. While the majority of these residents aged 55 years or over live in their own fully owned home, 753 (62% women) are renting their homes.

Income

Income individuals 55 years and over 2001



Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

11% of residents 55 years and over (almost 2,500 people) earn between \$1 and \$159 a week. Another 41% earn between \$160 and \$299 (9,136 people) and 4,366 residents (20%) earn between \$300 and \$599 per week.

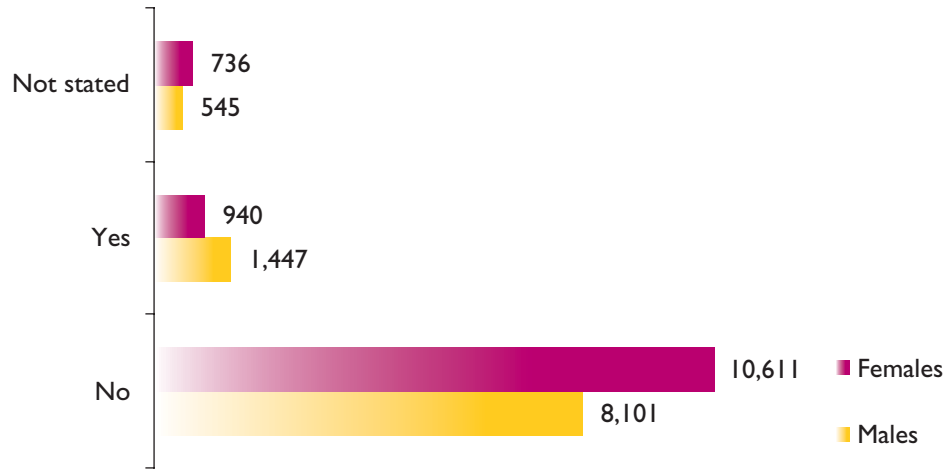
46% of women, and 34% of men earn between \$160 and \$299 per week. 12% of women and 10% of men earn between \$1 and \$159 per week.

As residents' age, incomes become lower. For example, in the 65 to 74 age group, 52% of women and 43% of men earn between \$160 and \$299 per week and 14% of men and women earn between \$1 and \$159.

For residents aged 75 years and over, 57% of women, and 48% of men earn between \$160 and \$299 per week.

Computer and Internet use

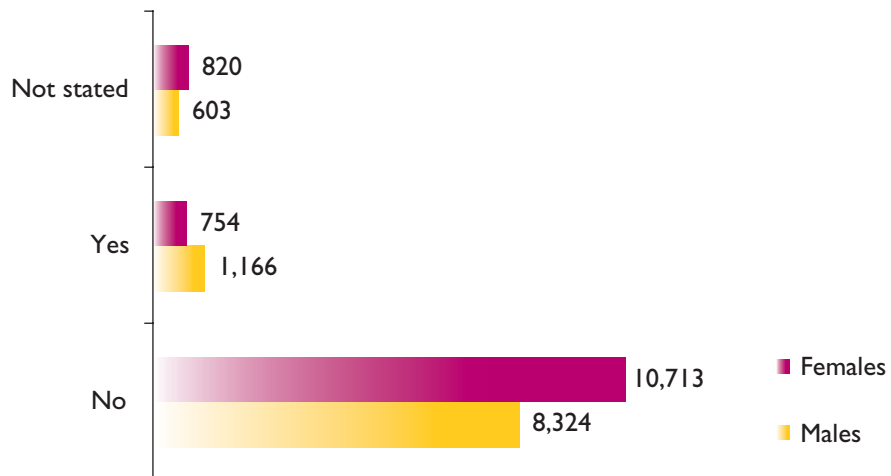
Computer use at home - older people 2001



Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

8% of women aged 55 years or over, and 14% of men, use computers at home.

Internet use - older people 2001

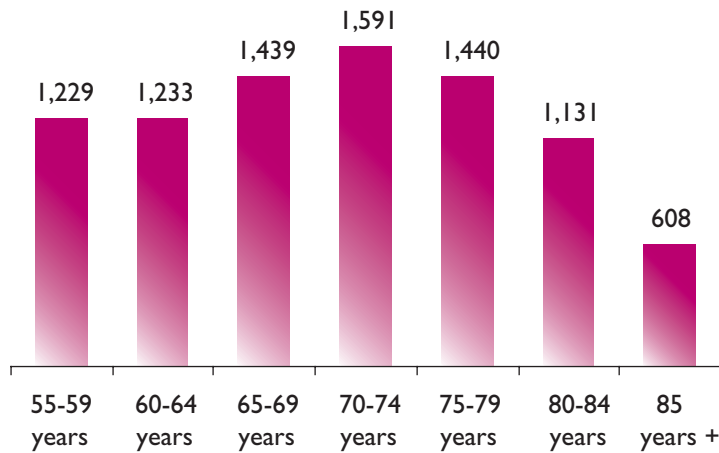


Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

Less than 2,000 residents (55 years or over) use the Internet, or 8.6% of this population group. 12% of men, and only 6% of women use the Internet.

Disability

Older people with a disability - 1998



Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

There were a total of 8,671 disabled residents among older people (55 years or over) in 1998. This represents 39% of the total population for this age group, and over half of the total number of disabled people in Rockdale. 55% or 4,733 of older disabled people are women.

Population summary

When considering how best to service older people in Rockdale City the main points that arise from an examination of demography are:

- There are more than 22,000 residents 55 years or over in Rockdale (26% of the total population), 14,000 (16% of the total population) are 65 years or over.
- Women make up 55% of all older residents, men 45%.
- Another 7,000 older people (totalling 30,500) are expected to live in Rockdale by the year 2021.
- A majority of older residents were born overseas, 41% in NES countries.
- Australia, Greece, Macedonia, the United Kingdom and Italy are the major countries of birth for older residents.
- 8,700 older residents speak a language other than English at home.
- More than 3,500 older residents do not speak English at all, or not well. 2,200 of these residents are women.
- Older residents are predominantly Christian although close to 1,000 in this age group practice non-Christian religions, including 420 Islamic residents.
- The majority of older residents own their own homes, although 2,400 are in rental accommodation.
- 4,700 older residents live alone (almost a quarter of all older people in Rockdale).
- 750 residents living alone are renting accommodation.
- 70% of those living alone are women.
- Older residents suffer declining incomes as they age. About 40% of all residents 55 years or over have weekly incomes of between \$160 and \$299. 11% have weekly incomes of between \$1 and \$159.
- Older residents in Rockdale have very low levels of computer use, and even lower levels of Internet access.
- Four out of every ten older residents is disabled. Older disabled residents represent more than half the total number of disabled people in Rockdale.

Council's Role

Council has a broad role in relation to providing facilities and services for the older population. All Council services, in particular planning in relation to urban form, recreation and transport, are extremely relevant to the older population.

In terms of direct service, Council provides a meals on wheels program and the library has a home visiting service and large print collection. Council also provides four senior citizens centres, which are utilised for recreation and leisure by a number of senior groups, and provides a rate rebate to people living in their own residence and in possession of a pensioner health benefits card. This rebate is worth up to \$245, of which the State Government contributes 55% and Council 45%.

Council has provided land for two local aged accommodation projects, and provides a community bus used frequently by older residents. In relation to services, Council is involved in planning, facilitating and supporting services for older people, often in partnership with other agencies or government departments, and is an active member of the St George Home and Community Care Forum.

Finally, Council is involved in promoting and celebrating older residents through its senior citizen week program

How issues for older people in Rockdale City have been identified

Issues affecting Rockdale's older residents have been identified in a number of ways, through reports, surveys, forums, census information, interviews with service providers, consultations with service users and inter agencies. Specifically, this has included:

- Consultations in October 2003 with CALD Older People – by the St George Migrant Resource Centre and Multicultural Aged Care Planning (MRC, 2003).
- "Recreation Needs for Older People and Migrants from NESB" for Rockdale City Council by UTS Students (UTS, 1999).

- "Perceptions of Community Safety", Ari Mottek for Rockdale City Council, 1999 (Mottek, 1999).
- "Keeping the Balance - Older Men and Healthy Ageing", NSW Committee on Ageing, Men's Health Information and Resource Centre, University of Western Sydney, 2001 (UWS, 2001).
- "Healthy Ageing Australia: Discussion", The National Strategy for an Ageing Australia, 1999 (NSAA, 1999).
- "Response to Healthy Ageing discussion paper for the National Strategy for an Ageing Australia", Council on the Ageing, 2000 (COTA, 2000).
- "Strategic Transport and Traffic Plan" Rockdale City Council, 2002 (RCC, 2002).
- "NSW Healthy Ageing Framework 1998 – 2003", 2002, Rockdale Council (RCC, 2002b).
- "Ageing Populations: Burden or opportunity", Denys Carol, Dissent, No 7, Summer 2001 – 2002 (Carol, 2001).
- "New South Wales Older People's Health Survey" NSW Public Health Bulletin Supplement, 1999 (PHBS, 1999).
- "Health Promotion Strategic Plan for the Veteran Community 2001 – 2005", 2001, State and National Offices of Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA, 2001).
- "Physical Activity for Older People in the ACT", Sport and Recreation ACT and YMCA Canberra, 2003 (SRACT, 2003).
- The DVA Health Promotion Plan, State and National Offices of Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA, 2003).
- The NSW Healthy Ageing Strategy, 2001, NSW Health (NSWH, 2001).

Discussion of local issues for older people

Healthy ageing

The Council on the Ageing (COTA), when considering the concept of Healthy Ageing, notes the United Nations definition of Healthy Ageing as being that 'ageing is a lifelong process (which) focuses on improving the wellbeing of people as they age'.³³

COTA considers there are certain conditions necessary for Healthy Ageing to occur. They include:

- An economic, social and environmental context.
- A community context where urban planning, housing, social capital and transport is considered.
- Adequate health services, community care, allied health, public health, dental care, pharmaceuticals and adequate consumer rights mechanisms.

As mentioned in the Disability Social Plan, an increase in the numbers of older people in the community is likely to mean there will be more older disabled people, or older people who are frail or have a chronic illness. There are costs and planning implications for these issues but according to the NSW Healthy Ageing Framework, maintaining older peoples health and independence can reduce these costs. As significant numbers of older people live alone, support services such as Meals on Wheels and Home Care will become increasingly important.

Social interaction is also important in maintaining good health, encouraging social networks and preventing isolation. Activities or social groups need not be physical, and could involve such groups as arts and crafts, learning circles and volunteering. A range of activities need to be developed and encouraged to suit a range of people.

COTA believes further work is needed in the following areas:

- Promotion of positive attitudes to ageing and older people.
- Further building of social capital.
- Further support for the role of older people in families.
- Increasing access to information and information technology.
- Development of a framework for lifelong learning.
- Reinventing retirement.

Such policy development would ensure that older people live with community engagement and enjoyment.

Staying active

A number of health promotion plans³³ have noted the importance of, and need for, physical activity, management of chronic conditions, falls prevention, social interaction, mental well being, carer support and health needs that may be gender specific.

Physical activity is particularly important to reduce the risk of disease, encourage a more positive state of mind, lower stress, and assist with concentration and self-confidence. It can also be helpful in relation to preventing falls, which are more common among older people. The consequence of a fall can be loss of, or reduced, mobility, reduced independence, and increased risk of isolation.³⁴ Thus an increase in physical activity has a number of benefits including personal safety.

One Canberra based study³⁵ suggested that when designing physical activity programmes for older people it is important to consider appropriate instructors, comfort and safety of venues, transportation and access (participants may be physically disabled), and cost. It also advised that the long-term health benefits and social value of programmes should be promoted.

Information needs

Older people, their families, and carers, need information about chronic conditions, including heart disease, stroke, obesity, diabetes, cancer, arthritis,

³³For example The DVA Health Promotion Plan and the NSW Healthy Ageing Strategy.

³⁴DVA, 2003.

³⁵Physical Activity of Older People in the A.C.T. Sport and Recreation ACT and YMCA Canberra, 2003.

asthma, dementia, osteoporosis and drug and alcohol use. Health promotion in the area of self-management through education and information about these conditions is needed. Community campaigns to increase community understanding are considered the best approach.

Mental health

Mental well being includes people's mental health needs as well as the impact of mental illness on families and carers. Some older people from a war service or refugee background may have conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, which may require professional assistance. Promoting such services to residents, especially CALD residents, and addressing the stigma associated with mental illness and the community are some of the issues here.

Gender s pecific health needs

The need for gender specific health needs have also been identified.³⁶ This includes increasing the living skills of older men and increasing men's knowledge, interest and self-management of their own health. Specific health needs of men include prostate health, suicide prevention, sexuality counselling, substance misuse treatment and nutrition advice. One report has noted that some older men develop a loss of self-esteem when they retire because their role and status have changed. Many find the changes difficult to make and begin to feel lonely and isolated away from a work role.

There is also a perception that health and community services are more sensitive to the needs of older women and, in addition, that men do not identify with the environment of many of these services. There is a need for services to become more 'older men friendly'.³⁷

Specific health needs of women include breast cancer checks, menopause support, the need for pap smears and nutrition advice.

Gender specific needs should also be considerate of cultural appropriateness in service and information delivery, and strategies should be devised to reach CALD communities.

Implications: With numbers of older residents on the rise in Rockdale City it will become increasingly important to address the various needs and issues arising from an aging population.

Adjustments to the types of services provided, and the method of delivery may be necessary, as a result of increased demand for certain types of services.

The implications of an ageing population are vast and need to be considered as a matter of urgency in Council planning.

Maintaining Independence

There are a number of factors important to ensuring independence for aged residents. These include accessible recreation, appropriate transport and community safety. Council's Strategic Transport and Traffic Plan listed Accessibility and Walking as two important strategies. Accessibility can involve different types of transport such as public transport, private transport, cycling or walking. Walking is regarded as inexpensive, encourages social inclusion with neighbours, has substantial health benefits and provides security and natural surveillance.

Community safety is important for older people as it decreases isolation. Community safety involves developing strategies to respond to people feeling unsafe. Council interviewed older people from the Ramsgate Seniors Centre on their perceptions of community safety as part of consultations for the Rockdale Community Safety Plan. Older people reported concerns relating to traffic, street lighting, theft, drugs and public transport. Those interviewed however, thought the Seniors Centre and Brighton Beach were very safe, and some stations were thought to have excellent safety.

Community safety is important for older people as it decreases isolation. Generally, improvements in community safety relate to use of Environmental Design Principles, promotion of road safety to drivers and pedestrians, increased police liaison and recreational facilities for all age groups.

Implications: Assisting aged residents in maintaining independence will be important as our population ages. Enabling residents to live in their own homes through provision of appropriate services will increase the quality of lives for older residents and their families, and decrease the need for residential aged care facilities, which are themselves under-supplied in the community.

³⁶Veterans Affairs and the Older Men New Ideas Report.

³⁷UWS, 2001.

Income and Employment

As the above demographics demonstrate, older residents generally have low incomes and, in addition, residents in the 55 to 64 age group have high rates of not being in the labour force: for men in this age group 35%; for women almost 60%.³⁸ Employment discrimination of older people who wish to be employed is also likely to be occurring.³⁹

Low incomes impact on older people's standards of living and quality of life. Maintenance of homes (a large majority of older people live in their own home) and safety in the home are also related to income, as are transport, health, nutrition, and isolation.

This situation is especially difficult for women, who tend to live longer than men, yet generally have fewer resources. One study suggests that for women in the 55 to 69 year age group most have no superannuation due to interrupted work histories, and, in general, the median superannuation balance for women is half that of men.⁴⁰ In Rockdale, 72% of older women who stated an income earned less than \$300 per week, and 1,100 women are in rental accommodation. There is likely to be a significant degree of poverty among older residents, in particular among women.

To alleviate poverty among the aged, the previously mentioned study suggests the spread of lifelong learning as it "enables individuals to develop constructive responses and assist in the maintenance of social cohesion."⁴¹ For lifelong learning to occur in the community, it is necessary for participants to have economic security, health, access to aids and equipment, and access to well resourced facilities such as neighbourhood houses, libraries and community learning centres.

Implications: As a larger part of our community ages, the potential for poverty will increase. To protect standards of living, quality of life, and social harmony, strategies are necessary to alleviate the reality of declining incomes as people age.

Language barriers

Rockdale's migrant aged population is significantly large: 8,700 residents. The language barrier is a major issue for elderly migrants, 3,600 of whom speak little or no English, 60% of whom are women. These residents cannot read or understand letters, and other relevant information such as signs and public notices. Often the elderly require a bilingual worker to accompany them to the doctor, hospital or bank or to assist them in arranging interpreting and translating services.

Implications: There is a strong need to ensure that home and community care services cater to people with limited English. Translations, bilingual staff and cultural awareness training are all particularly important. The Ethnic Access Project based at Bexley Community Centre will increasingly play an important role in access, both for the people needing support and for the services providing support.

Carers

The needs of Carers are also important when considering the needs of older residents. For older Carers who may become frail with age, this can be an additional burden. With an aging population, the number of older Carers is also likely to increase. A number of older people may be caring for someone who has a long-term illness or other type of problem. For example 1,148 older people in Rockdale are sole parents.⁴² Factors such as a lack of nursing home beds and mental health accommodation mean that Carers have little option but to undertake the role. Many CALD groups also have a preference for family care of the elderly and incapacitated, and yet migrants and people from CALD groups have difficulty accessing services, potentially exacerbating their situation.

Carers often have access to few services and can become exhausted in their role. Many will require assistance with household tasks, home nursing, home maintenance, gardening, meals, transport for shopping or other tasks, and respite services. Home and Community Care and respite services are particularly important for people in the caring role.

³⁸ABS, 2001 Census of Population of Housing.

³⁹HAF, 2003.

⁴⁰COTA, 2003.

⁴¹COTA, 2003.

⁴²ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

The organisation 'Carer's Australia' notes in its vision paper that, ideally, carer support would have the following components:⁴³

- Simple, reliable and timely access to personalised information about services and assistance
- Assessment of the care situation with core assessment information valid across community care and regularly reviewed
- Recognition of the right of carers, and those they support, to be fully involved in decisions about their care situation and to have their wishes respected
- Affordable assistance tailored to the needs of the household
- Services and programs that meet a set of national community care standards with appropriate quality assurance and accreditation processes

Implications: It is essential, therefore, that carers receive adequate support to continue their role if they wish to. Such support needs to be designed and provided in a way that accounts for the life circumstances of the carer; and the wishes of carers, and those being cared for; to have as normal a life as possible.

Isolation

Isolation is another significant issue for older residents. As identified by three aged care workers, including the Community and Aged Care Packages (CACP) Co-coordinator; in the Rockdale area, there is a high need for more social and culturally appropriate activities and outings for the elderly from all the language groups (for example, picnics, visits to local clubs and shopping centres).

Older people need to develop and continue links with neighbours, clubs and other interest groups to prevent social isolation, which may increase through ill health or bereavement. Transport may be an important factor in keeping these links, thus accessible transport and community transport are important options. For older people from a non-English speaking background

this is even more important. It has previously been noted in the CALD Social Plan that the ability to speak English can decline with age.

Council's four senior citizen centres have been built as venues where older people can meet and socialise, however, Council does not provide any ongoing support or co-ordination. Without support, the groups are limited in their ability to run programs or attract members. Whilst some Centres in particular run very effectively and are well utilised, others could benefit from the assistance of professional staff. Councils, which have invested in recreational programming for their centres, have reported significant improvements in utilisation.

In 2004, Council will be commissioning a comprehensive recreation and leisure needs study that will examine these and other issues relevant to recreation for older people.

Implications: Social isolation is a major issue for older people as they lose work ties and sometimes partners and friends. The role Council's senior citizen centres play in addressing these issues is limited by the lack of resourcing for recreational programming.

Services access in aged CALD communities

Cultural factors require consideration when dealing with elderly migrants, especially in Rockdale where 40% of older residents were born in an NES country. In some cultures, such as the Pacific Islander and Arabic cultures, it is often not acceptable to place the elderly in nursing homes as caring for the elderly is considered a family responsibility.

There is a need for the wider community to have greater understanding and sensitivity

when dealing with migrants. Unlike the majority of Anglo-Australian elderly, elderly migrants do not understand how to use the system, are not aware of the services, their rights, often cannot read or write, and often need to have letters, pamphlets, contracts and other documentation explained or translated.

A number of aged care workers have identified access to mainstream services as a significant problem facing

⁴³A Vision for Carer Support in Community Care, 2002, Carers Australia.

older migrants. Individual services have introduced programs to address this issue, including use of translated materials, bilingual workers and language specific Home Care, and other HACC services. The Ethnic Access Program also aims to make HACC funded services more accessible, culturally and linguistically appropriate, and sensitive to Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds.

There is a high need for the provision of Aged Care services that are linguistically and culturally specific. In the St George area, care packages for elderly living at home are currently being provided in the Italian, Greek, Chinese, Arabic, Macedonian/Former Yugoslavian and Spanish languages. However, there is more need for language specific packages and for the service to include the Maltese and Russian languages. Currently there are Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Italian, and Macedonian bilingual aged workers but other groups,

such as the German, Maltese, and Balkan groups, are yet to be catered for. In response to these growing needs, funding has recently been granted to provide Bosnian, Croatian, Russian, Spanish and German packages.

There are also few culturally and linguistically specific nursing home facilities. This makes it difficult for elderly and frail migrants to accept a nursing home place.

Implications: The importance of providing services to the elderly in Rockdale is a challenge due to the fact that four out of every ten older residents is from a non-English speaking background. Older NESB residents need specific strategies to enable them to have equitable access to the services needed to maintain independence and live healthy, active lifestyles.

