



5. Population & Housing Characteristics

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Characteristics

5.1 Distribution of Population

Alice Springs lies in the physical and spiritual heart of Australia's arid zone, about halfway between Darwin to the north and Adelaide to the south.

The Municipality of Alice Springs covers an area of 328 square kilometres. It is however the service hub for a much wider region - the southern half of the Northern Territory, an area of 551,000 square kilometres, and parts of South Australia and Western Australia. It is estimated that Alice Springs services approximately 260 rural communities. The population which Alice Springs services is estimated to be 60,000 persons, based on figures from the Department of Health.

The majority (over 95%) of the Alice Springs Municipal population is accommodated within the inner portion of the Council area, as shown on Figure 5.1. More particularly, the existing population is centred east and west of the CBD and north of the geological feature known as Heavitree Gap, a water gap in the McDonnell Ranges and the southern entrance to Alice Springs.

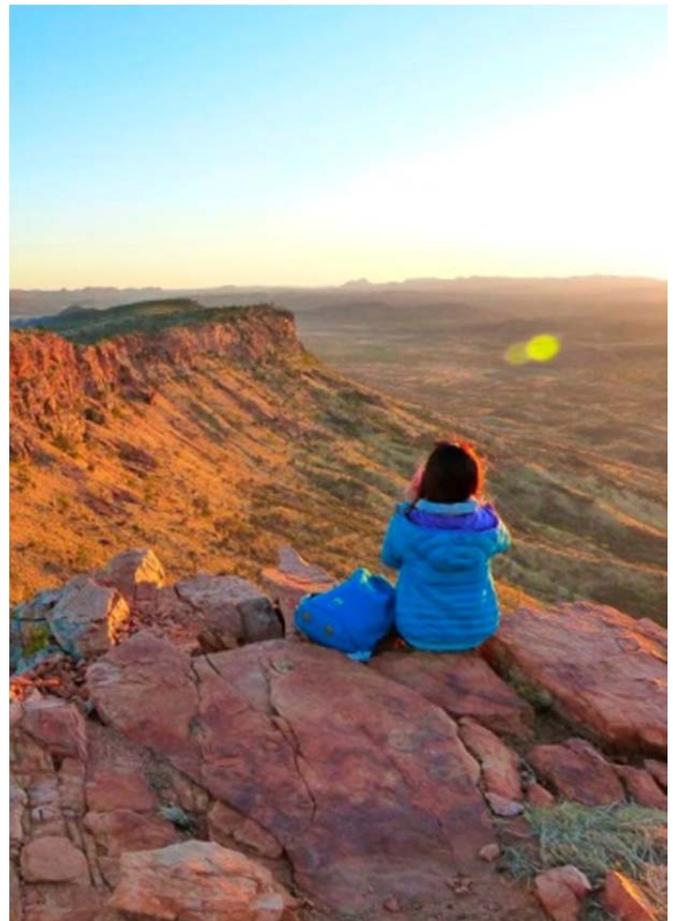
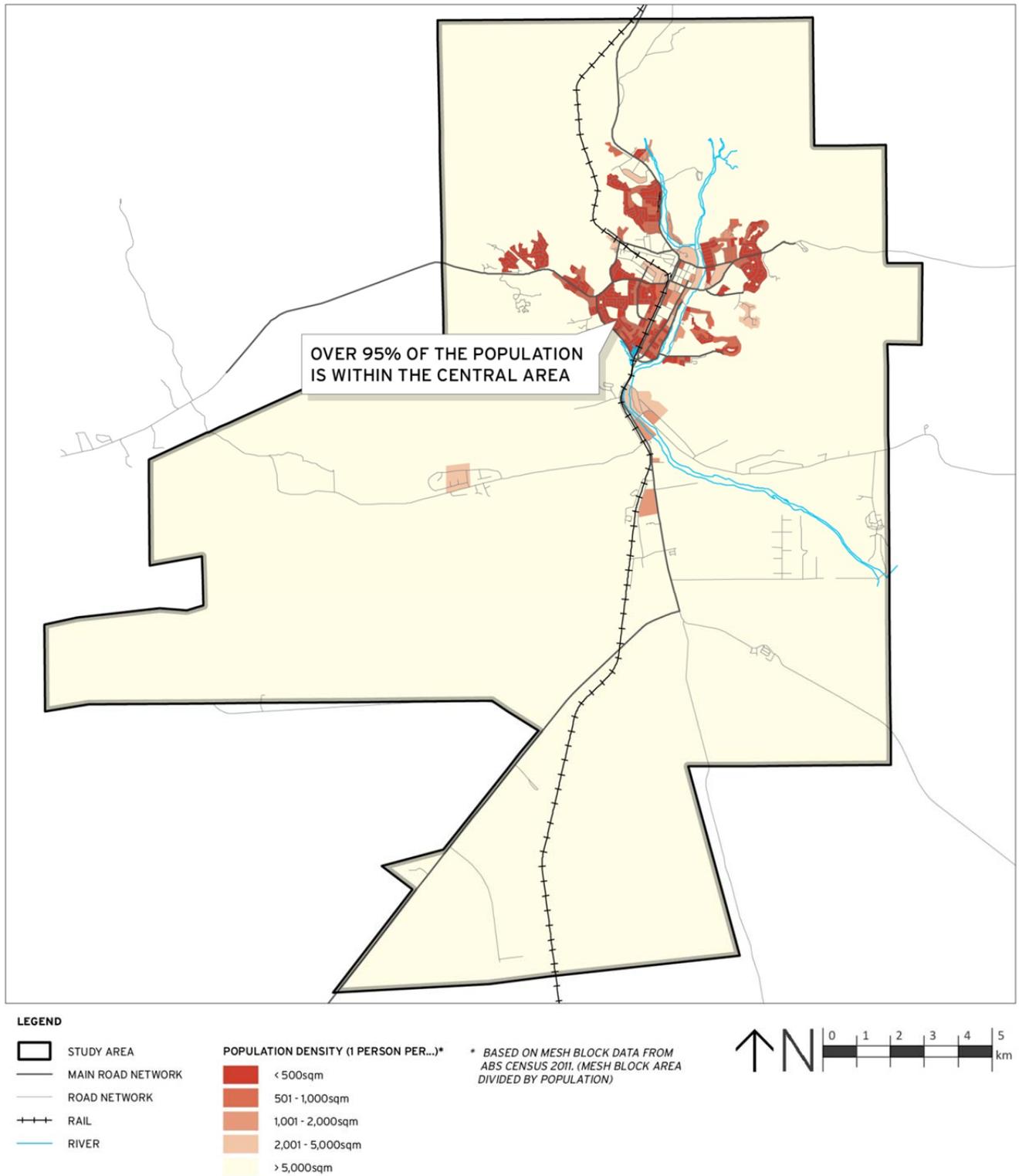


