

## Our Population

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North Coast Public Health Unit

Enquires: 1300 066 055

This Factsheet summarises selected information on the population of the Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNC LHD) including the age distribution, population growth and socioeconomic factors.

### Mid North Coast LHD: Our region

The MNCLHD covers a geographic area from Red Rock near Woolgoolga in the north to Passionfruit Creek in the south. The western boarder extends to the Great Dividing Range and this border is shared with the Hunter New England LHD (see **Figure 1**). The MNC LHD covers an area of 11,324 square kilometres with a population of 207,490 persons in 2011 and is comprised of five Local Government Areas (LGAs) including<sup>2</sup>:

**Coffs Harbour LGA** (2011 pop 70,972)<sup>2</sup> has an area of 1,174 sq km located around the coastal town of Coffs Harbour and includes the town of Woolgoolga and many surrounding villages. *Professional* is the most commonly nominated occupation for residents of the Coffs Harbour LGA and *health care and social assistance* followed by *retail trade* are the leading industries of employment.<sup>1</sup>

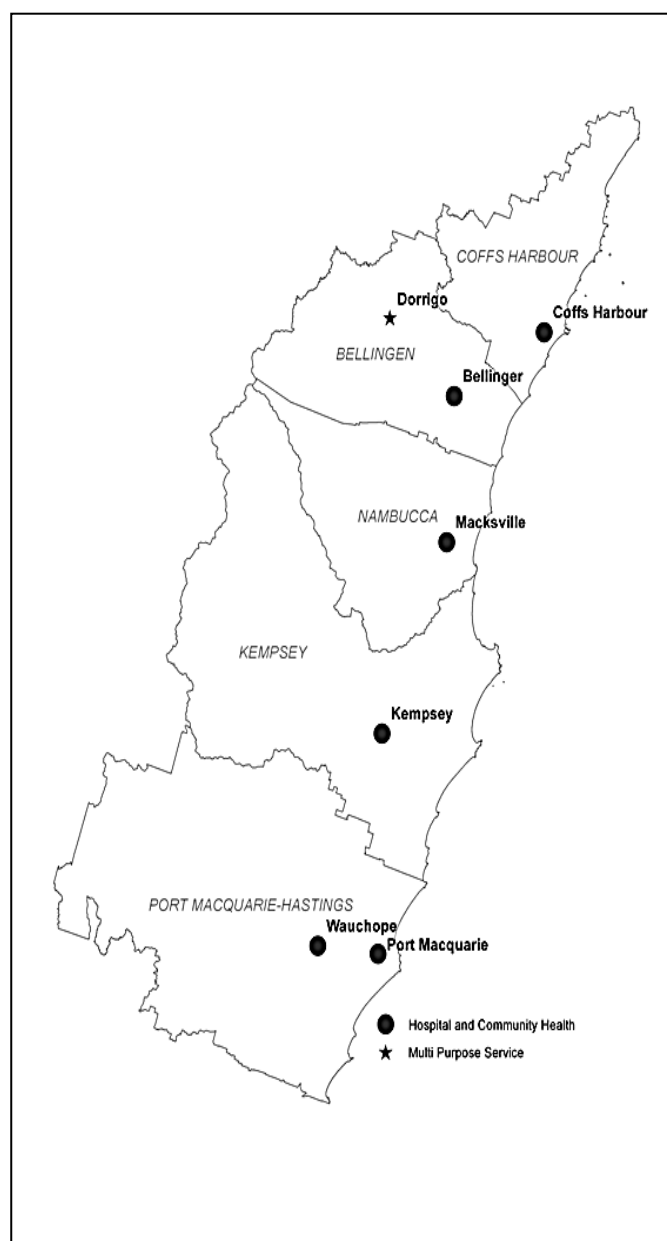
**Bellingen LGA** (2011 pop 12,923)<sup>2</sup> covers an area of 1,600 sq km around the town of Bellingen and includes the towns of Dorrigo and Urunga as well as many surrounding rural villages. *Professionals* are the most common occupation for residents of the LGA whilst the leading industries of employment are *health care and social assistance* followed by *retail trade*.<sup>1</sup>