Recommended Actions

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
1: Healthy Ageing	1.1 Continue to provide specific services for older people including large print books and home library service	Manager Community Services	Ongoing
	1.2 Work in partnership with St George Division of General Practice and other agencies to develop appropriate programs	CDO	Ongoing
	1.3 Implement Community Safety Plan	MCEP	Ongoing
2: Maintaining independence	2.1 Implement strategies from Strategic Transport and Traffic Plan	MT & IS	
	2.2 Implement Road Safety Plan	RSO	
	2.3 Continue to operate Council's Meal Service	MCS	
3: Income and Employment	3.1 Continue current rate rebate system and fee concessions for pensioners	CRO	Ongoing
	3.2 Prepare discussion paper on Affordable Housing	MUP	Dec 2004
	3.3 Continue fee policy of not charging senior citizens groups for use of Council Senior Citizen Centres	MCEP	Ongoing
4: Support for Carers	4.1 Continue to provide space at Bexley Community Centre and Brighton Community Centre for services supporting carers	MCEP	Ongoing
5: Isolation	5.1 Develop and support programs to reduce social isolation	CDO	Ongoing
	5.2 Ensure the needs of older people are addressed in the forthcoming Recreation and Leisure Study	MLS	June 2004
	5.3 Continue to provide Senior Citizen Centres	MLS	Ongoing
	5.4 Continue to provide a Senior Citizens Week Program	MCS	Ongoing
6: Access to Services	1.1 Support the planning, development, establishment and continued improvement of services addressing the needs of older people	CDO	Ongoing

Target group:

People with A Disability

Definition

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) notes the difficulty in defining disability due to the vast array of health conditions it may cover, which, in addition, may be experienced differently, and at different times in a person's life.⁴⁴ For example, a disability may be the result of birth or acquired through accident or disease. Its affects may be physical or psychological, intermittent or permanent, however, the incidence of disability is likely to increase with age, therefore an area's age structure affects its rate of disability.

The World Health Organisation's broad definition of disability includes the health experiences of all people.⁴⁵ Thus, positive and negative factors are accounted for, and the relationship between disability and a health condition is considered. Ideas such as body function and structure, level of activity, and participation in different situations are included.

Rockdale Council's 1996 Action Plan for Disability used the definition from the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) where disability might be physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, and/or neurological. It also included learning disabilities, physical disfigurement, a previous condition, and one that may exist in the future.

For the purposes of this document disability will be defined as it is under Section 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act, which refers to "disability", in relation to a person, as:

- (a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- (b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- (c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- (d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or

- (e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- (f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- (g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour; and includes a disability that:
 - (h) presently exists; or
 - (i) previously existed but no longer exists; or
 - (j) may exist in the future; or
 - (k) is imputed to a person.

Population profile

Prevalence of people with a disability in Rockdale

The number of residents with disabilities is an important factor when considering strategies to service disabled residents. The types of conditions, the level of severity, and management needs are also important, as these affect factors such as independence, the levels of support needed, residential and accommodation needs, employment, and recreational opportunities.

The availability and type of support services offered, therefore, have a great impact on people with disabilities and their carers. These services also need to match the demographic characteristics of an area. For example, a resident from a CALD background may not know about available services or may utilise them less.

⁴⁴ABS, Disability, New South Wales: 2001.

⁴⁵WHO, International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Health.

It is difficult to obtain exact figures on local disability levels due to the use of various defining criteria, and the exclusion of questions related to disability in the national census questionnaire. For this reason several measures of disability, based on different data sets, are used in this report to indicate likely levels of disability in Rockdale.

Indications of the level of disability can be obtained through estimations of people with a disability, and by numbers of associated government payments.

In the Rockdale City Council area, as at December 2003, there were a total of 2,543 recipients of Centrelink payments for the Disability Support Pension. A further 4,000 Centrelink clients receive a Carers Allowance/Payment and 790 parents receive child disability payments. In addition, a significant level of disability is likely among age pension recipients, totalling 9,155 Rockdale residents.⁴⁶ Combined, this

indicates possibly as many as 13,000 disabled residents receiving pensions in Rockdale.

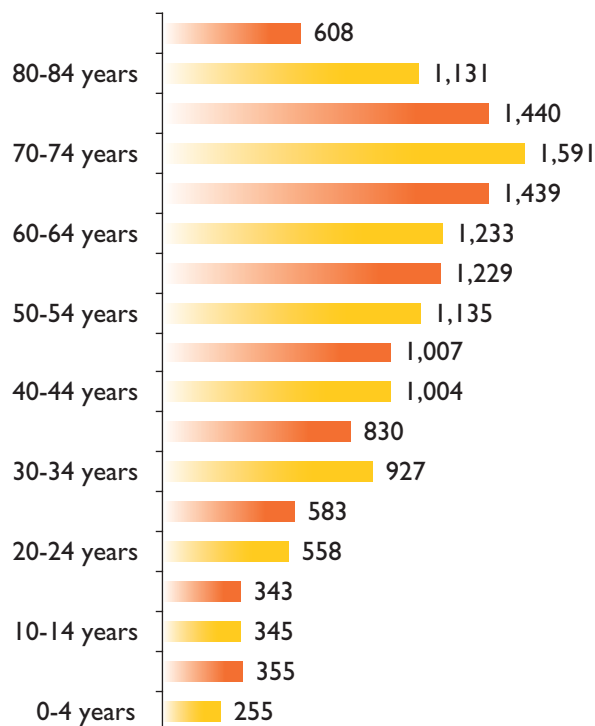
The NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care found that in the South Eastern Sydney Area (the LGAs of Randwick, Botany, Waverly, Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville and Sutherland), 17.5% of residents had a disability. Of these, 8.1% are classed as having a moderate, severe, or profound level of disability.⁴⁷ Based on this formula around 15,500 residents have a disability, and just over 7,000 a significant degree of disability in Rockdale.

Other data from the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and compiled by the ABS indicates that Rockdale had a total of around 16,000 disabled residents in 1998.⁴⁸

Based on data gathered from 1998 to 2001 then, the number of residents with a disability in Rockdale City can be confidently estimated at between 15,000 and 16,000 people.

Ages of disabled residents

1998 Disabled residents by age



Source: ABS, 2002 Regional Profiles.

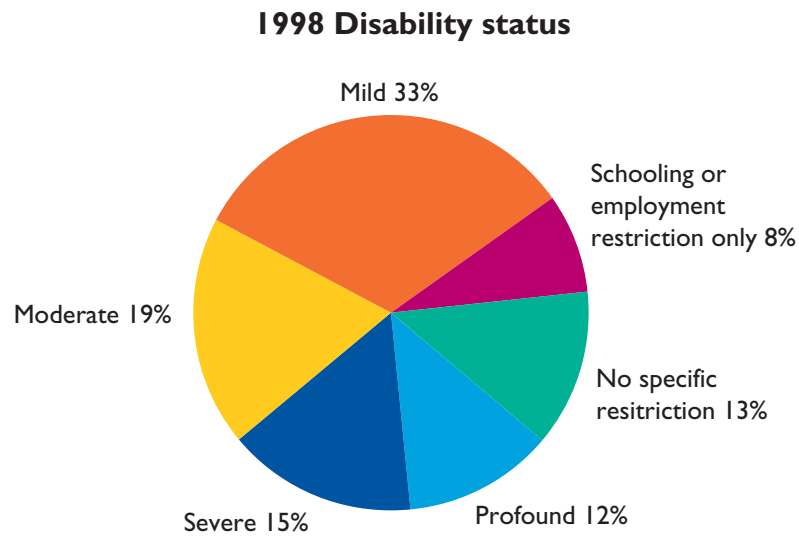
The above graph shows the age of residents classified as disabled, regardless of their degree of disability. As indicated, the numbers of disabled residents increase as people age. 55% of residents with a disability are 55 years or older according to this data set.

⁴⁶Centrelink, 2003.

⁴⁷DADHC, 2002.

⁴⁸ABS, 2002, Rockdale Regional Profiles.

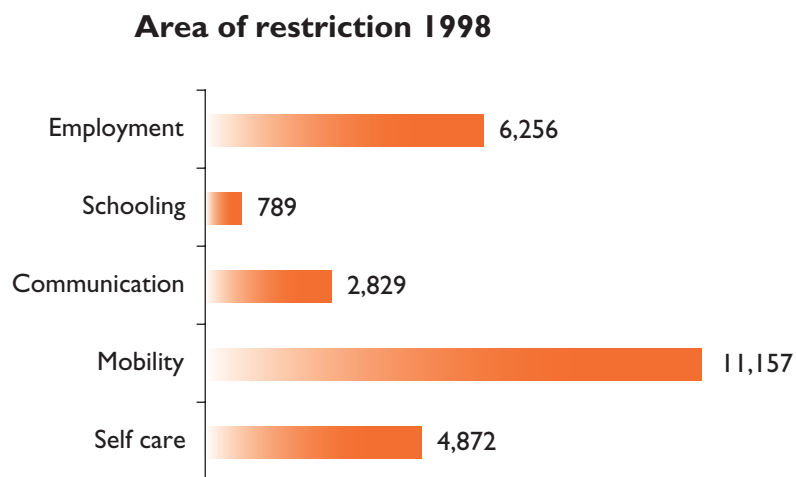
Degree of disability



Source: ABS, 2002 Regional Profiles.

The above graph shows the degree of disability of relevant Rockdale residents. 46% (7,471 residents) are moderately, severely or profoundly disabled, according to this data.

Area of restriction

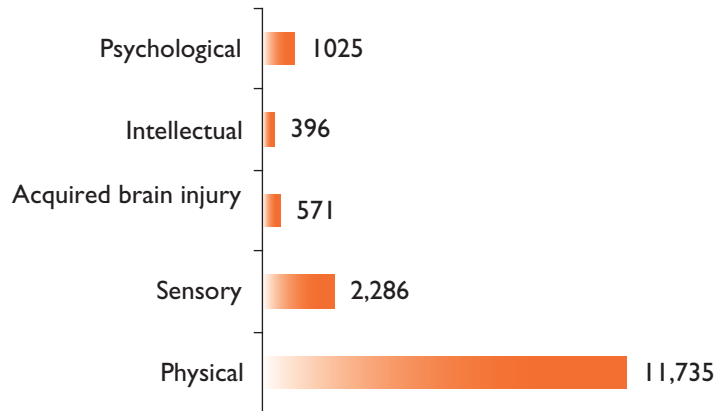


Source: ABS, 2002 Rockdale Regional Profile.

The above graph indicates the areas disabled residents are restricted in. Almost 70% reported mobility restrictions, 40% employment restrictions, and around 30% restrictions in self-care.

Type of disability

Main disabling condition 1998

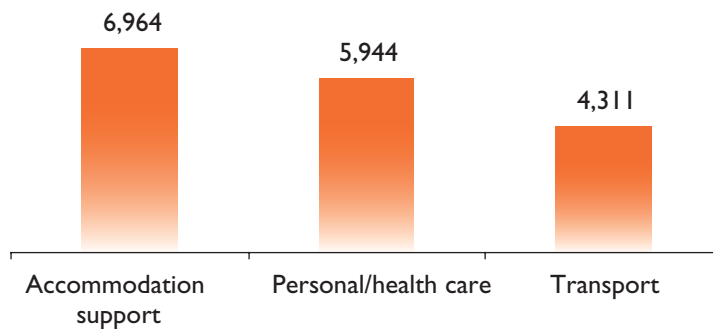


Source: ABS, 2002 Rockdale Regional Profile.

The main disabling condition for Rockdale residents is a physical disability, followed by sensory disabilities.

Assistance needs

Assistance needs 1998

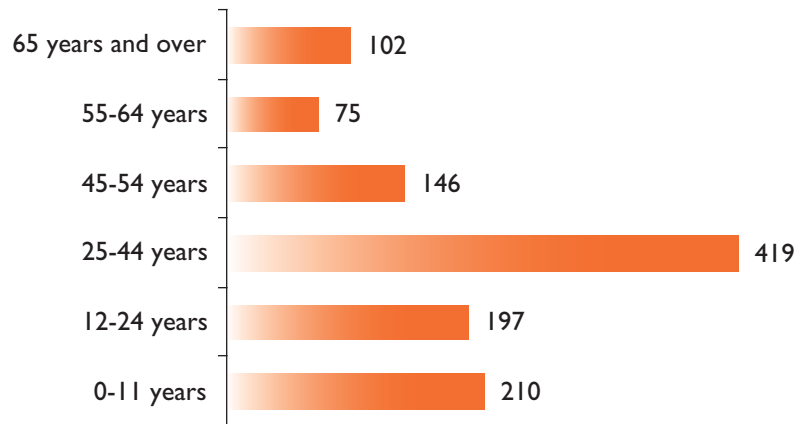


Source: ABS, 2002 Rockdale Regional Profile.

There is a high level of demand for accommodation support, personal and health care, and transport from disabled residents in Rockdale.

Disability service recipients

Disability service recipients 2000



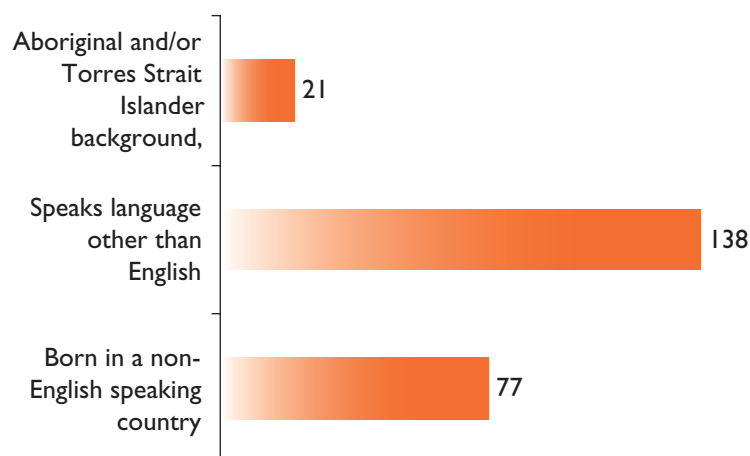
Source: ABS, 2002 Rockdale Regional Profile.

Disability services, such as accommodation and respite services, are important in maintaining quality of life for the disabled and their families. In the year 2000, the number of Rockdale residents who received disability services were more often under 44 years of age, and there was a total of 1,153 occasions of service. Even if we assume just one occasion of service for every disabled resident (which is highly unlikely) this represented access for about 14% of Rockdale's 16,000 residents with a disability, or 26% of the number of residents who are profoundly or severely disabled. Clearly this indicates a significant undersupply of disability services in Rockdale.

To take one service area as an example: the need for disabled accommodation support has been expressed by 6,964 residents, but only 395 occasions of accommodation support were distributed to Rockdale residents in 2000.

Disability and CALD

Disability service recipients, 2000, by CALD characteristics



Source: ABS, 2002 Rockdale Regional Profile.

As the above graph shows, 236 (20.5%) of Rockdale residents who accessed available disability services were from a CALD background in 2000, proportionally fewer than the 48% of Rockdale residents from an NESB in 2001. To use another measure of cultural diversity, in 2001, 35% of residents were born in a predominantly NES country, however, only 6.7% of residents who accessed disability services in 2000 were born in an NES country. These discrepancies demonstrate the under supply of services to this section of the community.

Less than 0.5% of Rockdale residents identified themselves as from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) background, and ATSI residents who accessed disability services in 2000 made up 1.8%.

Population summary

When considering how best to service disabled residents in Rockdale the main points that arise from an examination of demography are:

- There are between 15,000 and 16,000 people living with a disability in Rockdale.
- Disability is increasing as Rockdale residents' age, and in the future the population will demonstrate higher proportions of elderly residents. Therefore in the future people with a disability will increase in both numbers and proportions.
- 46%, or almost 7,500 residents have moderate, severe, or profound levels of disability.
- Mobility, employment and self-care are the most common limitations residents with a disability face.
- Physical disabilities are the most common type of disability in Rockdale City.
- NESB and CALD residents are not accessing disability services in proportion to their local population levels.
- There is overwhelmingly more demand for disability services than supply.

Council's role

The Federal Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person with a disability in terms of employment, education, access to premises, accessibility of public places (such as footpaths, shops, restaurants and public transport) provision of goods, services and facilities, accommodation, land purchase, activities of clubs, associations and sport and administration of Commonwealth laws and programs. Council activities affected include:

- Planning and development
- Provision of parks, playgrounds, footpaths and other public infrastructure
- Council as an employer

Dr Sev Ozdowski, Human Rights Commissioner and Acting Disability Discrimination Commissioner, has noted that the Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1993 has gone some way to improving access for people with disabilities. In particular, there has been success in the areas of access to public transport and buildings, and he commends local governments for their production of local Disability Action Plans.⁴⁹ It is pleasing to note therefore, that Rockdale City Council was one of the first to produce a Disability Action Plan (DAP) for which it won the Prime Minister's Award for policy in 1997. This plan included a major consultation process with people with disabilities to identify gaps and strategies. Local feedback indicates that the DAP is working well and is well accepted.

Council has an important role in providing an accessible built environment through the application of Development Control Plans. Council's Access Development Control Plan, adopted in 1997, sets out design standards and general requirements for the provision of access in Rockdale. It applies to new and existing residential buildings (including the provision of adaptable units in multi unit developments), Council buildings, pedestrian networks and public open space.

Council also plays an important role in supporting the planning and provision of appropriate local services. Council is an active member of the local Home and Community Care Forum and the St George Disability Interagency. Council also provides accommodation for local service providers through the Bexley and Brighton Community Centres.

Finally, Council is involved in promoting understanding of disability issues through recognising and celebrating International Day of Disability.

How Disability Issues have been identified

Disability issues affecting Rockdale have been identified in a number of ways, through reports, surveys, forums, census information, interviews with service providers, consultations with service users and inter-agencies. Specifically this has included:

- An understanding of the Regional Planning Process Achievements from Regional Planning 2000- 02, Metropolitan South Region Profile,

⁴⁹Ozdowski, Sev, 1992, "Disability and Human Rights," paper delivered at the NSW Local Government and Shires Association conference: Without Prejudice, November 1992.

by the Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care, July 2002 (DADHC: 2002).

This document explored planning needs and priorities for older people and their carers, and people with a disability and their carers. Extensive consultation was conducted across Regional and Metropolitan NSW, which included the South Eastern Sydney Planning Area, of which Rockdale City is a part. These results are therefore very pertinent for Rockdale.

- The Inner South West Community Development Organisation Surveys (ISWCDOs: 2001 and 2002), which explored unmet and emerging needs within Home and Community Care Organisations. The survey provided service specific information, and information on general and emerging issues.
- The 1998 survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers which provided a comprehensive overview of people with a disability and their carers in New South Wales; and Rockdale specific data, based also on the 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, and compiled by ABS.
- Data on disability service recipients provided by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, and based on data collected in May 2000 (DADHC: 2000).
- Interviews with the St George -Sutherland Respite Options Working Party, Rockdale and Hurstville Mental Health, Non English Speaking Background Access Project, Aged and Disability Service St George, Migrant Resource Centre, and St George Disability Interagency, that was attended by workers from disability services, community development workers, service support, development officers from the Department of Disability Ageing and Home Care, and people with a disability.
- Consultations with Respite Service Users in December 2002, and carers from a non-English Speaking Background in September 2002 (consultations included Chinese, Spanish, Egyptian, Lebanese, Greek, Italian and Muslim women).
- A Forum in March 2003 hosted by the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability with St George political candidates and St George

residents. People were encouraged to raise issues of need, and political candidates were asked to address questions on a range of service provision issues.

- Reference to current theory. For example on the roles of local government in service provision we considered the work of Dr Sev Ozdowski; for consideration of the intersection between disability and ethnicity (including racial discrimination in disability services) we included the work of the National Ethnic Alliance (NEDA).

Discussion of local disability issues

Service Gaps

While specific service gaps will be discussed below it is apparent that, in general, disability services in Rockdale are significantly undersupplied. Data collected in 2000 by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care clearly show demand failing to meet supply. The need for social support across various categories of disability is also a frequent complaint.

In 1998, for example, there were more than 17,000 requests for accommodation, personal, health and transport needs. However, in 2000 the data shows that only 1,153 occasions of disability service provision. According to this data, demand is being met only 6.7% of the time. Accommodation, personal and health, and transport needs, in that order, were the most frequently requested services, but other sources indicate a need for day programs, clubs, therapy services, and social outlets. An absence of services for some forms of disability, such as intellectual disabilities was also noted.

Implications: Adequate provision of services, and planning for services, will allow people to remain living in their own homes and provide adequate support for carers. Without these services, demand for various assisted living solutions will increase in the community. It is reasonable to assume that this will also lead to an increase in poverty and homelessness among the disabled.

Disability and Ethnicity

Many different sources identify significant service gaps and difficulties accessing available services for CALD communities in Rockdale. For example, the 2001 and 2002 Home and Community Care Surveys, consultations conducted for regional planning by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (2002), and other sources, identified an increased need for social activities for NESB & CALD residents, as well as appropriate services for such things as meals, physical health, mental health, carer support and respite, social and recreational activities, and knowledge about services and entitlements and how to access them.

A number of reports, and organisations such as Hurstville Mental Health, Carers NSW, the National Ethnic Disability Alliance Report, the local NESB Access Project, and the most recent NESB Carers Consultation, all highlight the significant linguistic and cultural barriers faced by NESB people with a disability, and NESB residents in the role of carer, when trying to access services, or understanding service systems that may be different to those experienced in their country of origin.

This point illustrates what has been described as the double disadvantage of disability and ethnicity. There is an acknowledged need for the development of culturally appropriate models of service, and for disability, home, and community care services to provide internal training on cultural issues, make provision for interpreters and translations, appropriately market services to the relevant ethnic communities, and conduct cultural sensitivity audits of the services they provide.

