# Planning Education Provision in a Changing Australia

**.id (informed decisions)**



First presented 28 October 2025


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Facilitator: Andrew Hedge

# The take home messages

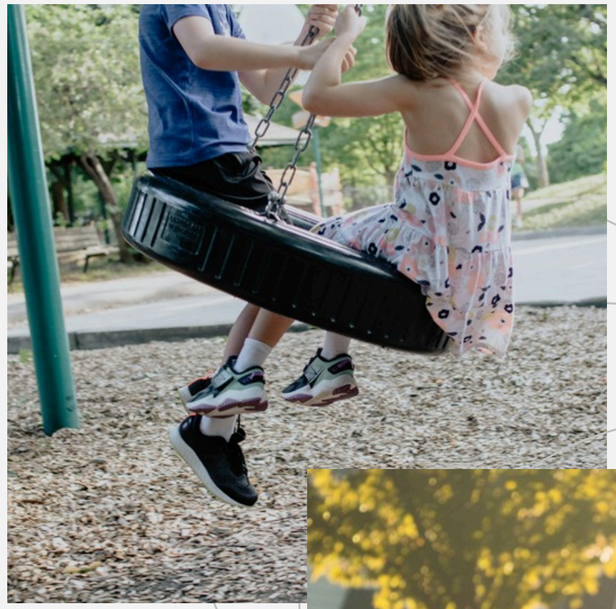
The number of children in Australia is growing, but that's not the story in every local community.

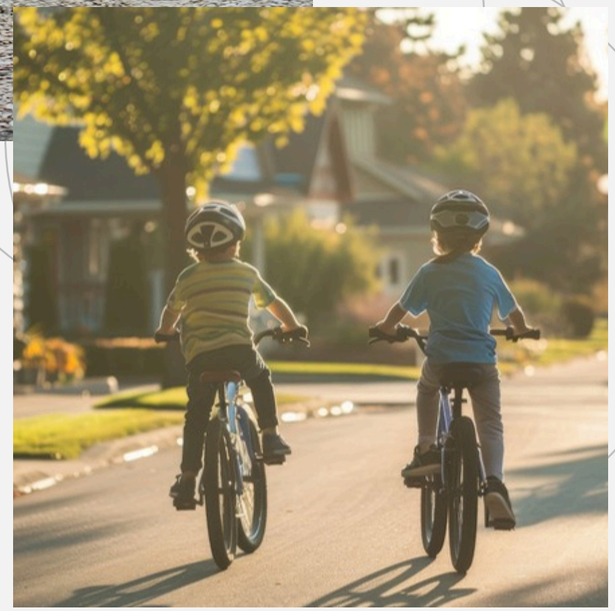
1 720,000 more children by 2046, requiring 424 more primary schools, 172 more secondary schools and up to 4,000 new childcare centres in the next 20 years.

2 Migration and births remain the key engines of school demand even as fertility stabilises near 1.6 children per woman.

3 Increases in the population of young people is uneven, but there are indicators and patterns that help us identify where there will be future demand for education services.

4 Children born during the 'COVID baby blip' - a spike in births during the pandemic - are finishing their pre-school years and about to enter primary schools.





# The broad demographic context

**Liza Ivanova**
**Population Forecaster**
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# Australia needs to plan for more schools

By 2046, Australia will have **720,000 more children**, taking the total to 6.5 million aged 0–17.