**Nambucca LGA** (2011 pop 19,235)<sup>2</sup> has an area of 1,491 sq km and is situated around Nambucca Heads and includes the towns of Macksville and Scotts Head as well as their surrounding villages. The leading occupations for the Nambucca LGA are evenly distributed between *technicians and trades workers and professionals*. The leading industries of employment are *health care and social assistance* followed by *retail trade*.<sup>1</sup>

**Kempsey LGA** (2011 pop 29,128)<sup>2</sup> is located around the town of Kempsey and includes the coastal townships of South West Rocks and Crescent Head, as well as many surrounding villages, covering an area of 3,378 sq km. The leading occupation is fairly evenly spread between *Professionals, labourers, technicians and trades workers and community and personal service workers*. *Health care and social assistance* followed

**Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA** (2011 pop 75,232)<sup>2</sup> covers an area of 3,683 sq km around the coastal town of Port Macquarie and includes Wauchope, the Camden Haven area and other surrounding villages. *Professionals* are the leading occupation for the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA with *Health care and social assistance* followed by *retail trade* being the leading industries of employment.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1: Mid North Coast LHD Geographic Region.**



**Estimated Population Size and Projected Growth**

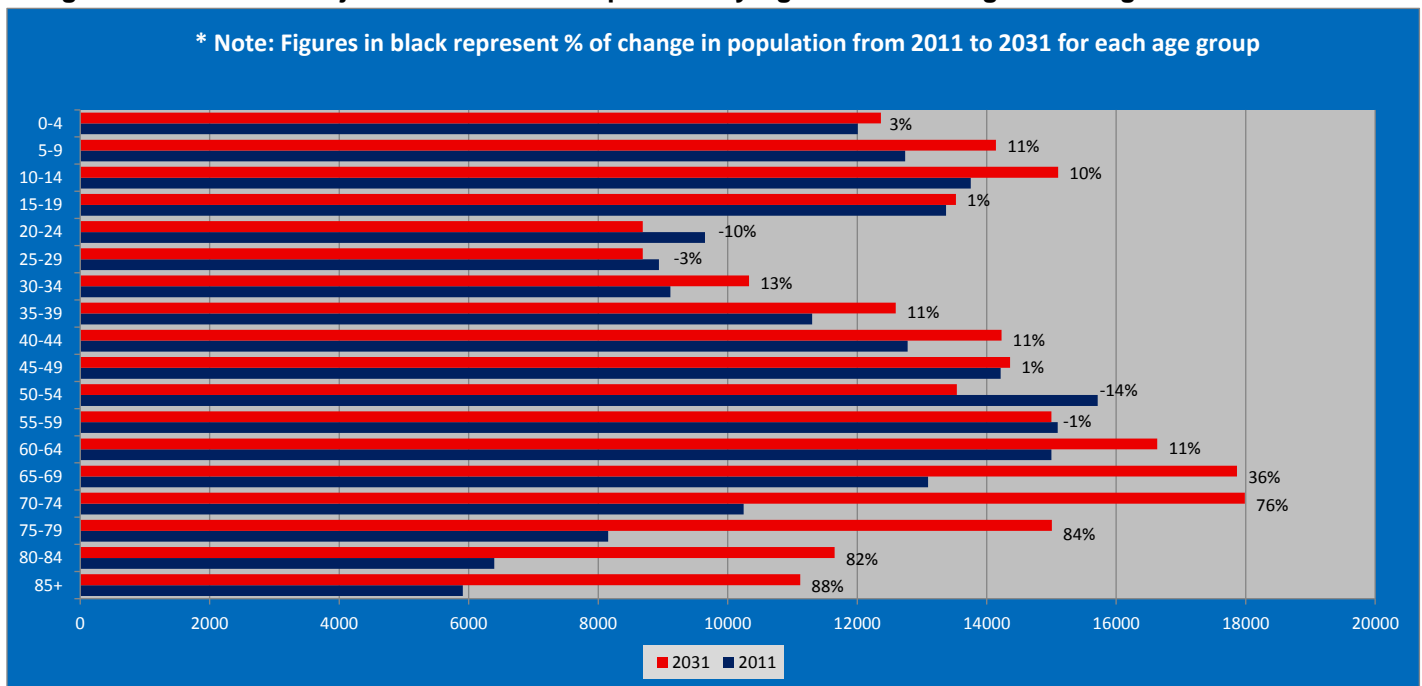
The population of the Mid North Coast LHD for 30 June 2011 was 207,490 a 4.1% increase since 2006. The population is projected to grow by a similar proportion to reach 217,489 in 2016 (a 4.8% increase from the 2011 population) and to 226,870 in 2021 (a further 4.3% increase from 2016 population), reaching approximately 242,822 by 2031.<sup>3</sup>