Implications: CALD residents have already been identified in the CALD section of this report as more likely to have lower incomes than other residents in Rockdale, to have poorer English language skills, employment outcomes, and access to services. CALD communities can often be more reliant on family support, and ineligible for support from, or suspicious of, government and authority. It is therefore important that attempts be made to encourage CALD residents to access their fair share of community services, which will remove the myriad difficulties and disadvantages affecting this section of the Rockdale population.

Flexible forms of respite

Respite issues have been identified as a local priority in the Regional Planning Process, and more flexible forms of respite have also been specifically identified. This need is echoed by the St George-Sutherland Working Party, consultations with carers conducted by the St George Migrant Resource Centre, and the Respite Forum organised by the Disability Interagency in December 2002.

Respite services are intended to provide short-term care for people with a disability who need additional help to remain independent, or to provide assistance to carers needing a break from their responsibilities. As care givers' age, respite needs are likely to increase.

The NSW Community Services Commission estimated, in December 1998, that 40% of designated respite care beds were not used as respite at all, but occupied by people on a long-term basis. The majority of these people have challenging behaviours and were not deemed appropriate recipients of supported accommodation. This situation has diminished the number of respite beds currently available. Approximately 10% of carers in a national survey indicated they needed respite but had never received it.⁵⁰ These unmet needs included school holiday respite, particular forms of respite for working families, and respite that is culturally appropriate.

Carers attending the Respite Forum hosted by the Disability Interagency in December 2002, suggested a variety of respite needs: respite which included recreational and behaviour modification /stimulation; respite for siblings; respite that gave benefit to the person being cared for; more emergency respite; and flexible pick up points for outings. The range of differing suggestions, and the fact that it has been identified in so many consultations, strongly indicates the need for further flexibility.

There are also particular issues for CALD families in caring for disabled family members. These include the difficulty in obtaining carers visas for overseas family members, and the fact that CALD families are more likely to have more limited financial resources than non-CALD families, as well as more limited access to health services.⁵¹

⁵⁰Ohlin, Jackie, Unmet needs in Disability Services: Shortfall or Systematic Failure?

⁵¹NCOSS, Younger people with Disability out of Nursing Homes: A discussion paper, 2002.

Implications: Respite services are an important factor for the disabled in remaining independent, and for carers and families to maintain quality of life. A lack of respite options can contribute to pressure on the living situations of the disabled, and increase the likelihood of homelessness, poverty and stress amongst these residents and their carers.

Needs of young people with a disability

The needs of young people with a disability were also raised repeatedly, and included a need for social groups for young people with an intellectual disability, and social outings for young people with a disability.

Appropriate accommodation is also an important issue, as young people, and people much younger than the target group, have had to access aged accommodation due to a lack of other options. This situation is compounded by a lack of clear government responsibility for appropriate support for young people with a disability.⁵² The isolation and inappropriateness of this situation is compounded when the disabled person is from a CALD background.

The need for services for other children in the family of a disabled child, as they may receive less attention because of the high level of care needed by the child with a disability, has also been reported. These needs indicate service gaps in current provision.

Implications: Young disabled residents have particular needs that are not currently being met. This increases the pressure on families to meet the needs of young disabled residents, as well as their isolation and suffering when inappropriately accommodated.

Carers Needs

It is clear from all the available sources that there is an under supply of most services for the disabled in Rockdale. As a consequence the responsibility lies with the family, or another carer, to provide what is necessary. Carer's therefore undertake an important

role in meeting the needs of people with disabilities, but they themselves need specific support to continue meeting these needs. As Carers Australia reports, based on the findings of their "Health and Well being Survey" – "Caring is a health hazard".⁵³ The health of carers can also suffer if they cannot access health and support services due to their caring role. Other sources report particular problems with the level of provision, and method of delivery, of respite services, specific services being undersupplied to youth, children, and the intellectually disabled, and the need for carer support groups.

Support services in general are needed for carers, including culturally appropriate support services. There is also a need for information about how to access services and how to obtain help with the particular problems that arise for families, without which family breakdown can occur.

Implications: Without the work of carers in the community the demand for disability services, particularly accommodation, would increase significantly. Replacing carers with home nursing staff, for example, would require considerable additional health funding. It is important to assist carers to care, and to care for themselves, through additional support services. Carers enable a lesser reliance on disability services, and need to be valued accordingly.

Ageing Carers

As our population ages we face not only the likelihood of the level of disability in the community rising, but the aging of carers as well. The ageing of carers raises unique issues which have been reported by our sources. Many aging carers will themselves face disability issues, and be in need of increased support services for their own, and their dependents', needs. There is a particular need for flexible delivery of respite, transport, and in-home support if aging carers are to continue to live in their own home and provide care to the disabled.

Implications: The issue of ageing carers is essentially a reminder of the need for planning for future needs.

⁵²NCOSS, Younger people with Disability out of Nursing Homes: A discussion paper, 2002.

⁵³Carers Australia, 2003.

Advocacy in St George

The need for a generalist advocacy service for the St George Region was first identified through the St George Disability Interagency in 2000. At this time some initial consultations were conducted and a survey aimed at service users was developed.

Advocacy can be individual, group based, systemic, legal, disability specific, or aim to improve the advocacy skills of a family. An advocate's role is to acknowledge a complaint/problem, clarify key issues, identify key players in the resolution of a problem, consider what the person with the complaint wants, and if this is possible, develop appropriate processes to resolve the complaint, and represent or support the person with the complaint if needed.

Currently, there are no regionally based advocacy services for people with disabilities. Most people in the region utilise peak disability bodies for this purpose. The problem for many local disability service providers is that they have limited resources, a lack of expertise, and a lack of awareness of where to take referrals. The issue may often fall out of the scope of the particular service provider. In addition, people with disabilities or their carers are not always aware of how to make a complaint, or how to locate an advocate.

In developing a local model, the scope of the service, role of the advocate, level of expertise required, service user eligibility, funding sources, multicultural access, and potential auspice body would all need to be considered. Further research and discussion within the St George Disability Interagency needs to occur with regard to these issues.

- The need for an accessible built environment;
- Improved wheelchair access in available transport options;
- An increased need for volunteers, and training for volunteer management committees;
- A home visit counselling service for the HACC group;
- An increasing suicide risk for men over 50;
- A wider range of opportunities for people who need work experience or volunteer work;
- A high staff turnover in service providers; and
- Lack of information about service eligibility, resources and equipment.

Other local disability issues

While the above discussion outlines some of the major disability issues in Rockdale City, many others have also been reported. These include:

- The need for the development of early intervention services;
- Improving transport options for medical appointments, recreational activities and out of hours and weekends;

Recommended Actions

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
1: Service gaps and access to services	1.1 Support the role and work of the St George Disability Interagency	CDO	Ongoing
	1.2 Support the St George Home and Community Care Forum	CDO	Ongoing
	1.3 Support the planning, development, establishment and continued improvement of services addressing the needs of disabled residents and their carers	CDO	Ongoing
	1.4 Investigate Council employment opportunities for disabled people	MHR	Ongoing
	1.5 Conduct customer service training in disability awareness	MCS	Ongoing
	1.6 Promote Understanding Mental Health Training to Council Officers	MCS	Ongoing
2: Disability and Ethnicity	2.1 Develop and support projects concerning CALD clients and carers	CDO	Ongoing
	2.2 Support cross cultural training initiatives for service providers	CDO	Ongoing
3: Advocacy	3.1 Support projects that educate service users on their rights and the complaint process	CDO	Ongoing
	3.2 In partnership with the St George Disability Interagency research the need for disability advocacy in the area	CDO	Ongoing
4: Accessible Built Environment	4.1 Implement Access Development Control Plan	MUP	Ongoing
	4.2 Continue to improve the accessibility of public places and facilities and promote accessibility	MTS	Ongoing
	4.3 Review Access Development Control Plan	MUP	December 2004

Target group:

Indigenous Residents

Definition

The NSW Department of Local Government “Social and Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines” (2002) defines indigenous Australians as:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people are people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent, who identify as such, and are accepted by the respective Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities.

It is also important to note that in the same guidelines ATSI people aged 45 years and over are in the “older people” target group, while non Aboriginal people are part of this target group when aged 55 years or older. This age difference reflects the poor health status that many ATSI people and communities have and continue to experience.

Population Profile

Prevalence of Indigenous residents in Rockdale

Data from the NSW Department of Health and Centrelink⁵⁴ indicates that 1.5% to 2.8% of our city’s population is made up of people from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) background.

The 2001 Census of Population and Housing indicates that 402 ATSI residents live in Rockdale, however it is accepted that this is an under-estimation of the numbers of ATSI people due to under-identification.

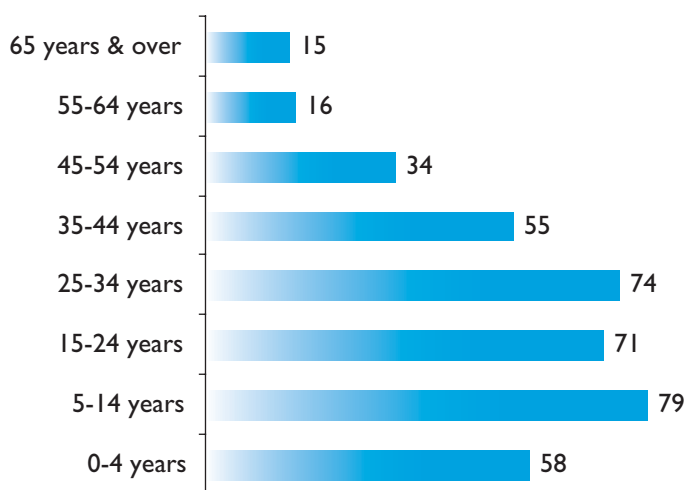
Direct delivery services and St George regional networks report a significant increase over the past

3 years of ATSI clients accessing services. While this 3 to 4-fold increase can partly be attributed to services having improved their promotion and goodwill within the community, there is also a strong sense from the community and social professionals that the number of ATSI employees and residents has also increased significantly in the area since the 1996 Census.

Actual numbers of indigenous residents are likely to be significantly higher than the 2001 Census suggests: more in the realm of 1,300 to 2,500 residents.

Ages of Indigenous residents

Age Distribution Indigenous 2001



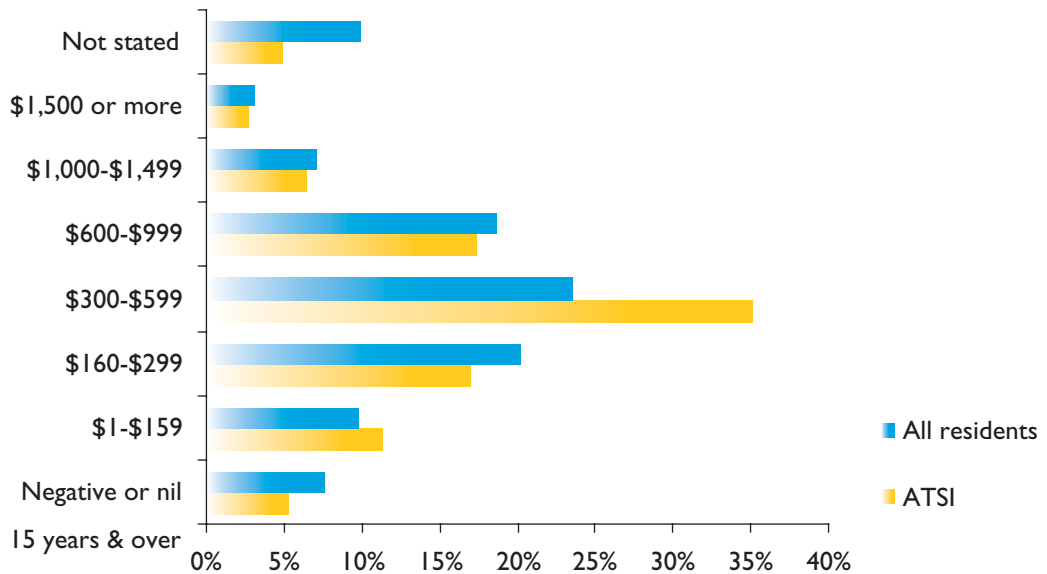
Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

According to the 2001 Census there were 194 males, and 208 female indigenous residents in Rockdale City. Indigenous residents have a younger age profile than the Rockdale population in general, where only 16% of indigenous residents are 45 years or over, as opposed to 39% for the population as a whole. One reason for this difference may be a shorter life expectancy for indigenous people.

⁵⁴Indigenous Cultural Training Day, June 2000; Gnarra Aboriginal Home and Community Care (HACC) Project and Inner South-West Community Development Organisation; Aboriginal Research and Resource Centre, University of NSW.

Individual income

Weekly income indigenous residents 2001

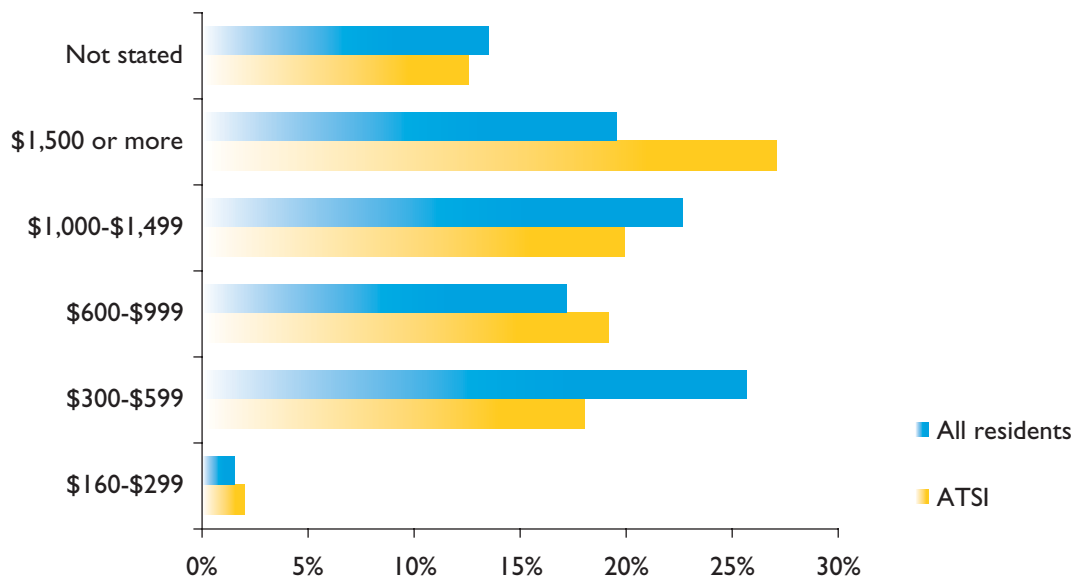


Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

The above graph compares indigenous income with all Rockdale residents. As can be seen, indigenous residents have proportionally lower incomes than other residents: they are less represented in high incomes, and more often on incomes of between \$160 and \$599.

Family Income

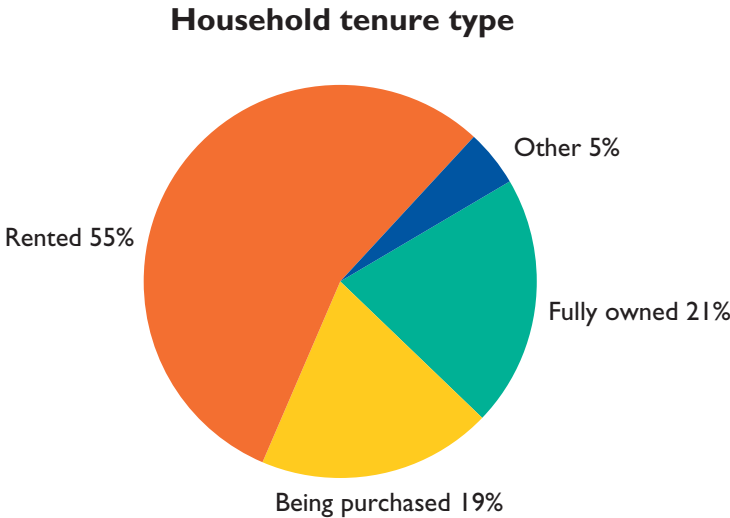
Indigenous family income 2001



Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Regional Profile.

The above graph compares indigenous family income, with the income of all residents in Rockdale. As can be seen, indigenous family income compares rather favourably, with 27% of indigenous families on incomes of \$1,500 a week or more. However, it must be remembered that this Census data, by other estimates, only provides data on as little as 20% of indigenous residents. The findings may therefore be distorted by this sample.

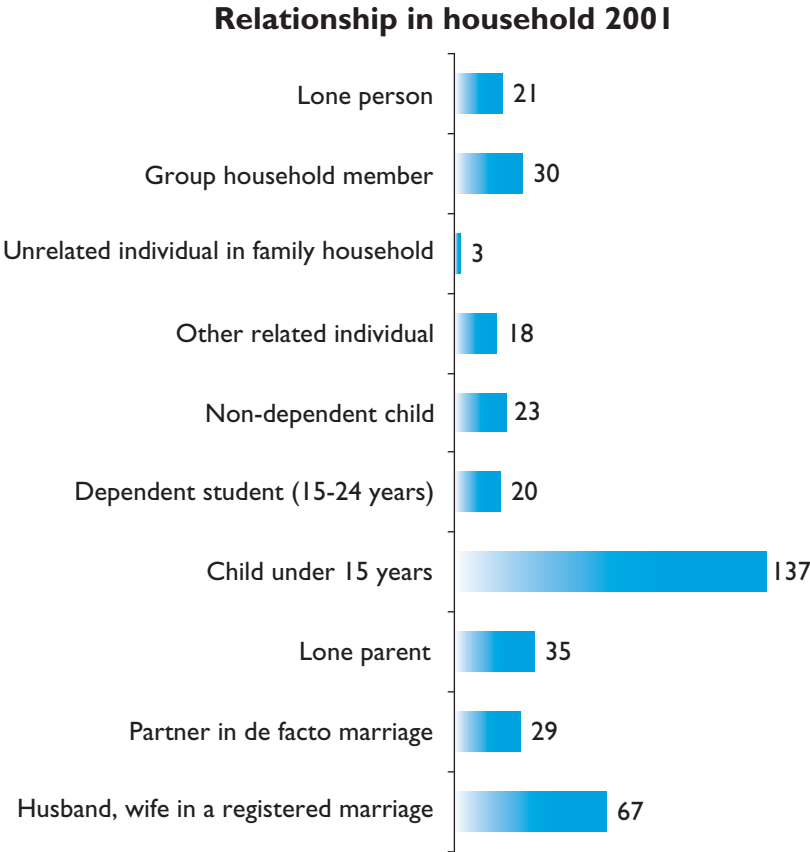
Household tenure



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

More than half of all indigenous people in Rockdale rent their place of residence, and just over one in five fully own their own home. This compares unfavourably with the Rockdale population in general where 28% of people rent, and 47% fully own their own home.

Relationship in household

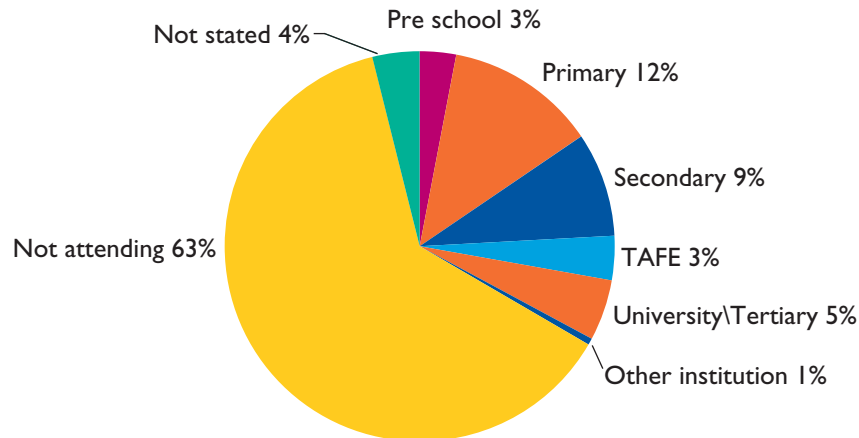


Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Compared to the Rockdale population in general, indigenous people have proportionally more children under the age of 15, proportionally less people in registered marriages (and more people in de facto relationships), as well as proportionally more lone parents, more group households, and less lone person households.

Attendance at an educational institution

Attendance at an educational institution

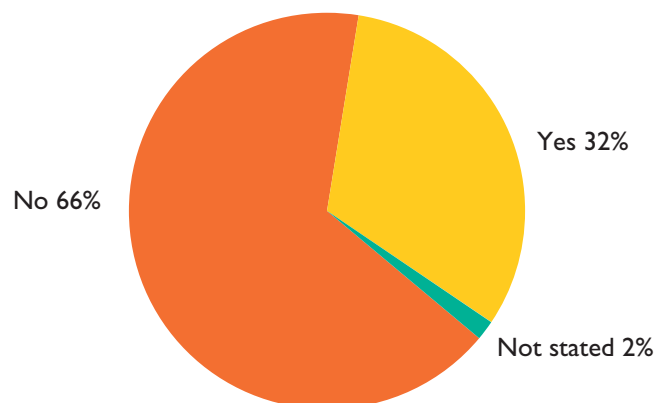


Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Compared to all Rockdale residents, indigenous residents are accessing education at proportionally higher rates. One reason behind this result is the proportionally higher level of children and young people in the indigenous population: for example attendance at infants and primary school is almost double the result for Rockdale generally. Indigenous residents are also accessing university and tertiary education at a higher proportional rate (5% compared to 3.8% for the population generally). Local sources report that young Aboriginal people have moved from regional areas to access tertiary education in Metropolitan Sydney. It is worth noting, however, that the only data available for indigenous education is 'attendance at an educational institution', in other words, current enrolments. Historically, indigenous residents have much lower levels of education and data on what levels Rockdale's indigenous residents have already attained would, according to local sources, demonstrate a lower level of educational attainment than this sample implies.