Figure 5.1: Alice Springs Population Distribution



5.2 Demographic Trends

5.2.1 Population Growth

A transient population has been a general long term trend for Alice Springs. Previous research has determined that between 2001 and 2005 there was a movement of 5,000 persons into Alice Springs and 6,000 persons out of Alice Springs. This has predominantly been due to movement in the non-indigenous population.

In 2007/08 net migration for Alice Springs was positive, with the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) and related policy settings seen to be a key facilitator for the increase in frontline services in Alice Springs. This led to more professionals moving into town.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) provides census data, which have been analysed to identify key population trends. Data for the Alice Springs Council Area have been obtained for the 2001, 2006 and 2011 Census periods.

The population of the Alice Springs municipality was 26,779 in 2001. According to the ABS Census, the population declined by 10.8% by 2006.

Between 2006 and 2011, the previous 5 year population decline was partially addressed, with an increase of 1293 persons, which represented a 5% increase.

It is relevant to note the differential between the indigenous and non-indigenous population.

Between 2001 and 2011, the indigenous population increased by 10% whilst the non-indigenous population declined by 12 percent. The non-indigenous population increased by 5% between 2006 and 2011, potentially due to the NTER and other programs initiated in the last decade. This moved towards addressing the reduction of 3305 non-indigenous persons between 2001 and 2006.

If the positive growth trends continue in relation to the indigenous population, there will be potential implications in terms of:

- future housing form and demands;
- affordable/emergency housing;
- town camp requirements and/or integration; and
- health and social services.

Table 5.1 outlines the total population and average growth rates between each Census³. The numbers shown in italic are for the whole of the Northern Territory.

It is evident that the population trends for Alice Springs demonstrate some consistency with the trends for the whole of the Northern Territory, with both populations declining between 2001 and 2006 before rising between 2006 and 2011.

The key difference is that Alice Springs experienced a greater decline and a slower rise over the two census periods, as compared to the Northern Territory as a whole.

The consistent growth of the indigenous population over both periods is evident.