The projected population increase for the District between 2011 and 2031 represents a growth of 17% or 35,332 additional people. The projected annual average population increase of 0.8% per year is lower than the NSW average of 1.2% over the same period. The population of the MNC LHD is ageing, due to the combined effects of relatively low childbearing levels, increasing life expectancy, and internal migration of

made up 14.5% of the population in 2011 and this proportion is projected to grow to 20% by 2031.<sup>3</sup>

The **dependency ratio** is a proxy measure of the relative size of the non-economically active and economically active populations and is calculated as the ratio of dependent people (not of working age ie under 15 years and over 65 years) to economically active people (of working age, 15-64 years). It gives an indication of trends in social support needs, with greatest need usually in the very young and old. In MNC LHD, the dependency ratio is set to increase significantly from 0.66 in 2011 to 0.90 in 2031. This change is largely driven by the increasing numbers of older people and, to a lesser extent, the outward migration of people aged 15-44 years.<sup>3</sup>

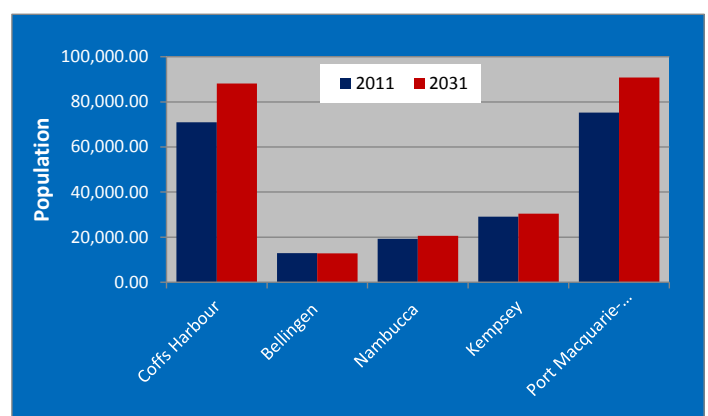
**Figure 2: MNC LHD Projected Residential Population by Age and Percentage of Change in 2011 and 2031.<sup>3</sup>**



retirees to the region. The projected population growth between 2011 and 2031 is not expected to be evenly distributed across the District as shown in **Figure 3**. The highest absolute growth is likely to be recorded in the Coffs Harbour LGA (17,146 or 24% increase), followed by the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA (15,555 or 21% increase), whilst Bellingen LGA is expected to have negative growth (112 or 1% decrease)<sup>3</sup>

People aged 65 years and over made up an estimated 21% of the total MNC LHD population in 2011 (43,800 people) and this is projected to increase to 30% 2031 (73,627 people). Across NSW people aged 65+ years

**Figure 3: Projected Population Numbers by LGA MNC LHD, 2011 – 2031<sup>3</sup>**



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### Population age profiles

**Table 1** summarises the projected age distribution for the MNC LHD and NSW populations in 2011 and 2031.<sup>3</sup> Compared to the NSW population the MNC LHD population has:

- a smaller percentage of adults of working age 25 – 64 years (MNC LHD = 60%, NSW = 67%)
- the same percentage of children aged 0 – 14 years (MNC LHD = 18%, NSW = 18%)
- a smaller percentage of adults 25-34 years (MNC LHD = 9%, NSW = 14%)
- a larger percentage of older persons age 65+ years (MNC LHD = 21%, NSW = 15%)

Between 2011 and 2031, the fastest growing age groups in the MNC LHD will be the 85+ years age group (88% increase), followed by the 75-84 year age group (83%) and the 65-74 year age group (54%). These projected increases in the number of older residents are expected to be below the rates for NSW. The MNC LHD however is expected to have poor and even negative growth in the younger age groups and the disparity compared to NSW growth can be seen in **Table 1**.