Computer use at home

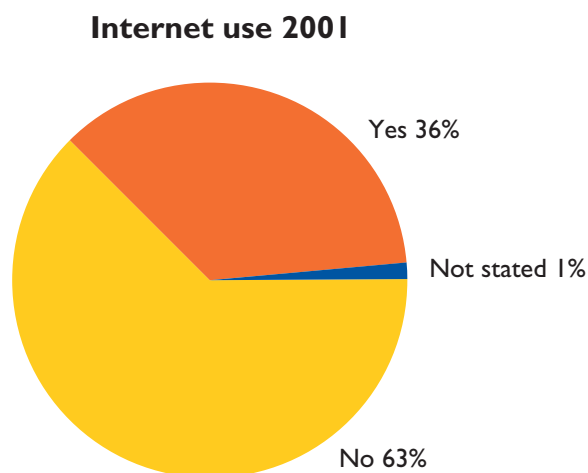
Computer use at home



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

The above results indicate access to computers in the home. Two in every three indigenous residents (or 66%) do not have access to a computer at home, while 58% of the population as a whole has a computer at home. Indigenous residents then, have less access to technology at home.

Use of Internet



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Indigenous residents also demonstrate less access to the Internet: 63% do not use the Internet, as opposed to 59% of the Rockdale population generally.

Population summary

When considering how best to service indigenous residents in Rockdale the main points that arise from an examination of demography are:

- There are between 1,300 and 2,500 indigenous residents in Rockdale.
- The indigenous population is proportionally younger than the Rockdale population in general: 34% of indigenous residents are under 15 years of age and only 16% are 45 years or older.
- Home ownership for indigenous residents is less than half the level of the Rockdale population as a whole, and well over half of all indigenous people rent accommodation.
- Indigenous households have a much higher proportion of dependent children.
- There are a higher proportion of sole parents, and there are less indigenous people living in registered marriages.
- While levels of educational attainment are much lower for indigenous residents, current levels of educational enrolment are comparatively high, including enrolment at university.

- Indigenous residents have less access to computers, and the Internet.
- National and State data on ATSI people, in general, suggest that these residents have a shorter life expectancy.
- Indigenous people are more likely to be unemployed than the rest of the population.
- Issues of poor health are more likely for ATSI residents.

Council's Role

Council has a strong advocacy and community leadership role in relation to ATSI issues. This includes ensuring Council appropriately recognises Aboriginal heritage and culture, and participates in activities to promote understanding of Aboriginal issues. The Aboriginal Heritage study conducted in 1999 formed a strong basis for this work.

Council is also involved in planning, developing and providing community services relevant to ATSI communities, largely in partnerships with community organisations and government.

How Indigenous Issues in the Area have been identified

Indigenous issues have been identified by consulting the following reports and groups:

- Material from the Australian Bureau of Statistics
- “Rockdale City Council Aboriginal Heritage Study”, 1999, by ERM Mitchell McCotter Pty Ltd (MM, 1999)
- “A Study of the Aboriginal Community of Rockdale City”, by Debbie Osgood, 2000 (Osgood, 2000)
- Consultations with
 - > The University of NSW Aboriginal Research and Resource Centre
 - > Hurstville City Council's Aboriginal Liaison Officer
 - > Kurrannya Aboriginal Corporation (KAC)
 - > Gnarrna Aboriginal Home and Community Care (HACC)
 - > The Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council (MALC)
 - > La Perouse Aboriginal Land Council (LPALC)
 - > Local Indigenous residents
 - > Local service providers

Discussion of local indigenous issues

Indigenous Australians are affected by many of the same issues as mainstream society, including gambling, drug, alcohol, and youth issues. However, there are additional issues and needs particular to ATSI communities.

Access to Services

ATSI people, like other CALD residents, can find accessing health services alienating and culturally inappropriate. It is important to provide services, and knowledge of services, in a way that is easily accessed by local indigenous residents.

This is especially important because Aboriginal people suffer from many challenging health problems. For example, this target group has the highest rate of diabetes and kidney disease in Australia. Living with these conditions requires access to specialised services and staff who are often not readily available in country towns. In fact several local families report that they came to St George from country towns to gain better health services for family members.

It is important to note that the Federal Government's Ageing and Disability Department allows people of ATSI background who are 45 years and over to access aged services, while all other groups must be over 65 years of age. It can be argued that this acknowledges the lower levels of life expectancy for indigenous Australians.

Implications: Consideration of ATSI health needs, in particular for new arrivals in the Rockdale community, is important. Improving life expectancy and health outcomes for indigenous residents should be supported due to the high levels of disadvantage, and related health outcomes, that this target group suffers.

Acknowledging Aboriginal Culture and Heritage

Indigenous Australians are the most longstanding residents of the Rockdale area (as it is now known) pre-dating all other residents by at least 12,000 years. Yet when most of us think of Australian history, it is the relatively short European history we consider.

Negation of the Aboriginal past has important implications for local Aboriginal people, non- Aboriginal residents, and indeed all Australians. Understanding our past is an important element to feeling at home in Australia, with both the land and each other; and is important in creating the future. It also has profound implications for the welfare of individuals and the community as a whole. There is social value in conserving heritage places, and community identity is

very dependent upon this preservation. Australia has long battled with identity issues and one significant aspect of this battle is a lack of acknowledgement of the pre-European past. Australia is not a land 'discovered' 200 years ago, and the absence of a longer history impacts negatively on Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals alike. Aboriginal culture has been, and is, undervalued in Australia. It is therefore important to value what signs remain of this history.

Research has suggested that Aboriginal people up to, and during, the earliest European settlement period, used Rockdale City extensively. Most of the evidence of Aboriginal occupation now lies beneath the surface of an urban environment, however, where the environment is less disturbed (for example along foreshores and in wetlands and bushland) there is even greater potential for discovery. A sensitivity map has been produced for Rockdale, which incorporates areas of known and potential Aboriginal heritage assets.⁵⁵

The 1999 Rockdale Aboriginal Heritage Study found that urban development was putting pressure on Aboriginal archaeology and heritage in Rockdale City, and, among other things, that there needed to be more awareness of heritage protection legislation. To this end the dispersal of information on Aboriginal heritage sites, tribal groups and contemporary significance should increase awareness of Rockdale's past.

One of the threats to preserving Aboriginal heritage is a perception that recognition of such heritage will impede commercial development or home building work. However signs of Aboriginal settlement are usually recorded at no expense to owners and development proceeds as usual.

Implications: Acknowledging, recording and, in some cases, preserving Aboriginal history is important for many reasons, not least for residents to know their local history. One result of not valuing Aboriginal heritage is a continued undervaluing of Aboriginal culture. This in turn has a negative effect on local indigenous people who, like all people, identify with ancestors and take their identity to a large extent from their culture. Other issues discussed in this chapter are also related to valuing Aboriginal history and culture.

Social and economic issues

Social and economic issues, including homelessness, are reported to be higher among the Rockdale indigenous population, than other local CALD residents. Chronic family health and social problems are often behind ATSI families' homelessness, and the need for public housing to assist with these problems. Census data demonstrates lower levels of income, home ownership and education for indigenous residents, to list only some disadvantages. Family instability may also be a factor. A scarcity of public housing is a feature of Rockdale City compounding these social and economic problems for ATSI residents.

The NSW Department of Housing accommodates a high proportion of ATSI residents at the Riverwood Housing Department Estate. Community workers also report that numerous young people in crisis have also arrived in the St George area to study, and with a need for employment and private sector housing. This dynamic has also contributed to an overall increase in the ATSI population of Rockdale City.

Implications: Social and economic issues are a feature of the lives of many ATSI residents, in higher proportions than for the non-ATSI community. Homelessness is just one of the issues which impacts on the Rockdale community as a whole.

Employment and education

One factor behind the increased numbers of indigenous residents in Rockdale City is migration into the area for the purpose of accessing education and employment. Parents feel their children will experience greater community inclusion and educational opportunities in a multicultural city rather than a town where historical racial boundaries continue to prevail, as in many rural areas. St George is also attractive because it is close to the city but offers a more family friendly suburban feel, rather than an urban environment. Rent affordability is also an important factor.

⁵⁵MM,1999.

At the same time, gradually improving employment opportunities for Aboriginal professionals, and better access to TAFE and tertiary education are starting to show among indigenous residents and this also attracts more Aboriginal people to the area. Local employers, such as Rugby League Clubs, South East Area Health Service, and the government community sector have specifically recruited ATSI staff and created traineeships, which has added to indigenous migration to the area.

However, with these changes particular problems have also arisen. Initially there is often only one income in a large family, putting the family under considerable financial pressure. The family can experience difficult settlement issues, similar to migrants from overseas. Housing, unemployment, lack of local knowledge and networks, and isolation are common settlement problems. Education can also be disrupted for school age and university age children and youth. This may be compounded as students attend a new school where being indigenous is uncommon.

As the NSW Government hands greater responsibility to local government to action more issues with less resources, there is also a parallel situation in regard to the state and federal Governments increasing ATSI responsibilities, yet providing fewer resources. Local governments are left to address these issues.

Implications: Successful settlement into Rockdale from other parts of Australia is an important issue overlooked in the case of indigenous Australians. Specific services and knowledge are required in this settlement process.

Discrimination and Racism

Australia, like most post-Colonial countries, has a history of racist treatment of indigenous people. Within living memory for some, ATSI people: were not allowed to vote; could not expect payment for labour; and were not free to exercise fundamental acts of autonomy such as freedom of movement. Further, there is the still sometimes denied part of our history, where ATSI children were stolen from parents. Many of these acts were intended to eradicate ATSI culture, and for many decades it was so

disadvantageous to be identify as ATSI that indigenous people hid the fact, even from their own children and grandchildren.

This history continues to leave its mark, even though much has improved for indigenous Australians. Attitudes, however, can be slow in changing. ATSI residents, like all CALD residents, at times still suffer from racism. This affects employment, income, education, self-esteem, and safety, to name just some issues. For example, ATSI residents everywhere report high levels of harassment from police. Most Australians link the police with increased levels of safety, while indigenous residents may link the police with feeling unsafe.

Implications: Racism undermines community harmony and increases all forms of disadvantage.

Communication and leadership

Local Government shares with Aboriginal Land Councils many common areas of concern and issues. This suggests that where Council can offer the Land Council access to resources, such as community venues to meet and more established systems regarding protocol and information sharing, then strong, mutually beneficial relationships can be established and further developed.

Recommendations

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
1. Acknowledging Aboriginal culture and Heritage	1.1 State at the beginning of Council meetings and community events an acknowledgement of the local traditional land owners – the Eora people	GM	Ongoing
	1.2 Council participate in National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week celebrations	CSP	Commence NAIDOC Week 2004.
	1.3 Fly the Aboriginal flag during NAIDOC Week	MLS	Ongoing thereafter
	1.4 Participate in the Aboriginal Mentoring Program as applications are received	GM	Ongoing
	1.5 Participate in the Local Government Aboriginal Network	GM, CSP	Ongoing
	1.6 Consider the coastal Darug dialect when naming public facilities, such as;- parks, cycle ways, walks, community facilities, etc.	MLS	Ongoing
2. Communication and Leadership	2.1 Consult with Land Council representatives regarding initiatives in relation to heritage management, community awareness and education	MUP, MCEP, CSP	Ongoing
	2.2 Ensure Council departments develop protocols, linkages and sound working relationships with the relevant ATSI bodies and community groups	EM	Ongoing
	2.3 Continue to encourage local community services to include indigenous people in service planning, employment and delivery.	CSP	Ongoing
3. Promote community awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal culture and heritage	3.1 Continue to resource Local History section of library	MCS	Ongoing
	3.2 Investigate the development of an annual Aboriginal Local History Prize	MCS, CSP	Ongoing
	3.3 Enhance understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage by supporting state government education programs	MCS	Ongoing
	3.4 Increase awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Rockdale by installing interpretive signage to explain the significance of particular areas	MO	Ongoing
	3.4 Develop educational materials to be placed at information points such as the customer service centre and libraries describing the Aboriginal heritage of the area and importance of conserving it	MUP	Ongoing

4. Protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage	4.1 Involve relevant Land Council/s and the Aboriginal community in heritage interpretation projects	MUP	Ongoing
	4.2 Ensure that items of Aboriginal heritage are adequately protected under Council's planning instruments	MUP	Ongoing
	4.3 Encourage and support consultation with the local Aboriginal community regarding management of their heritage	MUP, MTS	Ongoing
	4.4 Identify pressures on items of Aboriginal heritage and develop appropriate response to mitigate these pressures	MUP, MTS	Ongoing
	4.5 Advise developers of their responsibilities regarding Aboriginal heritage	MUP, MDAHR	Ongoing
	4.6 Update Council's sensitive sites map as additional Aboriginal heritage sites or places become known		Ongoing
	4.6 Undertake archaeological assessments where appropriate to identify and assess Aboriginal heritage sites and appropriate management options	MUP MUP MUP, MDAHR	Ongoing Ongoing
4.7 Identify on Section 149 certificates where a National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) registered relic or place affects such land while maintaining confidentiality of site locations			
5. Social and Economic Issues	5.1 Support the planning, development, establishment and continued improvement of community services targeting ATSI communities in Rockdale	CSP MCEP	Ongoing Ongoing
	5.2 Provide access to facilities for local Land Council activities and ATSI service delivery		
6. Staff and councillor training	6.1 Develop and provide cross cultural awareness training regarding ATSI issues for new staff and councillor induction	EM MO MUP	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
	6.2 Ensure staff are aware of procedures to take if cultural material is found at any time		
	6.3 Educate Council staff about the Aboriginal heritage values in the City and the requirements under the NPW Act regarding identification, notification, protection and management of Aboriginal relics and places, including the confidentiality of site locations		

Target group:

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Residents

Definition

This chapter examines relevant issues for residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) in Rockdale. CALD residents are in the majority in Rockdale, although coming from many different cultural and linguist backgrounds. Like the Anglo-Australian community, CALD residents may also be native Australian or migrant, elderly or young, able-bodied or disabled, male or female.

CALD residents can be identified through Census material in several ways: language spoken at home, country of birth, or questions on ancestry. These measurements of CALD in the community, and type of diversity, are fairly reliable. If anything the results may underestimate the number of CALD residents, as between the 1996 and 2001 Census questions about country of birth, and language spoken at home, were more frequently left 'unstated' in Australia.

Population profile

Prevalence of CALD residents in Rockdale

Given the high proportion, and number, of CALD residents in Rockdale there is a significant challenge for Council in developing appropriate services for these diverse groups, and in ensuring access. Each different CALD group has particular needs, both in terms of service requirements and in their ability to access services, which are in turn affected by age, gender, socio-economic status, country of birth, English language proficiency, length of time in Australia, available family support, understanding of the Australian system, and experiences brought with them from country of origin, or handed down to subsequent generations in Australia.

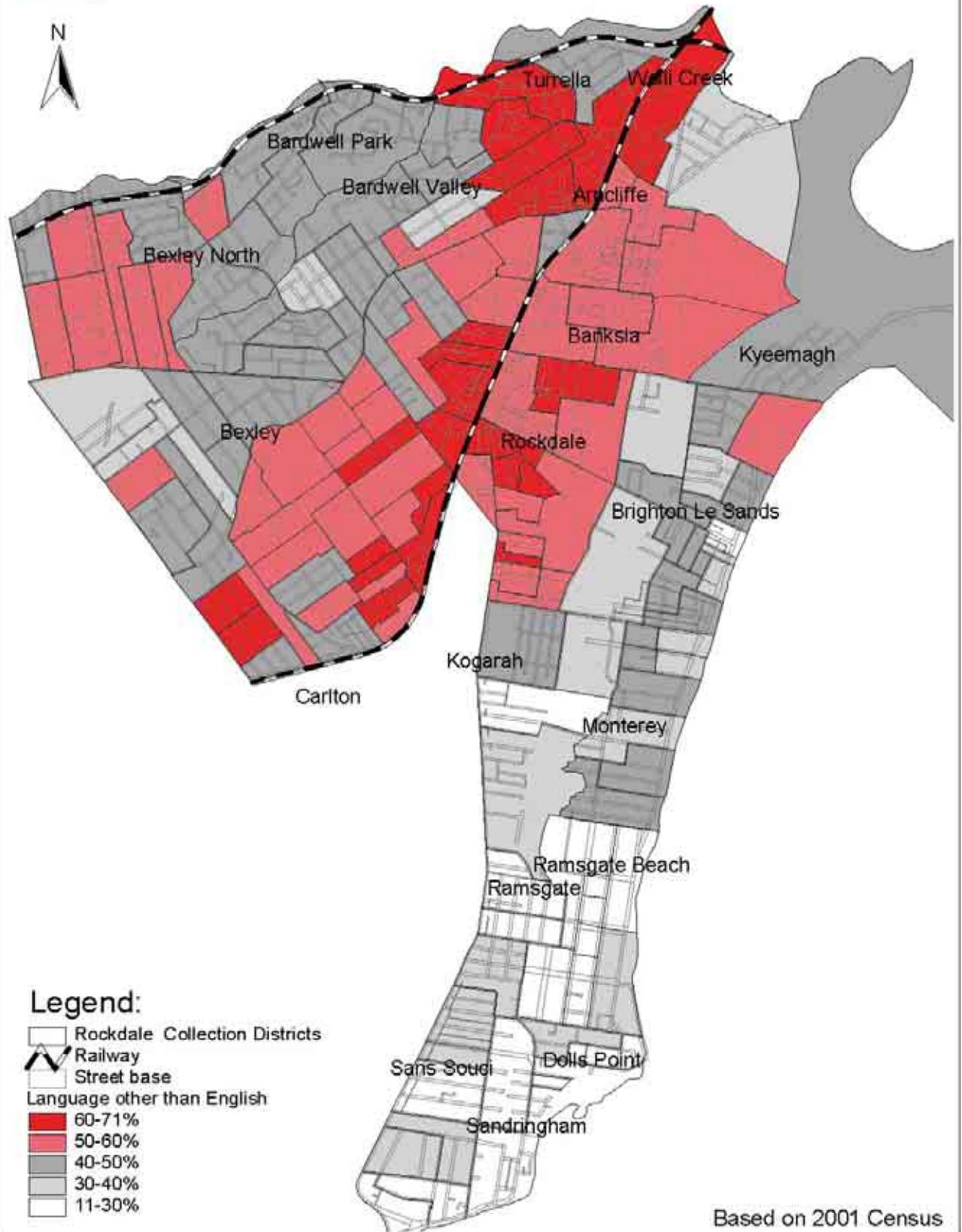
Gaining a detailed understanding of this huge part of our community is therefore crucial if we are to be able to provide services for all residents, to promote a safe, healthy and accessible lifestyle for the whole community, and to distribute resources with regard to equity.

In Rockdale City in 2001, almost 30,000 Rockdale residents were born in a non-English speaking country, and more than 42,000 speak a language other than English at home.



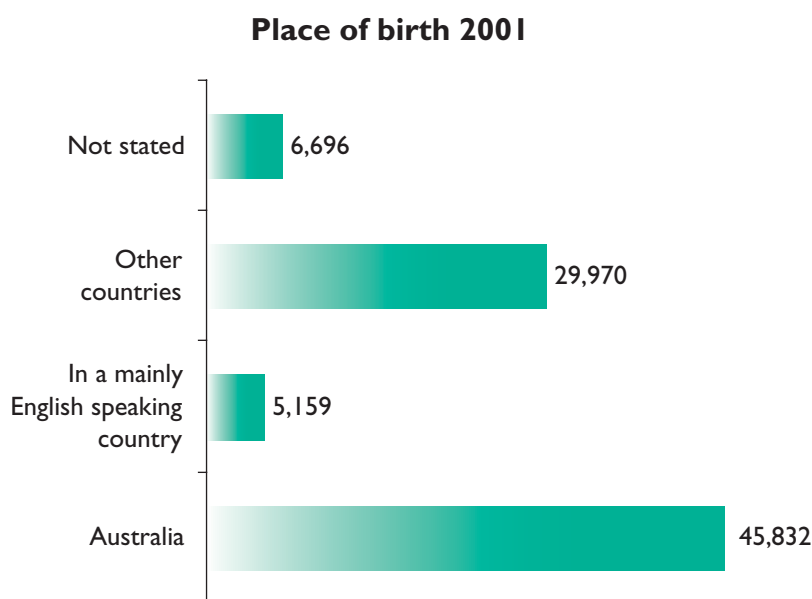
Persons speaking other language at home

Drawn by: M Hadley
Approved by: G Falconer
Drawn: February 2004
Scale: Not to scale



Based on 2001 Census

Place of birth



Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing, ABS.

According to the 2001 Census, 40% of Rockdale's residents (35,264) were born overseas, 34% (29,970) in predominantly non-English speaking countries. This compares with 40% of Rockdale's residents having been born overseas in 1996, and 38% in 1991.

