

Population Record rise in city dwellers Melbourne tops nation's growth rate

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Peter Martin
Economics correspondent
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Australians are piling in to Melbourne's central business district at a record rate. The latest regional population count shows the number of residents living within the CBD jumped an unprecedented 5400 in the year to June 2013, a growth rate of 23 per cent.

The Docklands and Southbank were not far behind, each with growth rates of 15 per cent.

The extraordinary boom has made the statistical division of Melbourne City the nation's fastest growing. Melbourne City encompasses the CBD, the Docklands, Southbank, North Melbourne, Carlton, Parkville, East Melbourne, South Yarra, and Kensington. It's growth rate of 10.5 per cent eclipses Gungahlin in the Australian Capital Territory (8 per cent) and Serpentine and Armadale in Perth (6 per cent). The fifth fastest growing region in Australia is Wyndham in Melbourne's south-west (6 per cent).

Although extreme, the packing of Melbourne's CBD is part of an Australia-wide trend.

Capital cities packed in more than three times as many new residents as the rest of Australia in the year to June. The Bureau of Statistics says by the middle of the century the proportion of Australians living in capital cities will have climbed from 66 to 72 per cent.

The population of Melbourne's CBD has doubled in the past nine years, climbing from 12,700 to 29,300. Around 5400 of those new residents arrived in the past year.

The wider Melbourne City region has gained 45,000 residents in the past nine years; 11,000 in the past year. The population of the nearby inner-city Abbotsford climbed 20 per cent in the past year.

Although inner Melbourne is one of the nation's most densely populated regions, there is room to make it denser still. At 12,400 residents per square kilometre it is well below the leader, Pyrmont Ultimo in Sydney, which has 14,300 per square kilometre.

The tide moving toward the inner city has seen the population of some middle and outer-ring suburbs shrink. In the past year Mill Park has lost 380 people, Endeavour Hills 210 people, and Frankston North and Rowville 160 each.

Greater Melbourne's gain of 95,500 is the largest of any capital city.

Geelong had the largest growth of Victoria's regional cities, up by 4800 people, followed by Ballarat (2100), Bendigo (2000) and Latrobe in Gippsland (1600).

The Bureau of Statistics says Melbourne has been growing faster than Sydney since the turn of the century.

If present trends continue it will overtake Sydney to become Australia's biggest capital city with a population of 8 million in 2053.