The projected age profiles of LGAs in the Mid North Coast LHD for 2011 and 2031 are summarised in **Figure 4**.<sup>3</sup> Careful interpretation is needed in assessing the data - the total population numbers (shown in **Figure 3**) as well as the

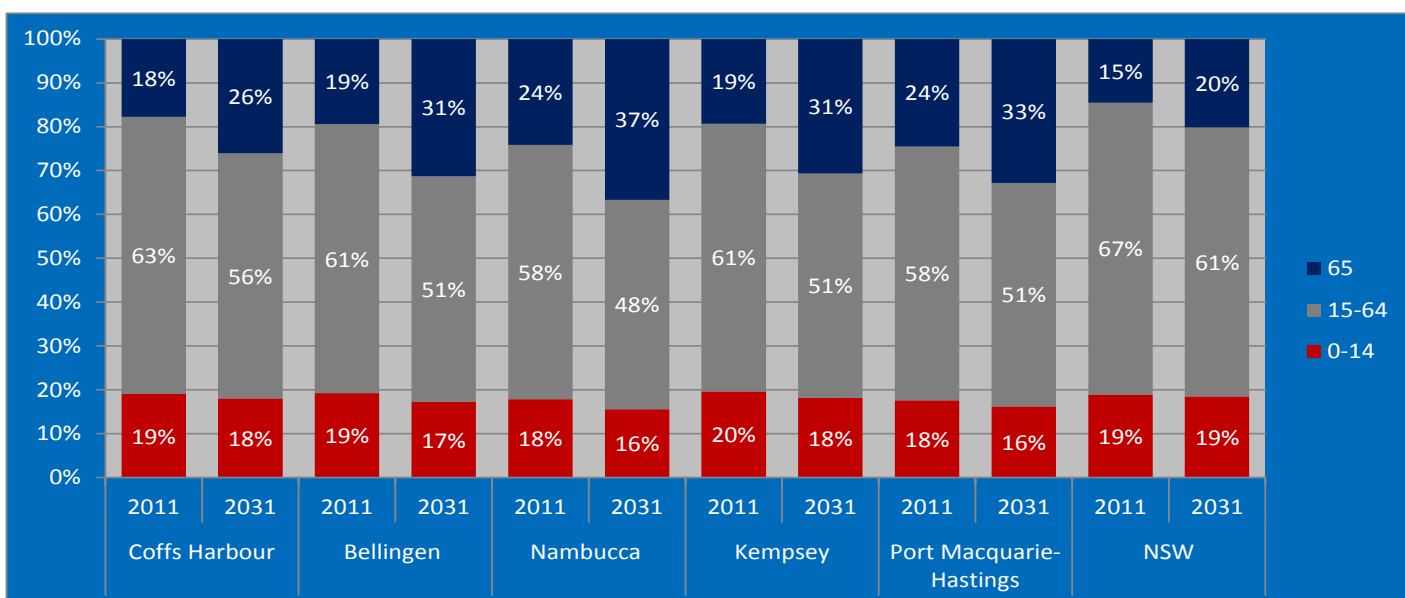
**Table 1: MNC LHD Projected Population by Age 2011 – 2031 with Comparative Percentages in Growth with NSW.<sup>3</sup>**

Age Group (years)	Population		MNC LHD (%)	NSW (%)
	2011	2031		
0 - 4	12,009	12,365	3%	21%
5 -14	26,494	29,246	10%	27%
15 - 24	23,022	22,212	-4%	13%
25 - 34	18,052	19,016	5%	13%
35 - 44	24,086	26,823	11%	24%
45 - 54	29,932	27,899	-7%	18%
55 - 64	30,095	31,635	5%	28%
65 - 74	23,340	35,850	54%	63%
75 - 84	14,550	26,658	83%	91%
85+	5,910	11,119	88%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>207,490</b>	<b>242,822</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>22%</b>

relative age proportions should be considered within each category. For example, despite Port Macquarie – Hastings LGA having one of the lower proportions of younger people 0-14 years (18%), it has the second highest population in this age group (13,281 persons) compared to other LGAs in the MNC LHD.<sup>3</sup>

Nambucca and Port Macquarie - Hastings LGAs have the highest proportions of older residents 65+ years (24%) in the MNC LHD. Coffs Harbour LGA has the highest proportion of working-age people 15-64 years (63%) with only 18% of the population aged over 65 years.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 4: Projected Proportion of the Population in the 0-14, 15-64 and 65+ Age Groups for LGA's in the Mid North Coast LHD, 2011-2031<sup>3</sup>**