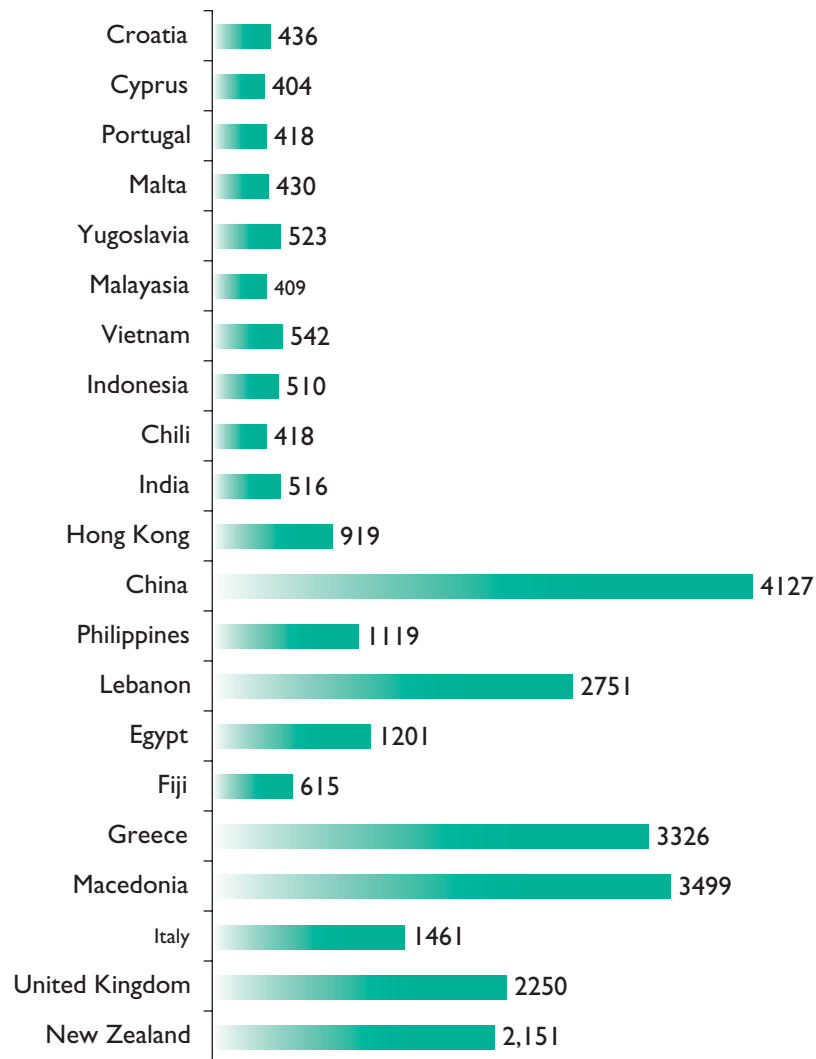
In addition, residents with both parents born overseas accounted for another 34% of Rockdale residents who were born in Australia. Therefore, almost three out of every four residents were either born overseas, or had parents who were born overseas.⁵⁶

The suburbs of Rockdale and Banksia had the highest concentration of overseas born residents in 2001 with about half the population of these suburbs born overseas. All other Rockdale suburbs had around a third of residents born overseas, with the exception of Sans Souci where just over one in four residents were born overseas.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

⁵⁷ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

Major birthplaces of Rockdale residents 2001

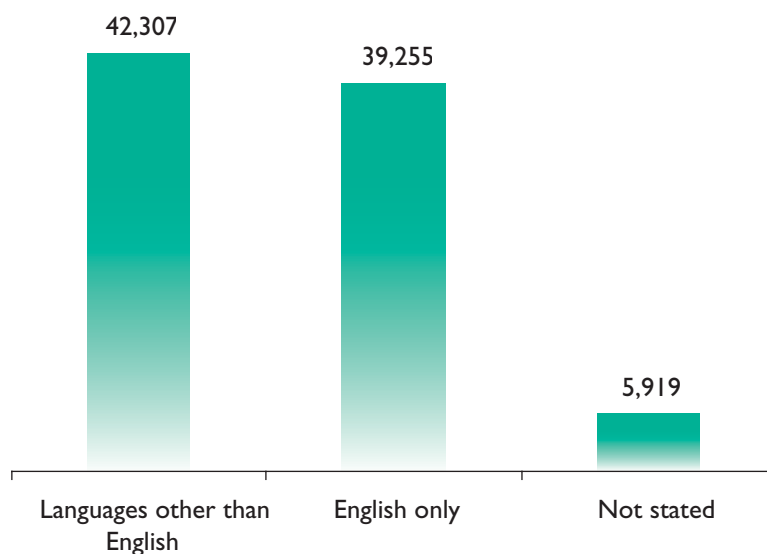


Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing, ABS.

The above graph shows the most common countries of birth for residents in Rockdale in 2001. China (with 4,127 or 4.7% of the Rockdale population), Macedonia (3,499 or 4%), and Greece (3,326 or 3.8%) were the three main countries of birth. Lebanon, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Italy, Egypt, the Philippines and Hong Kong were also significant places of birth for residents. Note that migrants from New Zealand may be from Pacific Islander cultures but are not distinguished from Anglo-New Zealand respondents.

Language spoken at home

Languages spoken at home 2001

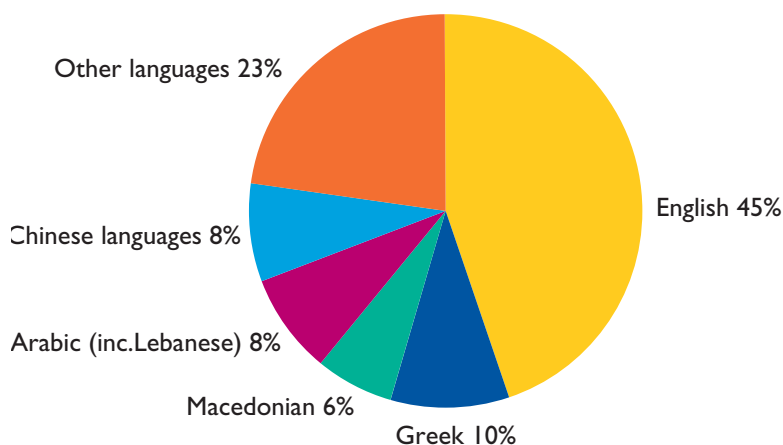


Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing, ABS.

As the above graph demonstrates, residents who speak languages other than English at home out-number, by 3,000, residents who speak only English at home.

According to Census 2001 48% of the Rockdale population, or 42,307 residents, speak a language other than English at home, however this is likely to be an underestimation as some CALD residents are reluctant to disclose that they do not speak English at home. English was stated as the only language spoken at home by 39,255 people (45%) in 2001, compared to 50% in 1996 and 55% in 1991.

Languages spoken at home 2001



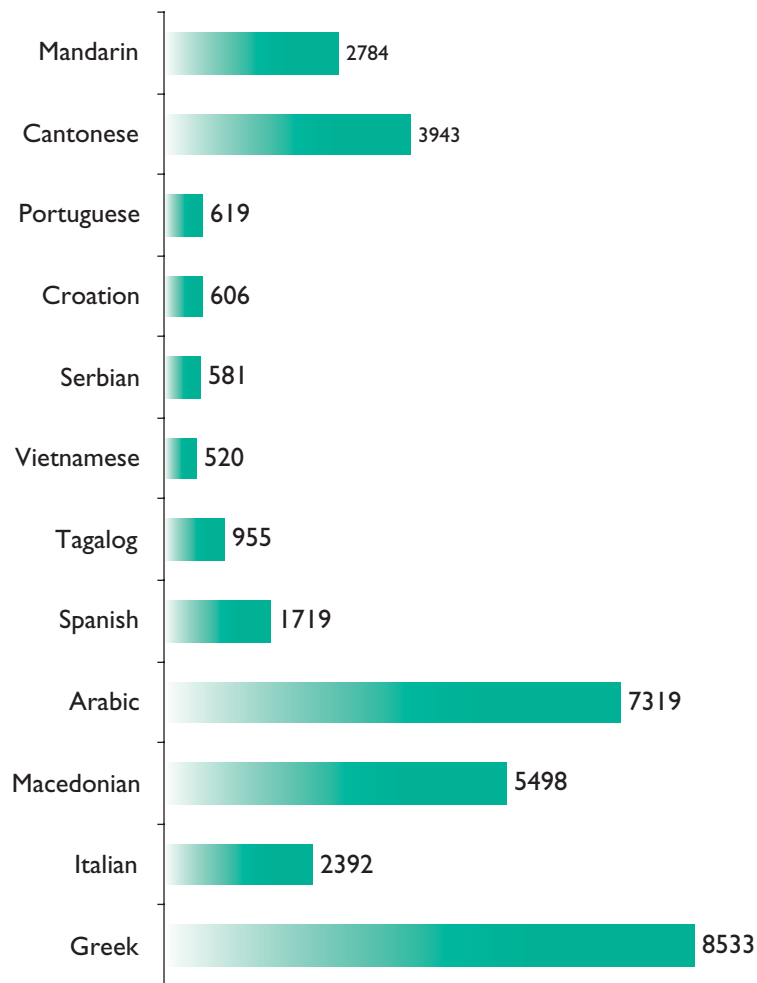
Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing, ABS

As this graph demonstrates, Rockdale has significant populations speaking Greek, Arabic, Chinese languages (predominantly Mandarin and Cantonese) and Macedonian. In addition to these language groups, almost one in every four residents speaks another non-English language.

The percentage of residents speaking Arabic and Chinese languages increased across Rockdale between 1996 and 2001.⁵⁸ Some areas of Rockdale show a greater concentration of particular language groups: in Arncliffe and Turella one in five residents spoke an Arabic language; in Kogarah, Carlton, Rockdale and Banksia Chinese languages were spoken by as many as 16% of residents.

⁵⁸ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

Main languages, other than English, spoken at home 2001

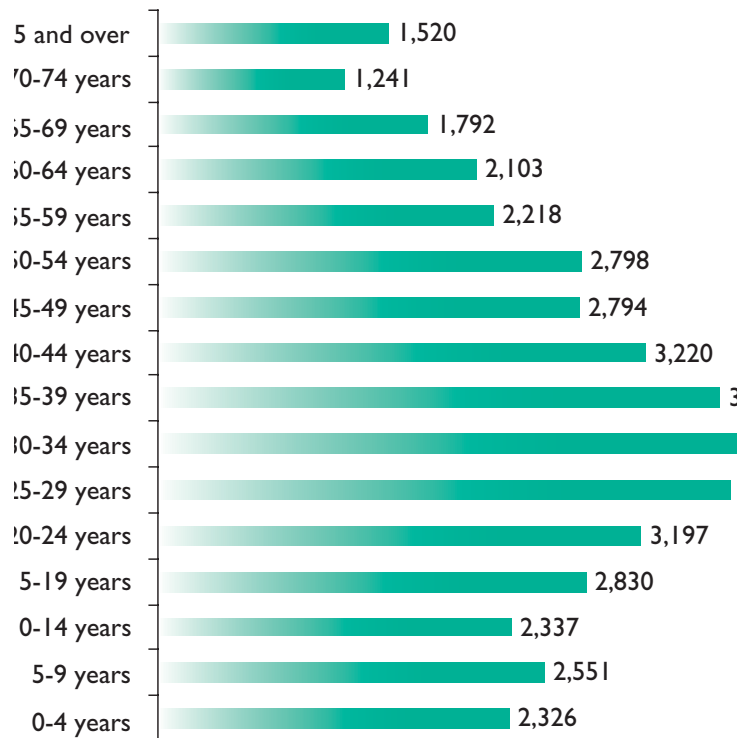


Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing, ABS.

The three most common languages spoken at home in Rockdale, other than English, were Greek, 8,533 (9.7%), Arabic, 7,319 (8.3%), and Chinese languages, 5,989 (8.2%). It is interesting to note the global diversity of these languages: 45% of residents speak a language from Northern Europe, 16% from Southern Europe, 9% from Eastern Europe, 9% from the Middle East and North Africa, and 13% from Southern, Southeast and Eastern Asia.

Age distribution CALD residents

Age distribution of people who spoke another language at home in 2001



Source: 2001 Population of Census and Housing, ABS

Compared to all Rockdale residents, the NESB population is younger: proportionally more residents are aged under 24 years, proportionally less are aged 75 years and over.

Recent Arrivals

Migrants who have recently arrived in Australia made up approximately 2% of the Rockdale population in 2001. The Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) defines the settlement period as the first five years of arrival. This is also the critical time when settlement services are available, although it should be noted that not all migrants access these services and some groups and individuals continue to have settlement difficulties after five years. The degree of settlement success impacts on migrants employment and therefore material circumstances, and those of their families, the ability to access services and assistance, and in the longer

term, their ability to function in the new society. To take one example, Cobb-Clark⁵⁹ found that although Australian migrants generally have high skill levels, they experience higher levels of unemployment due to settlement difficulties in their new host country. Shrestha⁶⁰ found that highly skilled migrant women miss out on accessing English language courses (that they pay for in their visa applications) because they do not know about them, or due to the limited amount of time they have to access the service, and also because they place their own settlement needs after those of other family members. It is therefore important for Council services to establish a relationship with new members of the community from their arrival.

⁵⁹Cobb-Clark, 2000.

⁶⁰Shrestha, 2003.

Top countries of birth for residents settling in Australia May 1999 to April 2002.	
China (excluding Taiwan and SARs)	476
Lebanon	157
Philippines	111
FYR of Macedonia	69
India	61
Indonesia	61
All other	778
Total	1,713

Source: Masri, 2002.

As the table shows newly arrived migrants from China made up a significant proportion in the three years to 2002, followed by migrants from Lebanon and the Philippines.

Top languages spoken by residents settling in Australia May 1999 to April 2002	
Arabic	208
English	193
Mandarin	168
Chinese (nfd)	158
Cantonese	109
Serbian	64
Macedonian	61
Indonesian	54
Tagalog	41
Spanish	39

Source: Masri, 2002.

Chinese languages were the most frequently spoken languages of new settlers in the three years to mid 2002, followed by English, then Arabic.

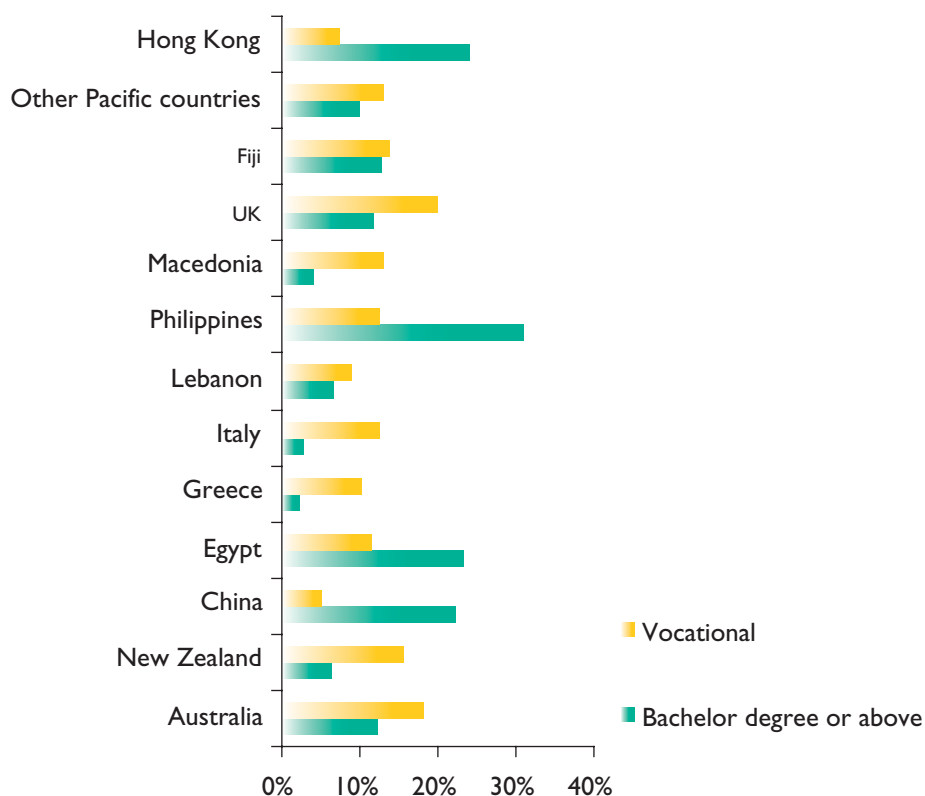
Top migration categories for settlers in Rockdale arriving May 1999 to April 2002	
Family – Spouse/Fiancé	713
Skill – independent	375
Skill – Australia/Regional linked	153
Skill – Business	77
Family – Parent	67
Humanitarian – Special Hum Program	66
Onshore: Family – Spouse/Fiancé	53
Humanitarian – Refugee	51
Family – Other	38
Family – Child	81
Others	81
Total	1,713

Source: Masri, 2002.

A large proportion of Rockdale's new settlers come to Australia under the Family Stream Visa, followed by various skilled visa categories. The type of visa a new migrant holds can provide some indication as to what services might be needed to assist their settlement process. Family Stream Visa holders are often spouses, predominantly women, and can be vulnerable to missing out on language services, and not being able to take advantage of their own education and skills in employment.⁶¹

Qualifications

Qualifications: residents aged 15 and over, by country of birth



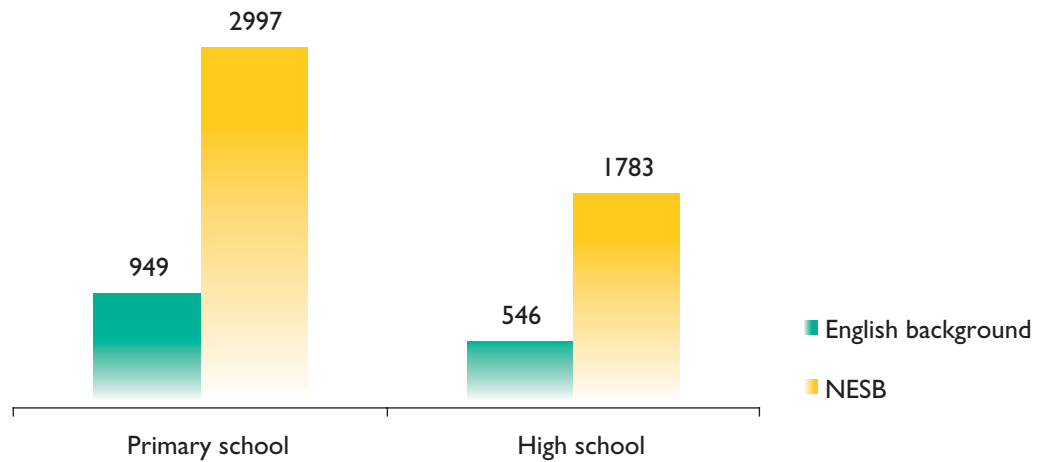
Source: ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

The above graph indicates the percentage of people holding university degrees, or trade qualifications by the country of their birth. Residents born in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Egypt and China are most often university educated. Residents born in Greece, Italy and Macedonia are least often university educated. Rockdale residents born in the UK, Australia or New Zealand have the highest levels of vocational qualifications.

⁶¹Shrestha, 2003.

Education

School attendance at public schools 2000



Source: NSW Dept of Education and Training; Department of Education, Training & Youth Affairs.

Public primary and high schools in Rockdale City are attended, according to these 2000 figures, by a large majority of NESB students. Around 7 out of every 10 public students are from NESBs.

Population summary

When considering how best to service CALD residents in Rockdale the main points that arise from an examination of demography are:

- Three out of four Rockdale resident were either born overseas, or had parents who were both born overseas.
- Almost 30,000 residents were born in a non-English speaking country.
- China, Macedonia, Greece and Lebanon are the most common countries of birth for Rockdale residents.
- 48% of residents speak languages other than English at home, 45% speak English only at home.
- English, Greek, Arabic and Macedonian, followed by Cantonese and Mandarin are the most commonly spoken languages.
- Around 2% of Rockdale residents have been in Australian for less than 3 years, with the largest number of new arrivals coming in under Family Stream Visa.

- Many residents born in NES countries have very high levels of education.
- Around 7 out of 10 public school students are from an NES background.

Council's Role

Council plays an important role in the support, delivery and facilitation of services addressing the needs of CALD residents. All Council services are relevant to this group, and Council's Multicultural Affairs Policy Statement includes a number of strategies to improve access for CALD residents, including the use of language aides, translations, and targeted communication/education measures. Council also has a Multicultural/Community Harmony Reference Group that provides advice to Council on CALD issues.

Council has a strong advocacy and community leadership role, which includes the initiation of projects to improve community harmony and understanding.

Council is also involved in planning, developing, and providing community services, largely in the form of partnerships with community organisations and

government. Council is an active member of the St George Ethnic Services Interagency and, through its Community Development Grant Program, has funded a number of projects for CALD communities.

How CALD issues in the area have been identified

Issues concerning NESB residents, and their communities, have been identified in the following ways:

- In 2002 a research project was produced for Rockdale City Council by Fadilla Masri entitled "Migrant Issues and Needs in Rockdale" detailing issues facing the NESB community in Rockdale. This chapter relies heavily on this report. As well as reviewing local statistics and available literature, the author of the report interviewed staff at the St George Migrant Resource Centre Inc, the St George Lebanese Joint Committee, other welfare organisations, and NESB residents (Masri, 2002).
- The Understanding Arabic Speaking and Muslim Communities in St George Forum, held September 2003 (UASMC, 2003).
- Community Relations Symposium – UTS 2003 (CRS, 2003).
- Growing Peace in Rockdale – A 2003 Forum of Christian and Muslim Leaders (GPR, 2003).
- Interviews with local community agencies and government departments, including the St George Ethnic Services Interagency.
- Specific consultations with Muslim women in 2002 through the Al Zahra Women's Association (Al Zahra, 2002).
- Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs 2003 Report of a review of settlement services for migrants and humanitarian entrants (DIMIA, 2002 & 2003).
- St George Migrant Resource Centre Annual Report, 2001 (MRC, 2001)
- The 1999 research project on the settlement needs of new Chinese migrants in Southern Sydney (Chung, 1999).
- Longitudinal Study of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA) for settlers in Australia in 1999-2000, conducted by the Department for Immigration, Multiculturalism and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA, 2000).
- The 1998 report on the needs and issues of Macedonian young people (MAWAS, 1998).
- The 1997 evaluation of Rockdale City Council's NESB communication strategies (Galea, 1997).
- The 2002 report by the St George Hospital and Community Health Service, on CALD focus groups on health (SGHCHS, 2002).
- Reports from the St George Lebanese Joint Committee on youth (2001) and women (2002).
- Review of the Ethnic Access Program, which include the St George Region (Ageing and Disability Department, 1999).
- Consultations with young people regarding racism, St George Migrant Resource Centre (MRC, 2003)
- Material from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Discussion of local CALD issues

Migrants are affected by many of the same issues as the rest of society, including gambling, drug, alcohol, and youth issues. However, there are additional issues and needs particular to migrant communities. In summary, the main CALD issues affecting the area, as identified by the above sources are:

English proficiency, skills acquisition, and language barriers

A total of 6,933 Rockdale residents reported not being able to speak English well, or not being able to speak English at all in 2001.⁶² This represents 8% of the total population of Rockdale City. A lack of English proficiency among many migrants is a significant

challenge and was reported to affect all NESB migrant communities in Rockdale. However, there are some differences in how each CALD community is affected by English language problems. For example, in the more established CALD communities, such as the Greek, Italian and Macedonian communities, English language problems are largely an issue for older community members. In other CALD communities, such as the Chinese, Arabic and Spanish speaking communities, emerging communities such as the Indonesian, Eritrean and Ethiopian communities, and arrivals on Refugee and Humanitarian Visas, there are significant language barriers among many of these residents, and in all age groups.