**EARLY LEARNING PLACES**
**+261,000**

**PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES**
**+254,000**

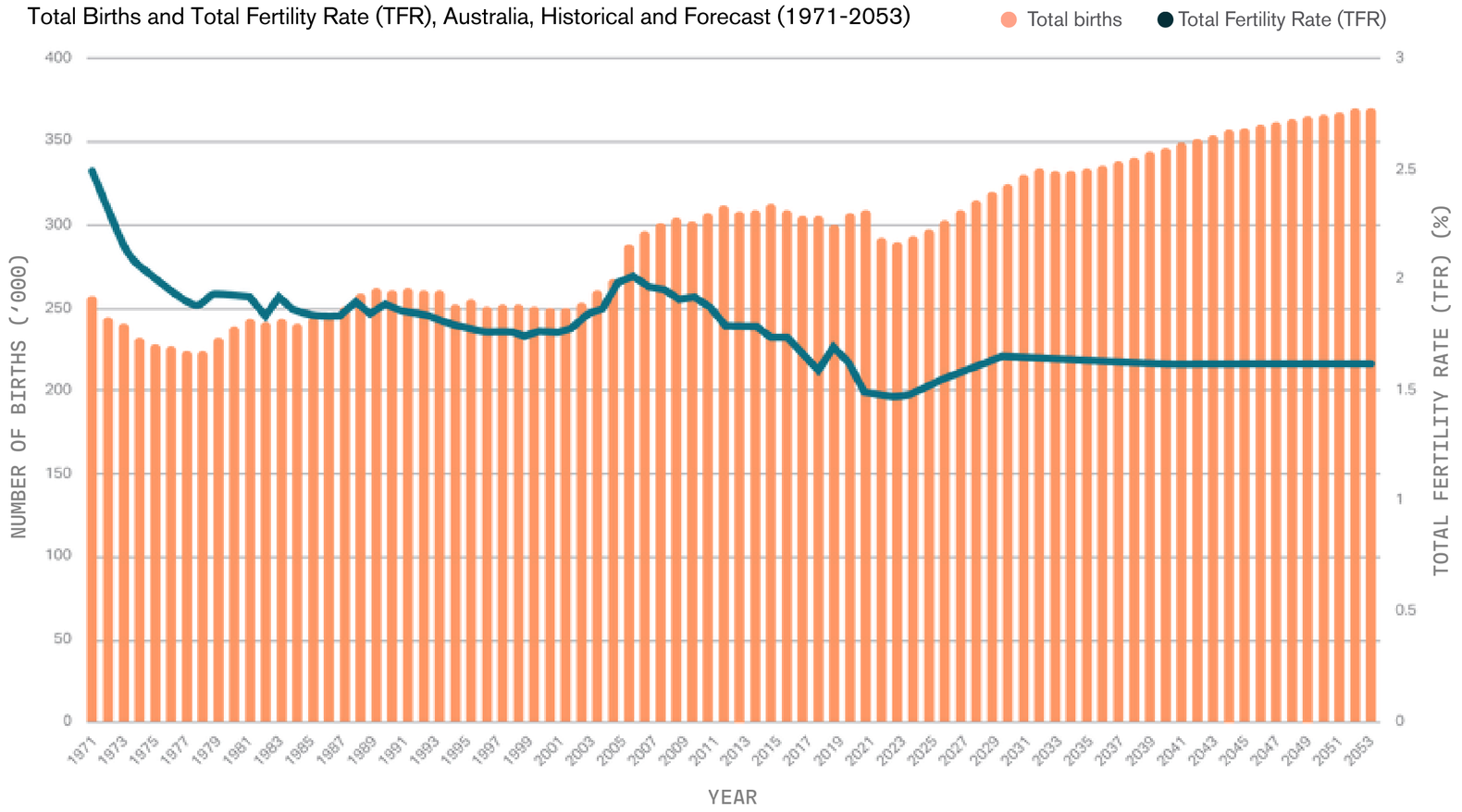
**SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES**
**+206,000**

THE BROAD DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

# Fewer births per woman (but more babies)

## BIRTHS INCREASING DESPITE FALLING FERTILITY RATE

Total Births and Total Fertility Rate (TFR), Australia, Historical and Forecast (1971-2053)