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**Aboriginal Population**

Based on the estimated residential population, in the 2011 Census, 12,087 MNC LHD residents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (**Table 2**).<sup>4</sup> This represents 5.8% of the total MNC LHD population and an increase from 4.4% reported in the 2006 Census. The percentage of the total resident LGA populations who identified as Aboriginal within the MNC LHD varies from 12.8% for the Kempsey LGA, 8.4% for the Nambucca LGA and 4.8% for the Coffs Harbour LGA. (**see Table 2**).<sup>4</sup>

Of the total 12,087 Aboriginal residents of the MNC LHD 30.7% (3,715) live in Kempsey LGA, 28.2% (3,405) live in the Coffs Harbour LGA and 24% (2,895) live in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 2: MNC LHD Aboriginal Population by LGA, 2011<sup>4</sup>**

LGA	Aboriginal Population	% of LGA Population
Coffs Harbour	3,405	4.8%
Bellingen	455	3.5%
Nambucca	1,617	8.4%
Kempsey	3,715	12.8%
Port Macquarie-Hastings	2,895	3.8%

**Table 3: Population born in non-English speaking countries, by LGA, MNC LHD, 2011 (% of total resident population)<sup>5</sup>**

LGA	People Born Overseas	% Overseas Born	People Born in non-English Speaking Countries	% Born in non-English Speaking Countries
Coffs Harbour	12,236	17.9%	4,044	5.9%
Bellingen	2,028	16.2%	494	3.9%
Nambucca	2,780	14.9%	547	2.9%
Kempsey	3,607	12.8%	767	2.7%
Port Macquarie-Hastings	11,672	16.1%	2,539	3.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,323</b>	<b>16.1%</b>	<b>8,391</b>	<b>4.2%</b>

**Population Born Overseas**

In the 2011 Census, 32,323 (16.1%) MNC LHD residents stated they were born overseas. Of these 13,768 (6.9%) were born in predominantly English speaking countries and 8,391 (4.2%) were born in predominately non-English speaking countries (5.0% country not stated).<sup>5</sup>

Less than 1% of MNC LHD residents reported poor proficiency in English compared with 3.4% for NSW.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 3** shows the number and percentage of LGA residents born in a non-English speaking country and ranges from 5.9% in Coffs Harbour LGA to 2.7% in Kempsey. Of those MNC LHD residents born in a predominately non-English speaking country 0.7% (1,328 people) have been in Australia less than 5 years.<sup>5</sup>

**Socioeconomic Disadvantage**

The socio-economic status of an area can be measured by the Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage (IRSD) score. The IRSD is one of the Australian Bureau of Statistics Socio Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) and is derived from Census variables related to income, educational attainment and employment.

The average IRSD score for Australia is 1000 and all LGAs within the MNC LHD are ranked as more disadvantaged than average, with Nambucca and Kempsey being the most disadvantaged LGAs (**Table 4**).<sup>5</sup> This means that these LGA have relatively fewer residents with high incomes, tertiary education and skilled occupations compared to Australia as a whole. However, as the IRSD score for an LGA is an average, within each LGA there will be a range of relatively advantaged and disadvantaged households.

**Table 4: Index of Relative Socio Economic Disadvantage, by LGA, MNC LHD, 2011<sup>5</sup>**

SEIFA IRSD		
LGA	Score	National Ranking (Decile)
Coffs Harbour	958	4
Bellingen	950	4
Nambucca	900	2
Kempsey	880	1
Port Macquarie-Hastings	969	5

**The information used in this factsheet was obtained from the following sources:**

1. ABS Basic Community Profiles.  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/communityprofiles?opendocument&navpos=230>  
(Accessed June 2013)
2. Estimated Residential Population. ABS Census, 2011.  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3235.0Main+Features12011?OpenDocument>  
(Accessed June 2014)
3. NSW Government. Department of Planning and Environment. 2014 Population Projections.  
<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/en-us/deliveringhomes/populationandhouseholdprojections.aspx> (Accessed July 2014)
4. ABS 3238.0.55.001 - Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, November 2013  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3238.0.55.001June%202011?OpenDocument>  
(Accessed June 2014)
5. Public Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU). Social Health Atlas of Australia: Statistical Local Area and Local Government Area. Published 2014. <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/phidu/maps-data/data/> (Accessed June 2014).