Community members and community workers have reported that English tuition, paid for as part of the cost of entering Australia (Adult Migrant English Program – AMEP) is often not sufficient for migrants to learn English adequately, requiring them to seek further tuition, sometimes at their own cost. In addition, not all NESB migrants are eligible for AMEP.

Due to a lack of English language proficiency, CALD residents from all communities widely reported a need for assistance when dealing with authorities such as Centrelink, the Department of Housing, law services, citizenship services and completing forms in general. Isolation was also reported to be a result of English language barriers in communities, in particular amongst the elderly.

Implications: The language barrier permeates all other issues relating to migrants' settlement and life in Australia. In the LSIA survey, the ability to communicate in English was found to be associated with labour market success, accessing education and training opportunities, gaining information about services, and finding suitable housing.

Access to information

Information dispersal to migrants from NESBs is a major concern for Rockdale residents, affecting both recent and more settled migrants. Easily accessible and translated material on basic information about health services, immigration, transport, social security, housing, education, employment, and law is in high demand, and under supplied. The need for telephone interpretation, simplified information, information sharing, advocacy, and support groups were all reported in consultation.

Marketing of available services to CALD communities is crucial in improving information levels.⁶³

Implications: Accessing information about available services, and how to utilise them, is essential for the successful settlement of migrants. Community members can remain in isolation and ignorance without an understanding of the way their new host country operates, greatly impeding their ability to live in, and contribute to, Australian society. Use of ethnic media, newspapers and radio has been recommended as an effective way of disseminating information.

Settlement issues

Newly arrived migrants and refugees have particular needs, for example, information about all aspects of their new host country, and assistance in such tasks as enrolling in English classes, applying for Medicare, opening a bank account, obtaining a tax file number, finding rental accommodation, employment, or education. The St George Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) reports that settlement issues are the area of greatest demand.⁶⁴ Emergency material relief assistance, referrals to relevant services, help with adjusting to cultural differences, technology and, in general, dealing with a new system, are also common needs.

The 2003 review of settlement services outlined the Australian Government's future approach to settlement services for migrants and humanitarian entrants.⁶⁵ The new approach is likely to lead to reductions in funding for local migrant services. In particular, it will result in a loss of security for the St George Migrant Resource Centre, which until now has had its own specific funding program. It will no longer receive funding for rent or electricity but will compete for funding with other agencies delivering settlement services.

Another change is the Department for Immigration, Multiculturalism and Indigenous Affairs' (DIMIA) intention to limit the definition of settlement to five years, which would exclude migrants who have been in Australia longer from eligibility for services. This will create hardship for many Rockdale communities, as there are significant variables that mean a longer period of access is required. These include circumstances of arrival, English language proficiency, employment status, and the level of resources new arrivals bring with them, as well as discrimination and acceptance of particular ethnic groups within the broader community. For example, many migrant women (a majority

⁶²ABS, Population of Census and Housing, 2001.

⁶³UASMC, 2003.

⁶⁴MRC, 2001.

⁶⁵DIMIA, 2003.

of whom come to Australia on Spouse Visas) put their own settlement needs behind those of their family, as employment and children's education are prioritised within the family. Women, therefore, are most likely to access settlement services several years after their migration to Australia.

The effect of these intended changes will be to bring about a fragmentation and a net reduction in service delivery to Rockdale's expanding multicultural community. The planned changes also increase the risk that existing communities with high needs will not have the benefit of ethnically specific services, which could impact particularly on the local Macedonian and Arabic communities.

Due to the importance of such services to the area, Rockdale Council will be developing a research project in 2004, in conjunction with the other St George Councils, on the effect of changes to DIMIA funding in the area.

Implications: Newly arrived migrants need particular assistance to successfully settle into Australian society. Concentrating assistance at this early stage of settlement may speed this adjustment, and lessen demand for services at subsequent stages of settlement.

Housing and accommodation

Locating and securing affordable and suitable housing is one of the major tasks undertaken by migrants in their early settlement years. LSIA data indicates that approximately nine out of ten migrants live in shared accommodation with either relatives or friends when they first arrive in Australia. Contributing to this pattern are high rents, lack of public and community housing, and affordable private housing in the St George area.

Most CALD communities in Rockdale report problems associated with housing. In particular, it is a concern for elderly community members who may have limited resources and need to rely on other family members for support. Common to all CALD communities is also a desire to stay living in Rockdale due to social and family links in the area. This means that relatively high housing costs are a fact of life for CALD communities, compounding their lower levels of income (relative to the non-CALD community), which will be detailed below. Several communities linked these factors to overcrowding.

Pacific Islander residents have been identified as one group with particular housing problems due to their large immediate families, and the need to accommodate extended families. This community requires larger accommodation facilities, in other words more expensive housing, which places financial strain on them. Residents born in the Philippines and New Zealand demonstrate low levels of home ownership, and for New Zealand in particular, low levels of being in the process of purchasing a home are a feature.⁶⁶ Council's Multicultural Community Harmony Reference Group also indicated that large Arabic families faced similar problems.

Newly arrived migrants also have problems securing rental accommodation, even if they can afford it, because of the lack of references associated with a previous rental history. In addition accessing affordable housing has become extremely difficult and applicants for public housing in St George face a waiting time of up to twelve years.

Migrants need information about available housing options, such as the Department of Housing's priority housing criteria, applying for public housing, tenancy, getting repairs done, re-housing and payment of rental bonds. The St George MRC has held numerous housing information sessions due to the high demand. Newly arrived migrants also require assistance with support and reference letters and referrals to refuges and other emergency accommodation services.

Implications: Housing is a crucial component of the successful settlement of migrants. Understanding how the housing system works in Australia is also crucial for migrants to begin establishing a foundation in their new communities, from which to meet other goals such as employment, education, language acquisition etc. Problems with housing lead to overcrowding, family stress, health issues, and financial strain.

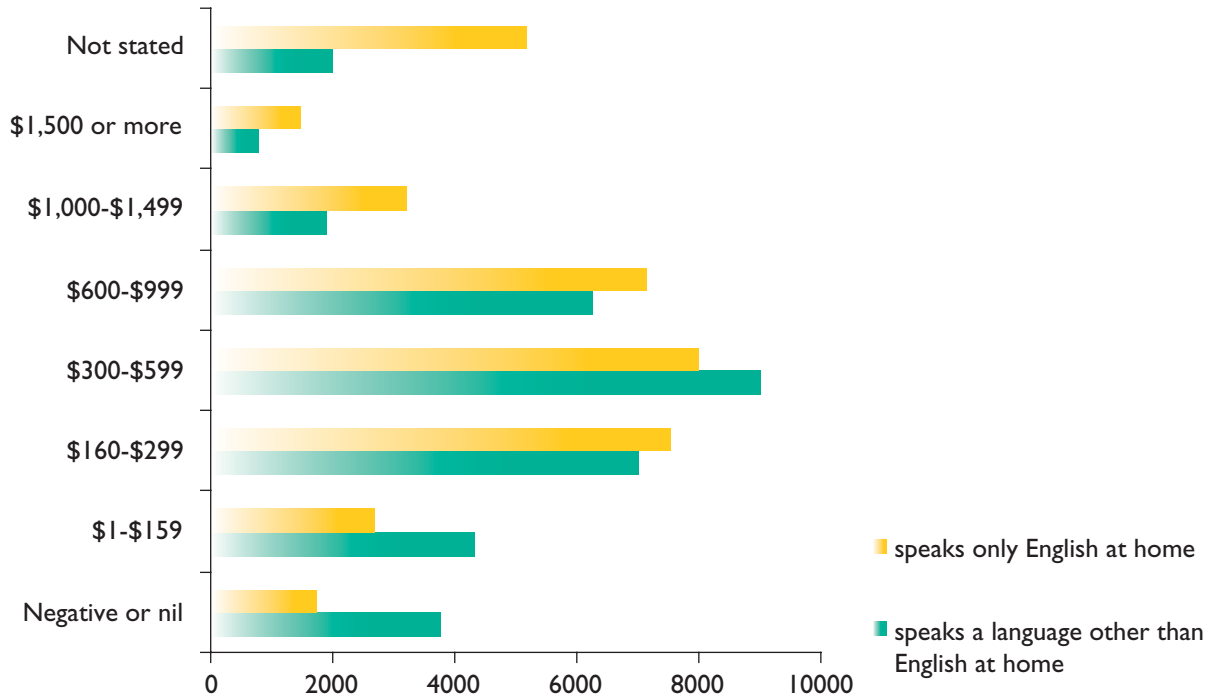
Immigration

Migrants also need to keep up to date with such things as: changes in immigration law; access to immigration information and advice; sponsorship of relatives and spouses; and referral to migration agents. Access to this information is complicated by migrants' English language proficiency, and not having an understanding of the Australian system. Another problem identified by a number of migrant workers is the misconduct of migration agents, for example through overcharging and the exploitation of clients. The relatively high fees of migration agents are said to have aggravated financial hardship for some migrants

⁶⁶ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

Income and Finance

Individual weekly income, 2001



Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing, 2001

The above graph demonstrates that when comparing the incomes of NESB residents, with residents from English-only backgrounds, NESB residents in Rockdale demonstrate lower levels of income. NESB residents are more represented in lower income brackets, and less represented in higher income brackets. Over 8,000 NESB residents (aged 15 years and over) earn less than \$160 per week, while 4,400 from the English-only community are in this income bracket. 2,700 NESB residents earn \$1000 and above, while 4,700 English-only residents are in this income bracket.

NESB residents also have lower labour market participation rates (47% not in the labour force) than residents born in mainly English speaking countries (36% not in the labour force). There was a correspondingly higher unemployment rate for NESB residents in 2001: 7.7% while for residents from mainly English speaking countries (including Australia) the rate was 5.2%.⁶⁷ There is also evidence of a higher proportion of sole parent families among some CALD groups (for example 17% of Arabic speaking households are one parent families, while the overall rate for Rockdale is 11%)⁶⁸.

A lack of income security, poor financial management, Centrelink issues, and financial hardship are common experiences for many migrants in Rockdale. Poverty and extreme financial hardship were also reported within communities. Income levels are a sign of economic and social well being, and will thus have an impact on other aspects of migrants' lives. Many recently arrived migrants find themselves under financial hardship because of the two-year waiting period to receive unemployment and other benefits. Some find that the resources they brought with them are used up more quickly than expected, and this can be compounded by problems finding employment and accommodation.

Migrants often require assistance from settlement officers when approaching Centrelink, most often due to their lack of familiarity with social security systems. Some are reluctant to access Centrelink services because of an associated stigma (considered as taking charity). Others may require interpreters and/or an advocate to be present. Migrants may also require help in approaching charitable organisations for

⁶⁷ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

⁶⁸ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

material assistance (food, clothing) when experiencing extreme financial difficulties, and referrals to financial management services can also be needed.

Implications: Poverty, family stress and inequity are the result of economic hardship and an inability to access assistance. In some cases migrants are eligible for assistance, but due to language barriers and/or a lack of information and advocacy, are unable to access services, leading to inequitable distribution of community resources.

Employment and education

Employment plays a major role in shaping the experience, and quality of life, of migrants.

They face many of the same issues as other Australians in seeking suitable employment, including an under-supply of available jobs. However, there are differences in the labour market success of native versus migrant job seekers. For example, migrants with high English language skills are more often able to use their qualifications, and therefore obtain jobs closer to their level of qualification and work experience. Migrants with poorer English language skills are more often reduced to taking jobs that do not utilise their skills and qualifications, jobs that they are in fact over qualified for.⁶⁹ According to one study, migrants are more likely to hold jobs for which they are over skilled, and less likely to hold semi-skilled jobs.⁷⁰ In 2001, NESB residents from Rockdale had significantly higher unemployment than English speaking residents.⁷¹

Migrant success in the job market is often hampered by such factors as an accent when speaking English, a preference for local work experience, confidence, and cultural and professional differences. These problems can also affect migrants from English speaking countries. Community workers also report some clients have encountered racism and discrimination from employers. In Rockdale, CALD residents also reported exploitation in the labour market, specifically under-payment, and OH & S issues related to long hours and inadequate breaks.

Migrants who do not speak English well face difficulties in accessing paid work, but also have difficulties meeting their obligations to do volunteer work under the Federal Government's mutual obligation system. This applies in particular to mature women.

Education levels and qualification levels are both higher and lower for CALD residents compared to the population as a whole, depending on various factors. Overall, 12% of residents have tertiary qualifications, while 31% of residents born in the Philippines, and 24% born in Hong Kong have tertiary qualifications. However, low percentages of residents born in Greece, Italy, and Macedonia have tertiary qualifications.⁷²

Specific education issues were reported for the South Pacific Islander Community. These include: low school retention rates; truancy, which was related to a lack of encouragement to continue in education; the reported attitude of teachers toward these students; stereotyping at school; and the cost of education. A high level of suspensions and expulsions were reported from within this community.

The changes to TAFE fee structures outlined below in the women's chapter will also have a detrimental effect on people from CALD communities.

Areas identified in which migrants need assistance include:⁷³

- Information on how to achieve conversion of overseas qualifications to Australian standards (such as through using the Overseas Skills Advisory Service and/or the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition, and the Vocational Training Board).
- Information on what assistance is available to increase skills and qualifications, for example on available educational opportunities such as language, literacy and bridging courses.
- Help with job searching, resume writing, job applications, interview skills, the development of training and employment plans, local work experience placements, and advice on education and training issues. There is also a specific need for youth services.

⁶⁹DIMIA, 2000.

⁷⁰DIMIA, 2000.

⁷¹ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

⁷²ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

⁷³MRC, 2001; and interview with The Specialist Migrant Placement Officer (SMPO) at the St George MRC

- Accessing services such as counselling and peer support.
- Awareness of the systems of the Australian workplace.
- The need for better communication skills, in particular when interacting informally in the workplace.
- Migrant women need particular help with issues such as entitlements and contracts and workplace harassment.
- The need for employers to be educated about the benefits of employing skilled migrants.
- Help with enrolling children in education.
- Help in accessing childcare.

Suggested strategies include government initiatives, greater links with local businesses in creating work opportunities, raising awareness of barriers faced by migrants, lobbying for changes to government restrictions for migrant access to training and education, and local workshops to address some of the above issues.

Implications: Migrants bring a wealth of skills and experience to Australia. The costs of not addressing employment barriers are borne not only by migrants, but also by the Australian economy, as it fails to benefit fully from the full contribution of migrants. In addition are the social, material and psychological effects of unemployment, under employment and employment beneath appropriate levels of skill and experience. This situation can also impact on subsequent generations.

Health

One major study has shown that people with poor English language skills report lower levels of health, and that Humanitarian Visa entrants were more likely to have suffered from a minor mental health problem.⁷⁴ A 2002 report by the St George Hospital and Community Health Service documented health issues for people from CALD backgrounds. These included problems accessing health services. Statistical evidence for this observation can be found in data available regarding access to disability services in

Rockdale. Although residents who speak another language at home make up 48% of Rockdale residents, only 12% of residents who used disability services were from this demographic in 2000.⁷⁵

Other migrant health issues outlined in this report, and also by local workers, include:

- Dissatisfaction with medical explanations and care.
- Feeling intimidated and a fear of authority.
- Language barriers.
- Not understanding the health system.
- The type and method of information provision.
- Concern about inappropriate and insensitive communication.
- Lack of knowledge about how to access and use services.
- The need for interpreters.
- Waiting times and waiting lists.
- Transport and parking.
- Lack of education about general health care.
- A need for promotion of health checks such as breast screening to some communities, eg: the Indonesian Community.
- A sense of lack of respect for patients and fear of discrimination.

Due to these factors migrants can be reluctant to seek medical attention until a critical or severe stage of illness is reached.⁷⁶ In particular the Pacific Islander, Eritrean, Ethiopian and Indonesian Communities were all reported as reluctant to seek medical attention at an early stage of illness.

Particular services are also needed for migrants who have entered Australia on Refugee and Humanitarian Visas such as torture and trauma counselling.

All CALD communities reported a lack of available community services, especially culturally specific services. A review into the Ethnic Access Program found that services under the Home and Community Care Program (HACC) did not respond to the needs of NESB people and that there were systemic, service delivery, and access barriers.⁷⁷ This report concluded

⁷⁴DIMIA, 2000.

⁷⁵ABS, 2002 Regional Profiles. Based on 2000 data supplied by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

⁷⁶Interviews with local MRC workers.

⁷⁷ADD, 1999.

that there was a need for more community developing activities to improve access for CALD groups to services.

Suggestions for improvements included: the need for quality assurance (to all clients) and improving information dispersal to CALD communities, through increasing the amount of information available, and greater utilisation of interpreters; training for medical staff in effective communication with clients from CALD backgrounds; and addressing cultural issues such as mixed wards, food issues and privacy.

Implications: Health problems, and access to health services, by Rockdale migrants is an important issue. Failure to maintain health, and to tend to health problems, impacts on migrants' ability to work, access education, successfully settle in Australia, and ultimately, on quality of life. If migrant health levels are not maintained, ultimately the cost of health provision also increases.

Racism and discrimination

Racism and discrimination was reported, to varying degrees, for different CALD communities in Rockdale. All communities identified racism as an issue but not all considered it a major issue. More established communities, such as the Greek, Macedonian and Italian communities reported racist incidents, but were not affected by it, for example, to the extent of the South Pacific Islander, Eritrean and Arabic communities.

These issues take place in a post-September 11 Australia. This context, and other factors such as international conflict, the Bali bombings, high profile sexual assault cases in Sydney, and the introduction of counter-terrorism legislation, have altered Australia's social and political environment. One outcome has been an increase in racism. This has impacted particularly upon the Muslim and Arab community who are enduring extremely negative perceptions at many levels of Australian society: media, governmental (both Federal and State politicians have made negative remarks toward this community) and at the local level. Negative media images of Arabic people

have become almost commonplace in Australia. The targeting of one CALD group also impacts on other CALD groups as some fear it could happen to them. Government's approach to defend free speech over a defence of migrants has also taken its toll.

Rockdale City had 7,500 Arabic speaking residents and a similar number of people stating their religion as Muslim (8% of all residents are Muslim) in 2001. However the number of people affected by racism in this context is likely to be larger than these figures suggest, for not all Arabic speaking people are Muslim, and not all Muslims are Arabic. Muslim people also arrive from countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Yugoslavia, India and Africa. In addition, these events have tended to increase racism towards all CALD groups, as distrust generally spreads throughout the Australian community.

Rockdale's Arab and Muslim communities have reported problems with racism and discrimination, one respondent stating that "fear is a core feeling in the community."⁷⁸ Community workers and members cite employment discrimination as a major issue, particularly in relation to young Arabic people.⁷⁹ In 2001 the unemployment rate for Lebanese born people in Rockdale was 16.5%, compared to 6.3% all residents, which suggests discrimination may be occurring.⁸⁰ There were also problems with negative stereotyping, and other various forms of abuse. This situation has caused deep-seated distrust between the Arabic speaking community and society more broadly, and makes Arabic speaking residents feel "isolated and uncomfortable".⁸¹ During a national consultation, one woman likened the whole experience to a similar experience she had had in South Africa during Apartheid.⁸²

This issue was also reported as a personal safety issue, as the Arabic speaking community found negative stereotypes led to discrimination and abuse, including physical abuse on public transport and on the roads. In addition, Arab and Muslim communities are generally reluctant to report incidents because of fear of reprisals and a sense that the police are scrutinising them, rather than defending them as victims of crime.

⁷⁸Al Zahra, 2003.

⁷⁹Masri, 2002; Al Zahra, 2003; MW, 2003.

⁸⁰ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

⁸¹UASMC, 2003.

⁸²HREOC notes Consultation with Muslim Women's National Network of Australia, Executive Committee Members, Auburn City Library Saturday April 5 2003.

Women: Consultations with Arab and Muslim women⁸³ also revealed high levels of fear, powerlessness and intimidation due to vilification. As many as 3,000 Rockdale women speak Arabic. Racism affects women in a different way to men⁸⁴ and Arabic and Muslim can be particularly vulnerable to racism due to distinctive dress, and because men (and some women) feel more empowered to harass and abuse women, rather than other men, on the street.⁸⁵ There are reports of widespread harassment on public transport, harassment of women drivers by other drivers, and older women are very concerned for their safety.⁸⁶ The issue of respect and community harmony is therefore relevant to many women in Rockdale.