Table 5.1: Alice Springs Population Trends 2001-2011

	Total Population ⁴ (NT)	Indigenous Population (NT)	Non Indigenous Population (NT)
2001	26,779 <i>(202,729)</i>	4,252 <i>(50,785)</i>	20,819 <i>(139,839)</i>
2006	23,892 <i>(192,898)</i>	4,494 <i>(53,662)</i>	17,514 <i>(122,731)</i>
2001-06	-10.8% <i>(-4.8%)</i>	+5.7% <i>(+5.7%)</i>	-15.9% <i>(-12.2%)</i>
2011	25,185 <i>(211,944)</i>	4,689 <i>(56,777)</i>	18,410 <i>(137,773)</i>
2006-11	+5.4% <i>(+9.9%)</i>	+4.3% <i>(+5.8%)</i>	+5.1% <i>(+12.3%)</i>
2001-2011	-6% <i>(+4.5%)</i>	+10.3% <i>(+11.8%)</i>	-11.6% <i>(-1.5%)</i>

³ Census, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Peoples (Indigenous) Profile

⁴ Includes "Indigenous Status not stated". "Indigenous" and "Non Indigenous" may therefore not add up

5.2.2 Age Profile

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 compare the age profile of the Alice Springs population with the whole of the Northern Territory. There is generally a high degree of correlation between the two. One element of note is that the proportion of the population between 25 and 44 years of age (prime working age cohort) has generally decreased between 2001 and 2011 for both indigenous (-8%) and non indigenous (-17%) people.

Table 5.2 shows the change in the Alice Springs age profile from 2001 to 2011. It is evident that the greatest decline was in the:

- 5-14 age cohort; and
- 25-44 age cohort.

Interestingly, there was an increase in the number of persons aged 45 and above. This indicates that this portion of the population is stable, however could result in an overall ageing in the population into the future. This could have potential implications in respect to housing need and choice.

The median age of the overall population increased from 32 years in 2001 to 33 years in 2011.

Figure 5.2: Alice Springs Age Profile 2011

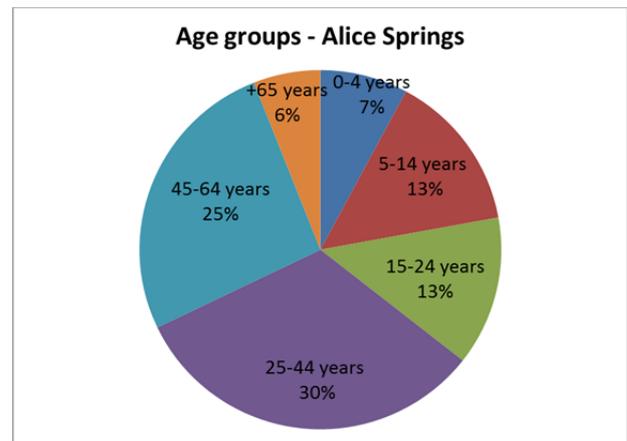


Figure 5.3: Northern Territory Age Profile 2011

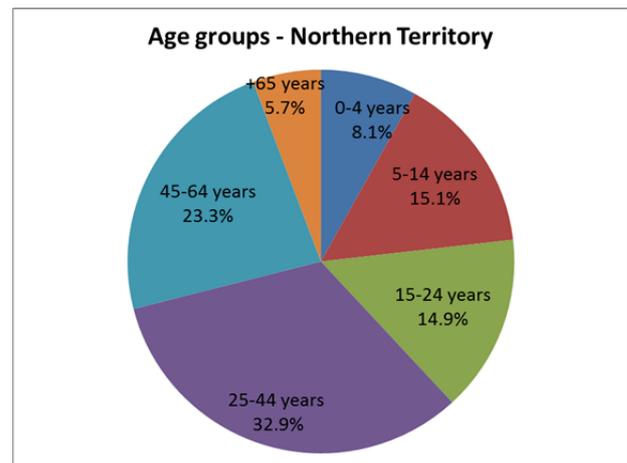


Table 5.2: Alice Springs Age Profile 2001-2011

Age group	2001	2011	Change
0-4 years	2068	1976	-4%
5-14 years	4229	3596	-15%
15-24 years	3497	3389	-3%
25-44 years	9394	8131	-13%
45-64 years	6086	6581	8%
65 years & older	1505	1512	0%
Total	26779	25185	-6%

5.3 Household Characteristics

5.3.1 Occupancy Rate

The average household size has remained stable for the last 10 years being 2.6 persons per household in 2011 (2.9 for whole of NT).



5.3.2 Household type

Only minor changes occurred between 2001 and 2011 in terms of household type. The proportion of couple families without children has slightly increased whereas the proportion of couple families with children has slightly decreased.

