

Perth tipped to be fastest growing city

Michael Ramsey AAP 26-Nov-2013



Perth's population is set to overtake that of Brisbane over the next 15 years, with experts forecasting the city will experience the highest population growth of all capital cities over the next 50 years.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics today released its predictions for coming decades, based on fertility, life expectancy and migration.

Western Australia's population is projected to almost triple in size by 2061 on "medium growth" assumptions, from 2.4 million people in 2012 to 6.4 million.

That would represent a 15.4 per cent share of Australia's total population compared to 10.7 per cent in 2012.

Perth is forecast to host a greater share of its state population than any other capital city, with the portion of Western Australians living in Perth expected to grow from 78 per cent to 85 per cent over the next 50 years.

Perth's population is tipped to grow by 187 per cent over that period to 5.5 million, overtaking Brisbane with 3 million people by 2028.

The ABS meanwhile predicts Australia's population will double to more than 46 million people by 2075, with further ageing of the population a likely reality.

"The ageing of Australia's population as a result of sustained low fertility, combined with increasing life expectancy is likely to continue," ABS head of demography Bjorn Jarvis said.

"In 2012 Australia's median age was 37 years old; by 2040 it could be 40.5 years."

Over the same period, the number of people aged over 85 is expected to almost triple to 1.2 million, while the number aged over 65 will double to 6.8 million.

Other projections include Melbourne's population growing to equal that of Sydney at 7.9 million by 2053 and the ACT's population surpassing that of Tasmania.

Growth is expected to continue in all states and territories except Tasmania where it is thought the population will plateau by 2040 and fall from 2047.

CommSec chief economist Craig James said the latest projections were important for long-term planning for both government and the private sector.

"The game has changed, and it is a case of everyone now updating their figures and debating the new circumstances," he said.