Vilification, discrimination, and harassment of Muslim women were identified as problems in the Joint Lebanese Committee Report, at a consultation conducted with Al Zahra Muslim Women's Association in December 2002, and in the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Report (which was based on national consultations, including some conducted in Rockdale). Further consultations conducted in April /May 2003 by Council also confirmed the nature and extent of the problem.

Children and youth: Children of migrants (especially the first generation) can often feel caught between two cultures and two sets of values. Identity was an issue for most migrant youth in Rockdale. Some said they identified themselves as Australian but were not accepted by others (mainly Anglo-Australians). Others reported finding it difficult to place themselves, as they were not accepted as entirely Australian or completely Chinese, Lebanese or Islanders, for example, as they had lived most, if not all, their lives in Australia. Many did not have very good native language skills, which also contributed to the tension in identity.

Students from all local schools identified racism as an issue needing to be addressed.⁸⁷ Given that a majority of Rockdale youth are from CALD backgrounds, and one in four were born in a non-English speaking country, this is a potentially widespread issue. A St George Youth Workers Network study with young

women at local high schools also identified the need to overcome racism and cultural barriers, and to have greater awareness of these issues.⁸⁸ Research with migrant communities found that Pacific Island, Eritrean and Arabic youth reported racism in Rockdale.⁸⁹ Older age groups were thought by young people to be most likely to perpetuate racial and generational stereotypes.

Many older people in Rockdale have Mediterranean or Anglo/Celtic appearances yet a large number of young people have Asian, Middle Eastern and Oceanic appearances, thereby the differences are considered generational and ethnic, and it is believed that an 'us and them' attitude will pervade if not challenged.⁹⁰ Radio shock jocks and media promoted stereotypes are considered to add to the problem. Community harmony projects and funding are reportedly needed for local schools.⁹¹

Statistically, very few young people commit crime in Rockdale, yet many feel that they are stereotyped because they come from diverse backgrounds, or socialise in groups for their own safety. Arabic speaking youths and South Pacific Islander youths also feel that they are targeted by police.

Other CALD groups in Rockdale also report racism and discrimination. In consultations with NESB young people by The Department of Women and the St George Youth Workers Network, young people reported that they suffer from racism, and raised racism as one of the most significant issues affecting them.⁹²

The South Pacific Islander Community also reported some of these same problems, again related in particular to youth. Negative stereotyping and targeting was reported for this group as occurring at school, both from teachers and from students, from the police (leading to a negative attitude to authority) and in general in a lack of understanding from the broader community.

Implications: The existence of racism and discrimination in the community undermines social harmony, increases fear and isolation among women and undermines equitable access to employment, wealth and community services.

⁸³Pinkstone, 2003.

⁸⁴Al Zahra, 2002; MW, 2003.

⁸⁵Masri, 2002.

⁸⁶St George Leader, 28th August 2001.

⁸⁷Masri, 2002.

⁸⁸PCTP, 2000.

⁸⁹Hijazi, 2001.

⁹⁰MRC, 2003.

Council also needs to be mindful that levels of harassment and vilification will increase due to international events, media reporting and concern about terrorism. Appropriate strategies need to be developed in such instances. Migrant women may appreciate Council taking a vocal stand in their defence, especially as other levels of government, and in the media generally, have so often engaged in vilification. Inequity and a lack of trust between authorities and migrants are the likely outcomes if these issues are not addressed.

Initial discussions have taken place with the Regional Violence Prevention Worker from the Attorney General's Department with a view to developing a regional project with affected women. It is envisaged that such a project will have components of dealing with street harassment, complaining to the anti-discrimination board, and working with mothers in schools at the School Council level. Further research needs to be done on this particular form of violence.

Council is in a position to play a strong role in promoting community harmony and respect for diversity. This positive message can be sent through specific programs like the recent Christian/Muslim Dialogue, support for local events celebrating diversity, and Council's public statements.

Social, emotional and cultural issues

Like other Australians, migrants need a level of emotional stability in order to maintain good mental health. CALD residents have a particular need to be accepted by the wider community however, at the same time, the maintenance of their own culture is equally important as it provides a sense of belonging and identity. There are many differences between the Australian society, culture and lifestyle, and the cultures of some migrants. Many migrants have cultures that are more community-based, where the extended family plays a major role in an individual's life, a more communal way of living exists, and there are stronger familial networks. Religion, for some groups, plays a more central role, although this varies from family to family – just as in the Anglo community.

Migrants have often come from countries where they feel strong community connectedness, with

developed family and social networks, to a country where they have (at least initially) no social supports, have left part or all of their family behind, and are now expected to be self sufficient and adapt quickly to the Australian lifestyle. Some become isolated, are unable to cope with the transition, and experience culture clash. Others may feel an inability to relate with others except those from their own communities. There may be an experience of loss of cultural identity when migrants attempt to favour the new 'Australian' culture. A dislocation in identity and culture (especially in 2nd, 3rd and future generations) may also lead to a diminished influence of culture.

These issues were reported as affecting all CALD groups in Rockdale, but perhaps more intensively the Arabic, Spanish, Chinese and South Pacific Islander communities. These issues impact heavily on young people especially, who are sensitive to peer group pressure, and desire to be accepted by the broader community. Young people are also in the confusing situation because they are traditionally considered to have less power and knowledge than elders but, because of their often superior language skills, have in some respects more power and knowledge than their elders.⁹³

Conflict between 'traditional' and 'Australian' ideologies, values and beliefs within the family unit is seen to contribute to dislocation and conflict between parents and children, as well as older and younger generations of migrants. A common example of this (seen as a problem for many communities including the South Pacific Islander, Arabic and Chinese communities) is parenting practices and expectations. In more 'traditional' practices, children have more restrictions in freedom and independence. They may also have high expectations placed upon them, such as caring for other siblings and responsibilities related to their extended family. These expectations and restrictions may also be in conflict with the edicts of 'Australian' culture, which allows for more freedom and independence for children and young people. This disparity may cause contention and conflict between parents and children, and youth and older generations (that is, inter-generational conflict). Many migrant communities in Rockdale reported a problem with the 'generation gap' and the need for parenting strategies to deal with this.

⁹³UASMC Forum, 2003.

Isolation, feelings of loneliness, and depression were also identified as considerable issues for some migrants, especially those in their early years of arrival. Social support is a significant need for all members of society, not excluding migrants.

Implications: The family unit is the primary socialising influence on individuals. Culture, class, and the effects of the generation gap can undermine how 'at home' migrants feel in Australia and relate to other issues of settlement. Emotional and social life has a huge impact on all other aspects of life, including employment, income, family stability and community harmony.

Services access

All CALD communities reported a lack of available community services, especially culturally specific services. A review into the Ethnic Access Program found that services under the Home and Community Care Program (HACC) did not respond to the needs of NESB people and that there were systemic, service delivery, and access barriers.⁹⁴ This report concluded that there was a need for more community developing activities to improve access for CALD groups to services.

A problem was also reported with CALD groups accessing services due to the two-year waiting period for services. This was widely reported as causing hardship.

Particular requests included:

- Social support groups
- English language classes
- Recreational services
- Family support services
- Youth services
- Childcare
- Sporting facilities
- Aged care and HACC services
- Transportation
- Services for Muslim women of all ages

Recommended Actions

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
1: Racism and discrimination	1.1 Act as a positive role model in the promotion of community harmony and cultural diversity	GM	Ongoing
	1.2 Integrate a range of cultural diversity approaches into events planning which celebrate and recognise diversity	CSM & PRM	Ongoing
	1.3 Develop innovative ways to promote community harmony that the community understands and enjoys	CDP & CSP	Ongoing
	1.4 Market and publicise Council's Statement of Intent in relation to Community Harmony	MCS	Ongoing
	1.5 Develop and support initiatives to assist the community in making complaints to the Anti-Discrimination Board.	CDO & CSP	Ongoing
	1.6 Develop and support initiatives that involve a community development approach to discrimination	CDO & CSP	Ongoing
	1.7 Develop appropriate strategies with Regional Violence Prevention Worker and Local Islamic Women's Groups to address discrimination and harassment of Muslim Women	CDO	Ongoing
	1.8 Develop strategies that respond quickly and effectively to vilification of Muslim Women and also support the local community.	CDO	As required.
2: Access to information	2.1 Improve approaches to customer service and communication particularly to people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds	EM & MCS	
	2.2 Arrange cultural diversity training to Council staff, particularly outdoor staff, on customer service and public relations	MHR	October 2004
3: Access to Council Services	3.1 Continue to implement and extend Multicultural Affairs Policy Statement	CDO	Ongoing
	3.2 Continue to seek advise from Council's Multicultural Community Harmony Reference Group	CDO	Ongoing
	3.3 Review Multicultural Affairs Policy Statement	CDO	December 04
	3.4 Continue to provide library materials in languages reflecting Rockdale's population	MCS	Ongoing
4 Settlement Issues	4.1 Develop and implement a research project with other St George Councils concerning the effect of DIMIA changes in funding on the St George area	CDO	June 04
	4.2 Support the planning, development, establishment and continued improvement of services addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse residents	CDO	Ongoing

Target group:

Women

Definition

This chapter examines relevant issues for women who reside in Rockdale. There are slightly more women in Rockdale than men, in particular; there are greater numbers of women aged 55 years and over.

Women are easily identified in the Census as the results for most questions are provided by gender. For the purposes of this document women will be defined as those women aged 15 years and over.

language skills, and women also have lower levels of English proficiency than men. Women also have lower incomes, more than half of Rockdale women were born overseas, and more than a quarter are over 55 years of age.

Gaining a detailed understanding of this huge part of our community is therefore crucial to be able to provide services for all residents, to promote a safe, healthy and accessible lifestyle for the whole community, and to distribute resources with regard to equity.

Population profile

Prevalence of women in Rockdale City

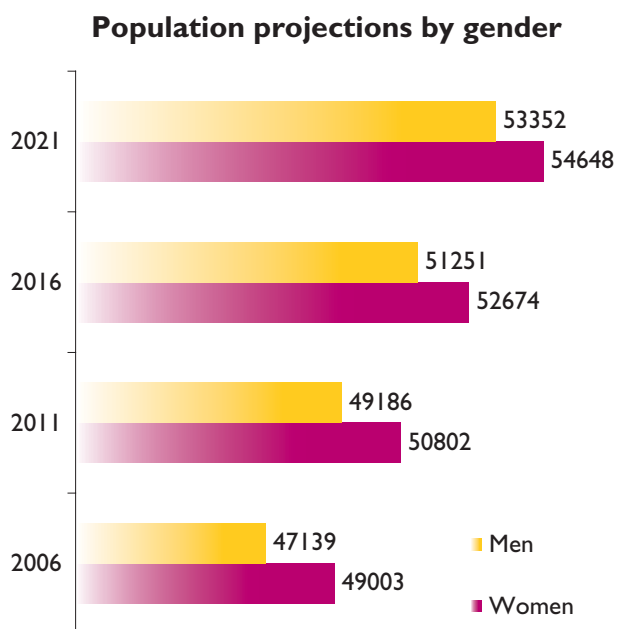
At the time of the 2001 census there were 47,512 women and girls in Rockdale City, and 37,229 women over the age of 15.

Women and girls make up 51.3% of all residents in Rockdale. Women, however, are not a homogenous group. Rather, they reflect the diversity of the Rockdale population as a whole. Therefore, in terms of age, language, religion, and country of birth, for example, there is great diversity among women in Rockdale City.

It is important to apply a gender lens to community issues because this can assist in recognising the constraints and contributions of men and women, and understand how issues affect them differently. This in turn leads to a more effective use of resources.

Given the diversity of women in Rockdale, using resources effectively, and promoting access to services, is a significant challenge for Council. For example 4,000 women in Rockdale do not have good English

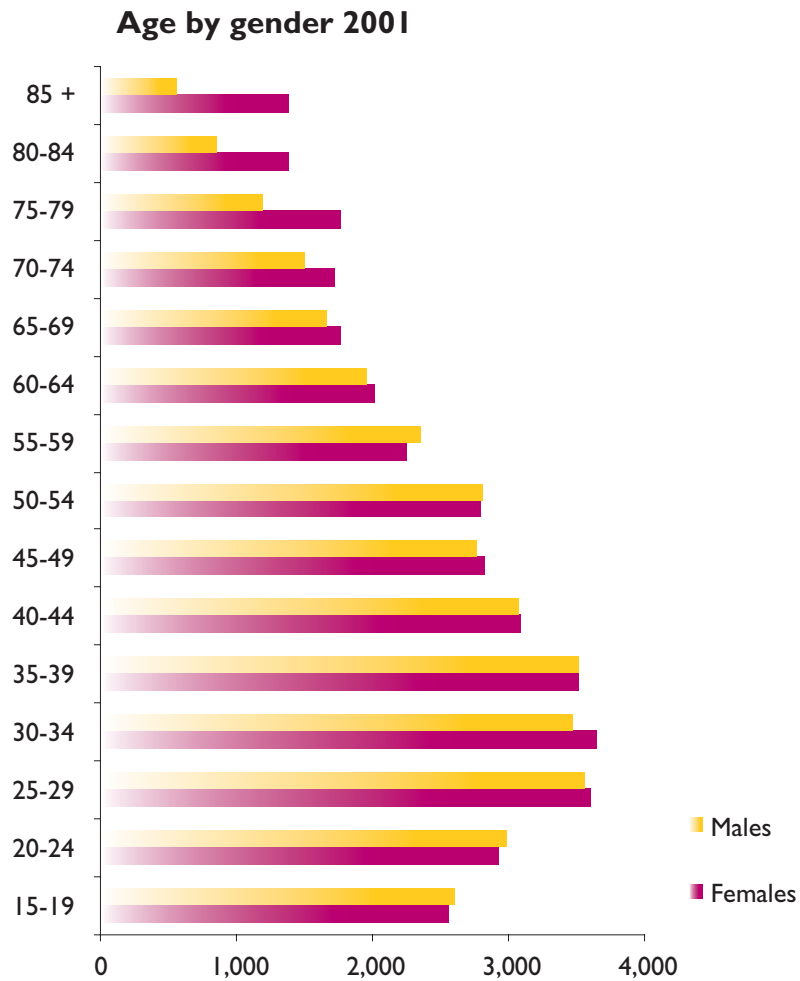
Population Projections



ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile

The number of women in Rockdale over the age of 15 is projected to exceed the number of men until at least 2021. Over this period from 2001 to 2021, there will be between 47,500 and 54,700 women, while men will number between 45,000 and 53,400.

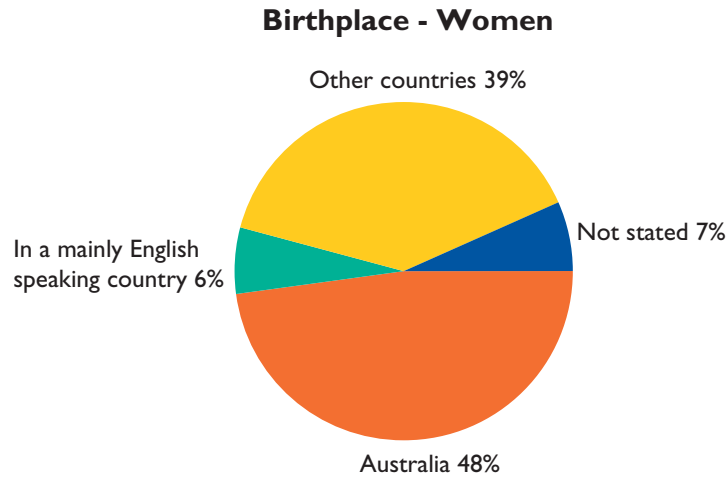
Age distribution



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

In 2001 there were 37,229 women, and 34,889 men in Rockdale City. 12,300, or 33%, of women were 55 years of age or over at that time, while 29% of men, or just over 10,000, were in this age group. Greater numbers of women in Rockdale are all accounted for by the difference between older men and older women.

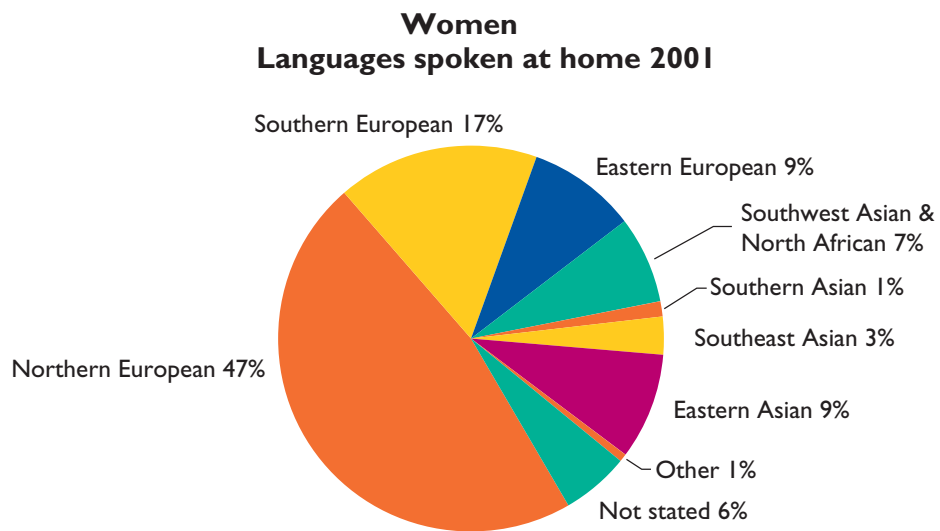
Birthplace



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

In 2001 just under half of Rockdale women were born in Australia and almost 18,000 were born overseas. China, Macedonia, Greece, Lebanon and the United Kingdom were the major countries of birth.

Languages spoken at home

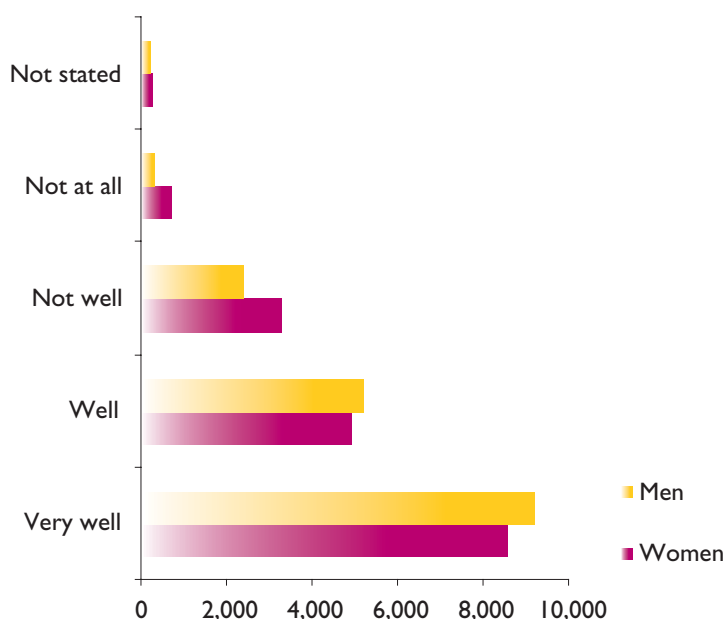


Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

Almost 18,000 women in Rockdale speak a language other than English at home. Apart from English - Greek, Arabic, Macedonian, Cantonese, Mandarin and Italian were the most frequently spoken languages.

English Proficiency

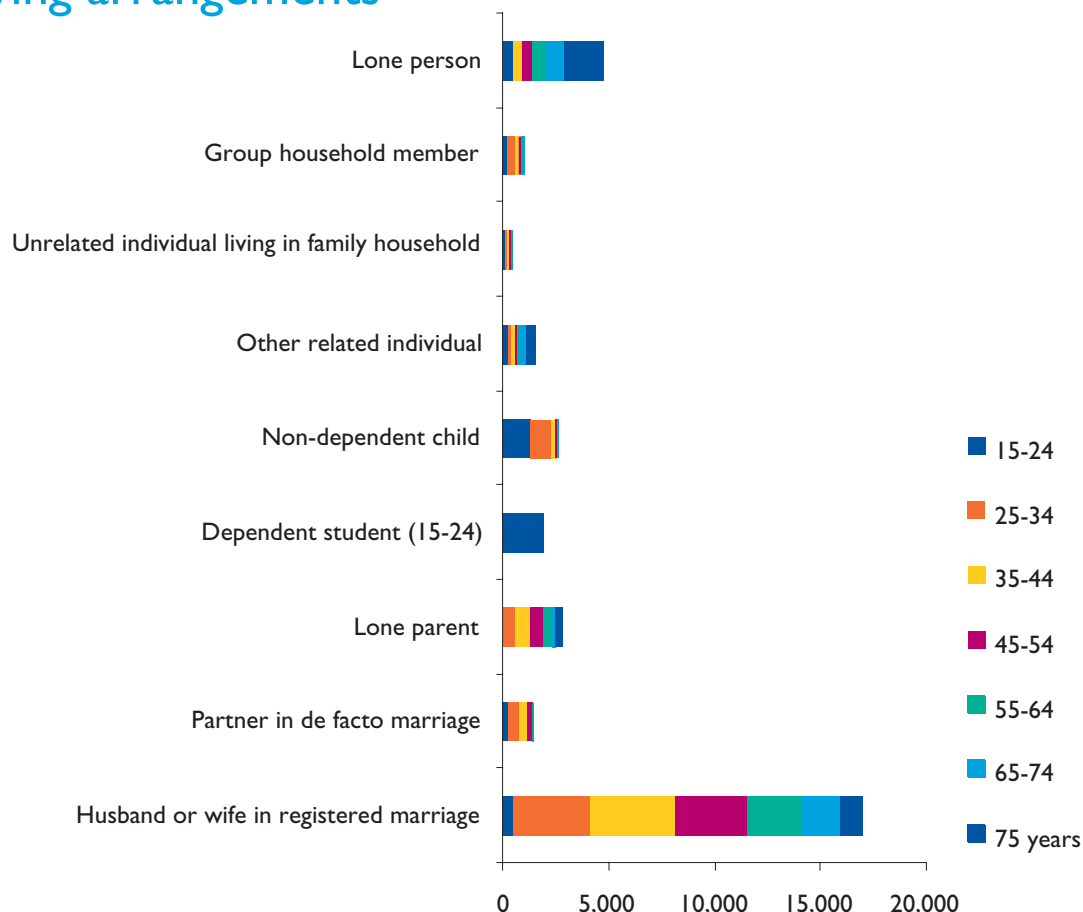
Proficiency in English Men & Women 2001



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

The above graph indicates English proficiency for migrants. 23%, or 4,000, women migrants do not speak English at all, or do not speak English well. Compared to men, women had lower levels of English proficiency.