This could potentially suggest an ageing of the population and/or a movement of young adults away from Alice Springs.

Lone person households continue to account for approximately a quarter of households.

5.3.3 Housing Stock

As identified by Figure 5.4, between 2001 and 2011, there was a slight decline in the overall stock of occupied private dwellings from 10,058 in 2001 to 9,670 in 2011. Of this change:

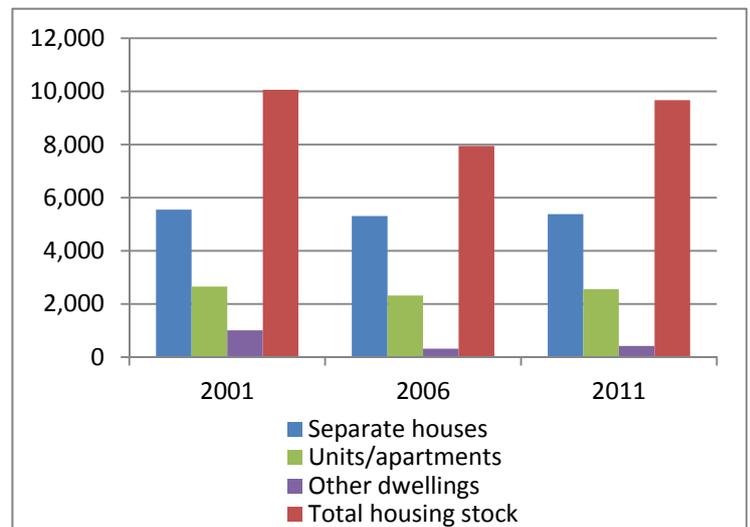
- separate houses declined by 168 dwellings;
- semi-detached dwellings, flats and apartments decreased by 96 dwellings;

- other dwellings (i.e caravan/improvised home) declined by 589 dwellings;
- dwellings of unstated structure declined by 13 dwellings; and
- unoccupied dwellings increased by 478 dwellings.

The 2006 Census data revealed an overall stock of 7948 dwellings, a decline of 2110 dwellings from 2001.

It is unclear the reasons why there was such a variation in the overall stock of housing. Various housing programs in the period would have played a key role in terms of replacement/refurbishment and construction of new stock.

Figure 5.4: Alice Springs Housing Stock 2001-2011



5.3.4 Dwelling Tenure

Figure 5.5 shows the change in housing tenure between 2006 and 2011.

There is no significant change in this period other than to note a slight shift in tenure from ownership to private rental.

The stock of 'territory housing' increased between 2006 and 2011, by a total of 130 dwellings.

As evident by Figure 5.6, territory housing is generally well distributed throughout Alice Springs, with higher concentrations evident in Larapinta, Sadadeen, Gillen and Braitling.

There has been no additional non-private housing constructed since the last census (2011). This raises a question in terms of what the public/affordable housing solution may be for the newer/future suburbs of Alice Springs.

Figure 5.5: Tenure Type in 2011

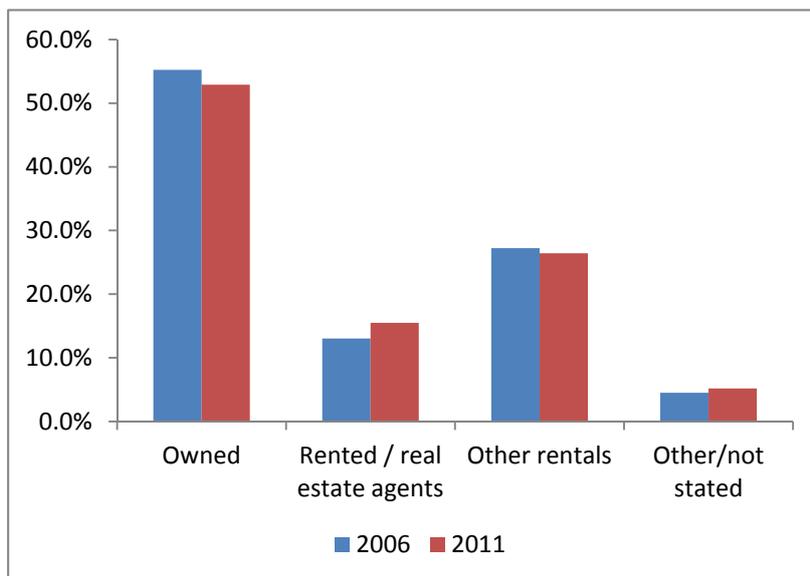


Figure 5.6: Non-Private Housing (Single-Multiple Dwellings/Unit Developments)