Living arrangements



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

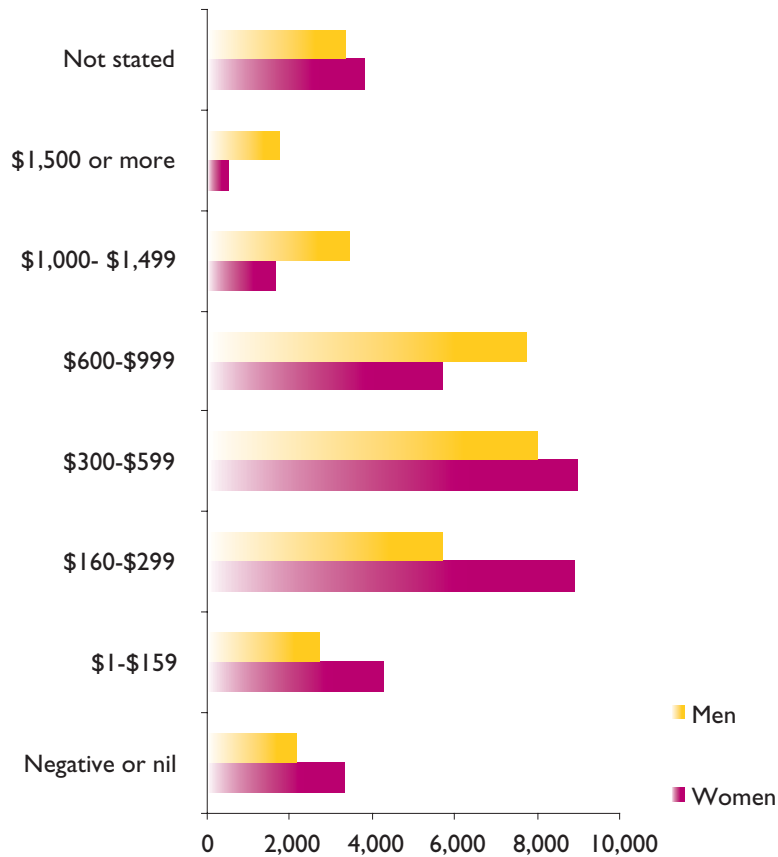
More than half of Rockdale women (18,500) are married, or in a de facto relationship. Almost 3,000 women (8.5%) are lone parents, and just under 5,000 (14%) live alone.

70% of women who live alone are 55 years or older; and 30% of female sole parents are also in this age group.

Women (aged 65 years and over) account for 82% of Rockdale's widowed, men account for 15%.⁹⁵

Income

Weekly income by gender, 2001



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

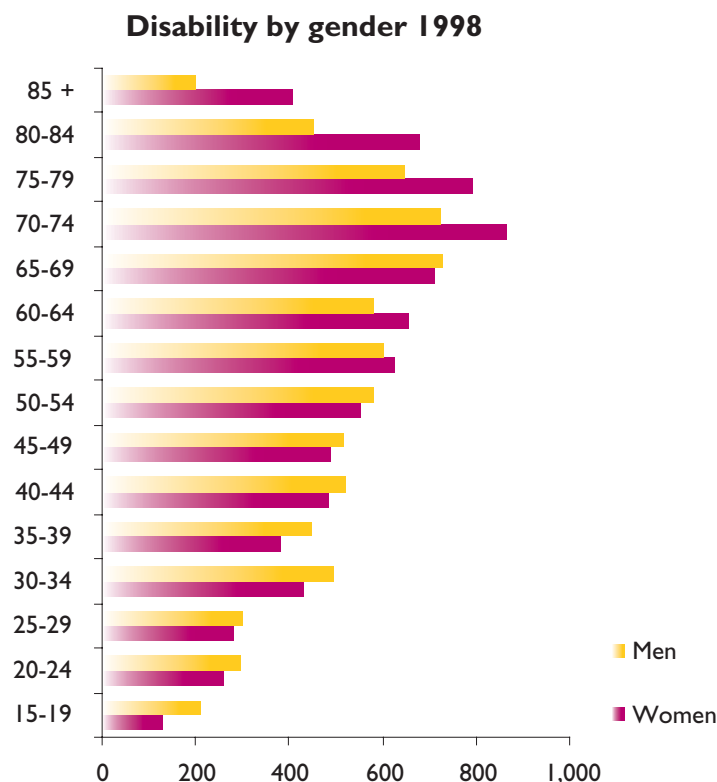
The 2001 Census demonstrates that more men earn higher incomes, and more women are in lower income brackets. Almost 45% of women earn under \$300 per week. Three times the number of men earned weekly incomes of \$1,500 and above in 2001, and double the number of men earned between \$1,000 and \$1,499 per week. Women's share of all incomes under \$299 per week is around 60%.

48% of women are not in the labour force, compared to 31% of men. However this is much higher for some CALD groups. For example, 79% of Lebanese born women are not in the labour force, 77% of Italian born, and 70% of Greek born.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

⁹⁶ABS, 2001 Rockdale Community Profile.

Disabled women



Source: ABS, 2001 Population of Census and Housing.

In 1998 there were estimated to be 7,750 disabled women in Rockdale, compared to 7,300 men. The fact that there are more disabled women than men is particularly evident for the over 70 age group.

Population summary

When considering how best to provide services to women in Rockdale the main points that arise from an examination of demography are:

- There are 48,000 women and girls living in Rockdale, and 37,000 women over the age of 15.
- There are more women than men in Rockdale.
- More than one in four women are 55 years of age and over:
- 17,000 women were born overseas.
- 18,000 women speak another language at home.
- 4,000 women have poor English language skills, around one in four migrant women.
- A higher percentage of men than women live in couple families.
- 3,000 women are sole parents.
- 5,000 women live alone.
- Many more women than men are not in the labour force.
- Women have lower incomes than men.
- 16,500 women earn under \$300 per week.
- 70% of women over 65 years of age are living on under \$300 per week.
- There are almost 8,000 disabled women in Rockdale.
- 3,700 women and girls are Islamic.
- Women have less access to computers and the Internet than men.

Council's Role

Council plays an important role in the support, provision and facilitation of services and facilities relevant to women. This includes its extensive role in providing public infrastructure such as parks and playgrounds, transport planning, urban planning and advocacy in areas of concern to women.

In addition, Council is also involved in planning, developing and providing community services, usually in partnership with community organisations and government. Council is also an active member of the St George Domestic Violence Committee and has funded a number of projects for women through its Community Development Grant Program.

How Women's Issues in the Area have been identified

The needs of, and issues concerning Rockdale women have been identified in the following ways:

- Consultations with Muslim women, undertaken through the Al Zahra Muslim Women's Association and St George Lebanese Joint Committee conducted by Council's Community Development Officer and Ethnic Community Liaison Officer from Kogarah Local Area Command (Al Zahra, 2002).
- Interview with Helen Moore, Coordinator of Backstop Family Support (Moore, 2003).
- Interview with Rebecca Pinkstone, Regional Violence Prevention Worker (Pinkstone, 2003) focusing on the development of a Regional Action Plan, and the need for domestic violence service in St George.
- Consultations with Migrant Resource Centre Sessional workers at the St George Migrant Resource Centre (MRC: 2003).
- Ethnic Communities Consultations, Priorities and Issues for Women (ECC, 2003), which explore barriers to women, safety, and services access, among other things.
- A scan of relevant documents and research papers, including:

- > "Playgroups in Rockdale", 2000, Thekla Pantziaros, Rockdale City Council (Pantziaros, 2000).
- > "Migrant Issues and Needs in Rockdale", Fadilla Masri, 2002 (Masri, 2002).
- > "I want respect and equality: A summary of consultations on racism in Australia", 2001, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC, 2001).
- > "Issues of Importance to Women in NSW", 1998, Department for Women (DW, 1998).
- > "Domestic Violence and Child Protection: A Research Report", 2002, Jude Irwin, Fran Waugh and Marie Wilkinson, Barnardos & University of Sydney (US, 2002).
- > St George College of TAFE Outreach Annual Report 2002 (TAFE, 2002).
- > "Attitudes to Domestic and Family Violence in the Diverse Australian Community Cultural Perspectives", 2000, Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (PADV, 2000).
- > "Arabic Speaking Women's Report", 2002, Ghada Hajazi, St George Lebanese Joint Committee (Hajazi, 2002).
- > St George Lebanese Joint Committee Arabic Speaking Client Survey (LJC).
- > Healthier Women Strategic directions to advance the health of women in South East Health 2003 – 2008: South East Health Women's Health Stakeholder Meeting, 2002, Debra Hanlin (Hanlin, 2002).
- > "Rockdale Community Safety Plan", 2003, Rockdale City Council (RCC, 2003).

Discussion of local women's issues

Women are affected by the same issues as men, although they impact upon women in particular ways. For example, drug and alcohol, poverty, and youth issues affect women differently to men, and CALD women are affected differently to Anglo-women. Other facts also affect the levels of impact, such as

culture, communication skills, experience, family and community support, attitudes, and knowledge among other things.

The main issues affecting women in the area, as identified by the above sources are:

English proficiency and language barriers

A significant number of consultations and reports note migrant women's English language skills as a significant problem. Census data indicates that approximately 23% of women migrants do not speak English well, or at all, in Rockdale.

English language skills have a crucial impact on settlement outcomes for migrants, affecting work, education, access to services, and all aspects of the resettlement process. These issues are discussed in detail in the CALD chapter.

Migrant women are particularly vulnerable to poor language outcomes, as they often place their own needs last, after those of their family.⁹⁷ Poor English skills also affect health outcomes, as well as increasing levels of isolation, which further affects health. A lack of English when attempting to access a health service or other provider can further exacerbate an already difficult situation. The intersection between health, social status and cultural diversity includes isolation and fragmented services.⁹⁸

The Joint Lebanese Report⁹⁹ also notes that the high cost of childcare was one factor that keeps women away from English Language classes.

Implications: The language barrier permeates throughout all other issues relating to migrants' settlement and life in Australia, and women are particularly vulnerable. In the LSIA survey, the ability to communicate in English was found to be associated with labour market success, accessing education and training opportunities, gaining information about services, and finding suitable housing. Language skills are also related to health care.

Training and education

Access to affordable training and education opportunities is vital to women who have had interrupted work lives and migrant women are frequently in need of training and education as part of their settlement process. This is needed so that the skills, experience and qualifications the women bring with them can be utilised in Australia. Although many migrants have high skill and qualification levels, local consultations show that difficulty getting skills recognition is deskilling many local migrant women.¹⁰⁰ Many studies show that English language courses and skills bridging courses are crucial to successful settlement outcomes for migrant women.¹⁰¹ South Pacific Islander women were reported as having a particular problem accessing education, and for all women with young children the expense of childcare is an issue.

A number of reports and consultations¹⁰² highlight the fact that TAFE, in particular Access English Language courses, are excellent for women trying to re-enter the workforce. TAFE provides opportunities for women to up-skill, complete a basic education, gain computer literacy skills, or learn English. TAFE courses can also be a way to make social contacts, learn about services, and break isolation.

The outreach program targets groups who have been identified as needing support. Women with low education levels, sole parents and low-income earners are some of the participants in the program.

In 2002, 80% of TAFE outreach students were women and 68% came from NESBs. Most of the outreach students were unemployed. TAFE, therefore, has been an excellent resource for migrant women and, at no cost to them, an important factor, especially in the early stages of settlement.¹⁰³ However, the new TAFE fee structure (to be implemented in 2004) will set fees for these access classes, with a one year exemption from fees for each student. These fees will significantly disadvantage this group.

⁹⁷Shrestha, 2003.

⁹⁸ECC, 2003.

⁹⁹Hajazi, 2002.

¹⁰⁰For example ECC, 2003.

¹⁰¹Shrestha, 2003.

¹⁰²For example Hajazi, 2002.

¹⁰³Tafe, 2002.

Implications: The TAFE system plays an important role in meeting the training and education needs of women, particularly women migrants. The cost of not addressing these needs, which in turn help women overcome employment and health barriers, is borne not only by the women affected, but by the Australian economy as it fails to benefit fully from the contribution of their labour. In addition are the social, material and psychological effects of unemployment, under-employment and isolation (to name just some likely outcomes). This situation also impacts on subsequent generations.

The TAFE outreach program services the most disadvantaged groups in Australia. It is important to provide these courses both in terms of equity, and to improve the standard of living for women migrants. The transition of these services to fee-paying will further disadvantage these women.

Employment

Women generally, but in particular migrant women, have difficulty finding appropriate employment and career paths. As demonstrated above, women's incomes are significantly below men's, a fact that has many causes including: women's role as caregivers; the large number of women in part time work; a lesser value being placed on traditional women's occupational groups; and discrimination and exploitation in the workplace.

Migrant women face a number of issues particular to them, as they find it even harder to find employment and are especially vulnerable to exploitation by employers. They also experience multiple forms of discrimination (racism and sexism, for example). Further, a lack of recognition of overseas qualifications that directly acts to de-skill women is another factor affecting their employment, health and status.¹⁰⁴

Implications: Employment is, among other things, linked to income, education and health outcomes. Self-sufficiency, a value much promoted in Australian society, is dependent upon finding secure, satisfying and appropriate employment.

Support for Women in the Caring Role

Women are still, in most instances, the primary caregivers in families. They take care of others, be they small children, partners or spouses, disabled relatives, or parents. However, women also need support to be able to continue giving support. As discussed in the chapter on disabled residents, carers' own health often suffers, and they are in need of increased access to services and can suffer from social isolation, to name just some likely outcomes.

Almost 3,000 women are sole parents in Rockdale, placing them as primary carers to their children, as well as being financially responsible for them. 17,000 women live in 'couple families' with dependents, and there are around 15,000 disabled residents in Rockdale. These figures alone indicate a vast number of women carers in the community.

One area where the need for support is obvious is for women caring for the disabled. It is clear from all the available sources that there is an under supply of most services for the disabled in Rockdale. In such a situation the impetus is on the family, or another carer, to provide what is necessary. If services are under supplied there is no other option. Carers therefore undertake an important role in meeting the needs of people with disabilities, but they in turn need specific support to continue meeting these needs.

Women in the role of carers need access to respite care and after-hours support. It also appears that parents who become their child's carer are often unaware of the services and benefits the child can receive until they reach school age. Many carers over a long-term period become socially and physically isolated.

Support for women with small children has also been identified by several reports.¹⁰⁵ The sessional workers at St George Migrant Resource Centre identified that playgroups were a foreign idea to many new migrants and that there were significant barriers to women attending, including language, culture, and not being made to feel welcome.

¹⁰⁴ECC, 2003.

¹⁰⁵Examples include Pantziaros, 2000; MRC, 2003; and Healthier Women Strategic directions to advance the health of women in South East Health 2003-2008: South East Health Women's Health Stakeholder Meeting, 2002.

It was suggested that playgroups in the area could benefit from an Ethnic Liaison Officer to support and integrate multicultural groups. Sessional workers recommended the development of a multi-cultural playgroup. In any case, given the diversity of Rockdale, further development needs to be given to culturally appropriate ways of supporting women who are newly arrived with small children. Perhaps through the development of a pilot project which might have components of cross cultural training for existing playgroup leaders and the development of a multi ethnic specific playgroup.

Resourcing of playgroups was identified as an issue when they were surveyed in 2000.¹⁰⁶ The playgroups participating in the study suggested that Council could assist with the purchase of equipment, provision of maintenance, assistance with venues, advertising, and volunteer training.

Sole parents are also a group in need. Sole parent families (the vast majority are female sole parents) in Rockdale have been identified as likely to have been victims of domestic violence, and many are living in poverty due to the cost of private rental and the difficulty in accessing public housing. Women in that situation may also face a range of health problems such as depression, post-natal depression and viral illnesses. Many have limited employment experience and are likely to have not completed high school. They are also likely to be feeling isolated with small children due to a lack of transport.¹⁰⁷

A lack of childcare places and affordable childcare in Rockdale also impacts dramatically on women, leading to impacts on their ability to access employment and education among other things. The Joint Lebanese Report¹⁰⁸ also noted that the high cost of childcare was one factor that keeps women away from English Language classes.

The need for a central meeting space for women in Rockdale is also a factor which Council needs to give some consideration to in its planning role.¹⁰⁹

Implications: Social and service support for women in the caring role is an important component of

women's ability to undertake this role. Without women caring for others in their family, extended family and wider community, the impact on public health and social resources would be significant. It is important, therefore, to help carers care, for others and for themselves.

Domestic Violence

The issue of domestic violence was raised throughout research for this plan, both in research reports and in consultations.¹¹⁰ The 1996 ABS survey on the nature and effects of Domestic Violence on women noted that of all women who had ever been married or in a de facto relationship, 23% had experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of their partner.¹¹¹ It is therefore hardly surprising that the subject warrants so much attention in research documents and is continually identified as an issue.

The Rockdale Domestic Violence Counselling service saw 254 clients between July 2002 and July 2003 providing intensive support and referral. Approximately 40% of their clients identified as coming from an Anglo Celtic background and 24% did not identify their background. A further 32 other backgrounds were identified, with substantial numbers from Chinese, Greek, Lebanese and Macedonian backgrounds. This is not surprising given the large numbers of Rockdale residents from these groups.

One report¹¹² identifies two particular groups of women as being less informed of domestic violence issues - those born in NES countries and older women with less education. Other factors also regarded as affecting understanding about domestic violence were: length of time in Australia; education levels; English language proficiency; religious background; community support infrastructure; and personal experience. Sole parents are also likely to have been victims of domestic violence.¹¹³

Also identified were a number of values regarded as deterrents to domestic violence in culturally diverse communities. These were religious values, the idea that

¹⁰⁶Pantziaros, 2003.

¹⁰⁷Moore, 2003.

¹⁰⁸Hajazi, 2002.

¹⁰⁹Hanlin, 2002.

¹¹⁰Noted by Moore, 2003; MRC, 2003; Pinkstone, 2003; RCC, 2003; and The Department of Women, Domestic Violence and Child Protection Research, Healthier Women Strategic Directions Document.

¹¹¹PADV, 2000.

¹¹²PADV, 2000.

¹¹³ECC, 2003

violent behaviour is unmanly, acceptance of changing gender roles, family harmony, respect for women, and the value of smooth interpersonal relations.

Factors that prevented reporting domestic violence or seeking help included fear of escalating violence, fear of being deported, a lack of support (including financial support), loneliness and isolation. The report also linked a willingness to disclose a problem of domestic violence to the availability and accessibility of culturally appropriate services. Given this link, strategies need to be developed to ensure these services are available in the local community.

Implications: The prevalence of domestic violence in all communities and the need for CALD education, support, and resources, is clear. Council needs to consider these factors when supporting or resourcing campaigns on domestic violence. Domestic Violence has been included in Council's Safety Plan and Council hopes to attract funding from the Attorney General's Department to assist with this issue. Council has also continued to support the St George Domestic Violence Committee with its associated projects.

Access to sporting and recreational opportunities

The issue of women's access to sport and recreation was specifically mentioned at the St George Migrant Resource Centre sessional worker consultation. Affordability, privacy and cultural issues were factors preventing women from accessing public facilities. One outcome of girls and women not being able to use facilities in a culturally appropriate way is inter-generational conflict.¹¹⁴

Implications: The forthcoming Council Leisure and Recreation Study will provide an opportunity for these issues to be further explored and for appropriate strategies to be formulated.

Recommended Actions

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
1: Support for the caring role	1.1 Support and resource projects which cater to the needs of single parents	CSP	Ongoing
	1.2 Provide support to playgroups	MCEP	Ongoing
	1.3 Investigate the establishment of a meeting place for women with the South Eastern Women's Health Service	CDO	Ongoing
	1.4 Introduce Baby Change facilities in all new and renovated public toilet facilities	MTS	Ongoing
2: Domestic Violence	2.1 Provide continued support to the St George Domestic Violence Committee	CDO	
	2.2 Encourage a partnership approach to support and resource local and regional domestic violence projects	CDO	
	2.3 Support and resource projects that are targeting the CALD community	CDO	
	2.4 Implement Community Safety Plan	MCEP	

¹¹⁴ECC, 2003.

3: Training and Education	3.1 Monitor the effects of the Introduction of Fees in 2004 on women attending TAFE Access Courses 3.2 Continue to provide a facility for computer training to occur in partnership with community based organisations	CDO CDO & MBS	
4: English proficiency and language barriers	4.1 Ensure the needs of women, in particular CALD women's reduced levels of literacy and women's lower use of the Internet, are considered in the development of Council's communication strategy. 4.2 Support projects and initiatives which increase CALD women's access to a range of services such as mental health, parenting programmes, drug and alcohol, stress management and domestic violence	EM & MCS CDO, CSP	
5: Access to sporting facilities	5.1 Ensure the needs of women and CALD girls are addressed in the forthcoming Recreation and Leisure Study.	MLS.	June 2004.

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