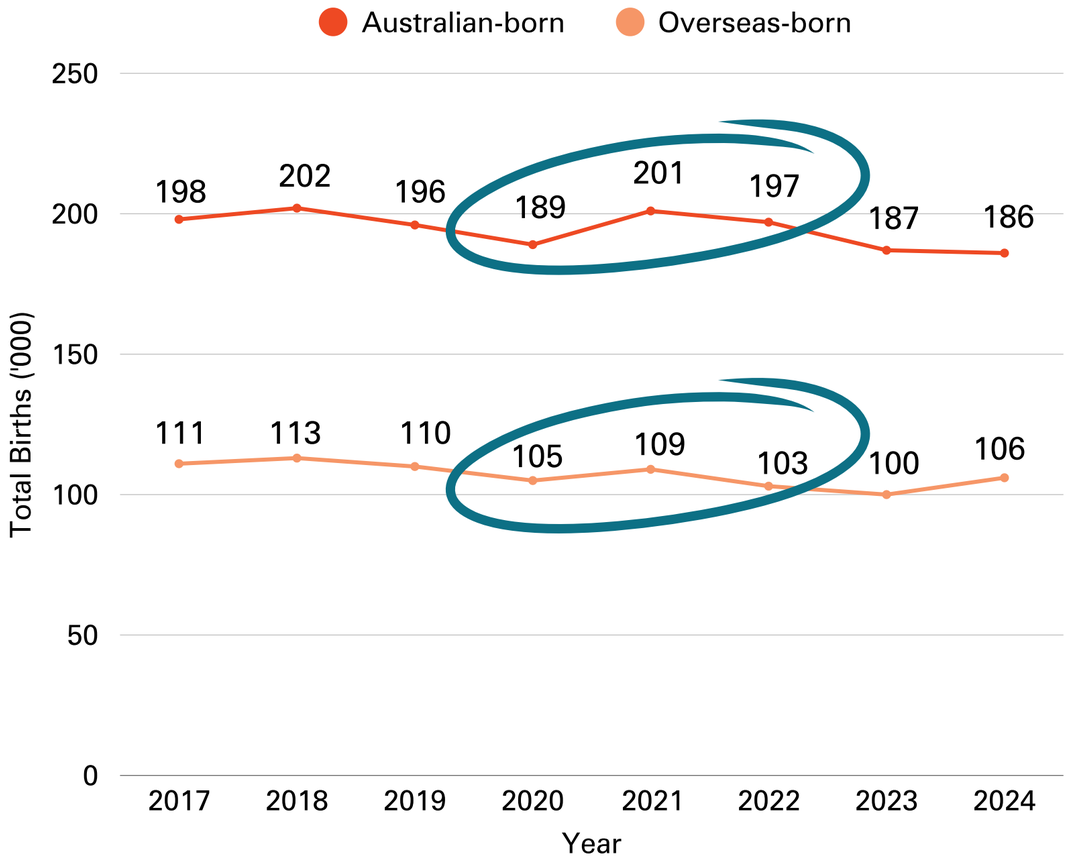



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

# The COVID baby blip is moving into classrooms

## THE PANDEMIC BABY BLIP

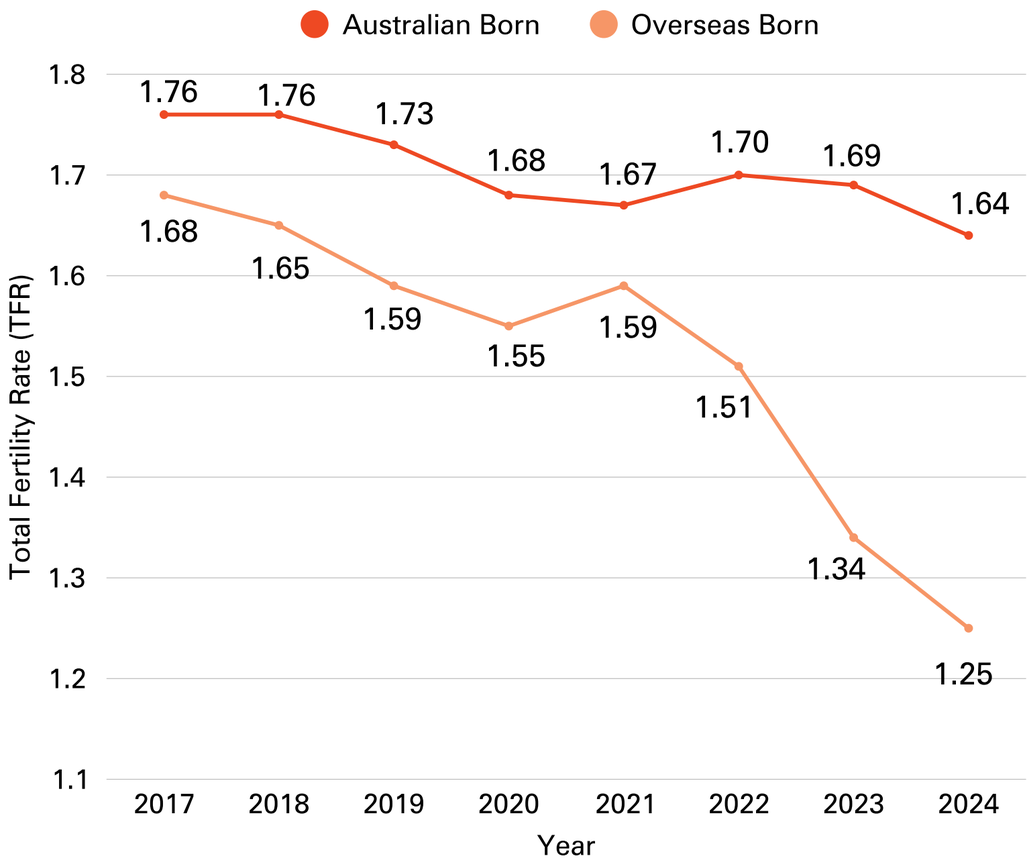
Comparison of the births by Australian born and overseas born women in Australia, 2017-2024.




Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Births, Australia, 2023

## A TEMPORARY HALT IN FALLING FERTILITY RATES DURING THE PANDEMIC

Comparison of the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) for Australian born and overseas born women in Australia, 2017-2024

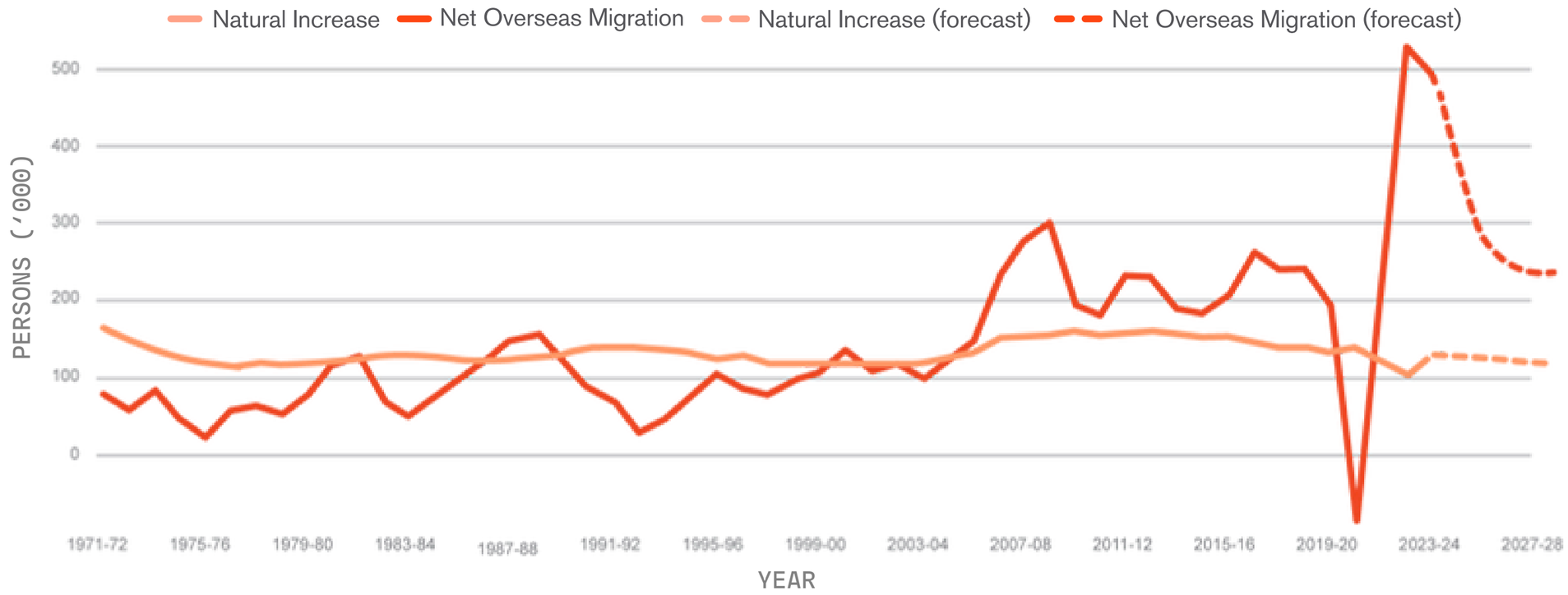



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Births, Australia, 2023

# Migration remains the dominant driver of population growth

## OVERSEAS MIGRATION: THE LEADING DRIVER OF POPULATION GROWTH SINCE THE MID 2000S

Components of population growth in Australia, historical and forecast, 1971/72 to 2027/28




Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

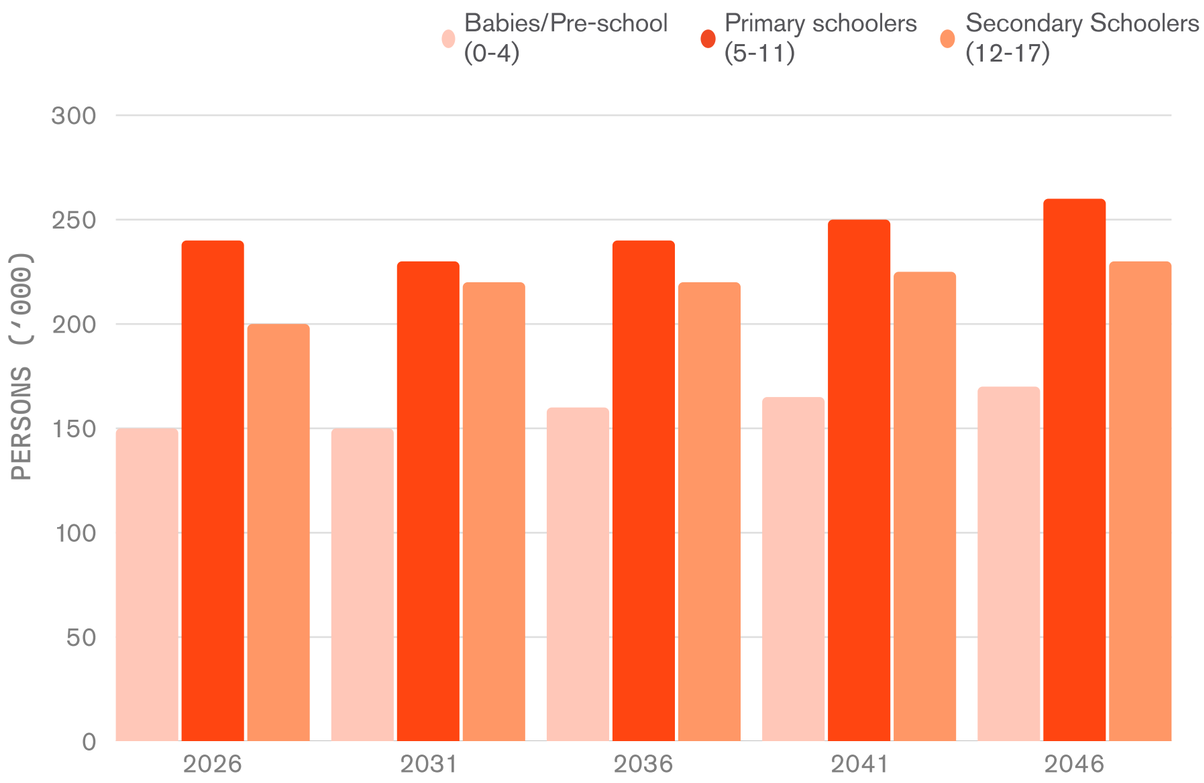
**Two thirds of Australia's growth** over the next 20 years will be in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth.

THE BROAD DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

# Every age group is growing

## AUSTRALIA'S SCHOOL AGE POPULATION WILL KEEP GROWING

Forecast change in service age groups, 2026 to 2046




Source: National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

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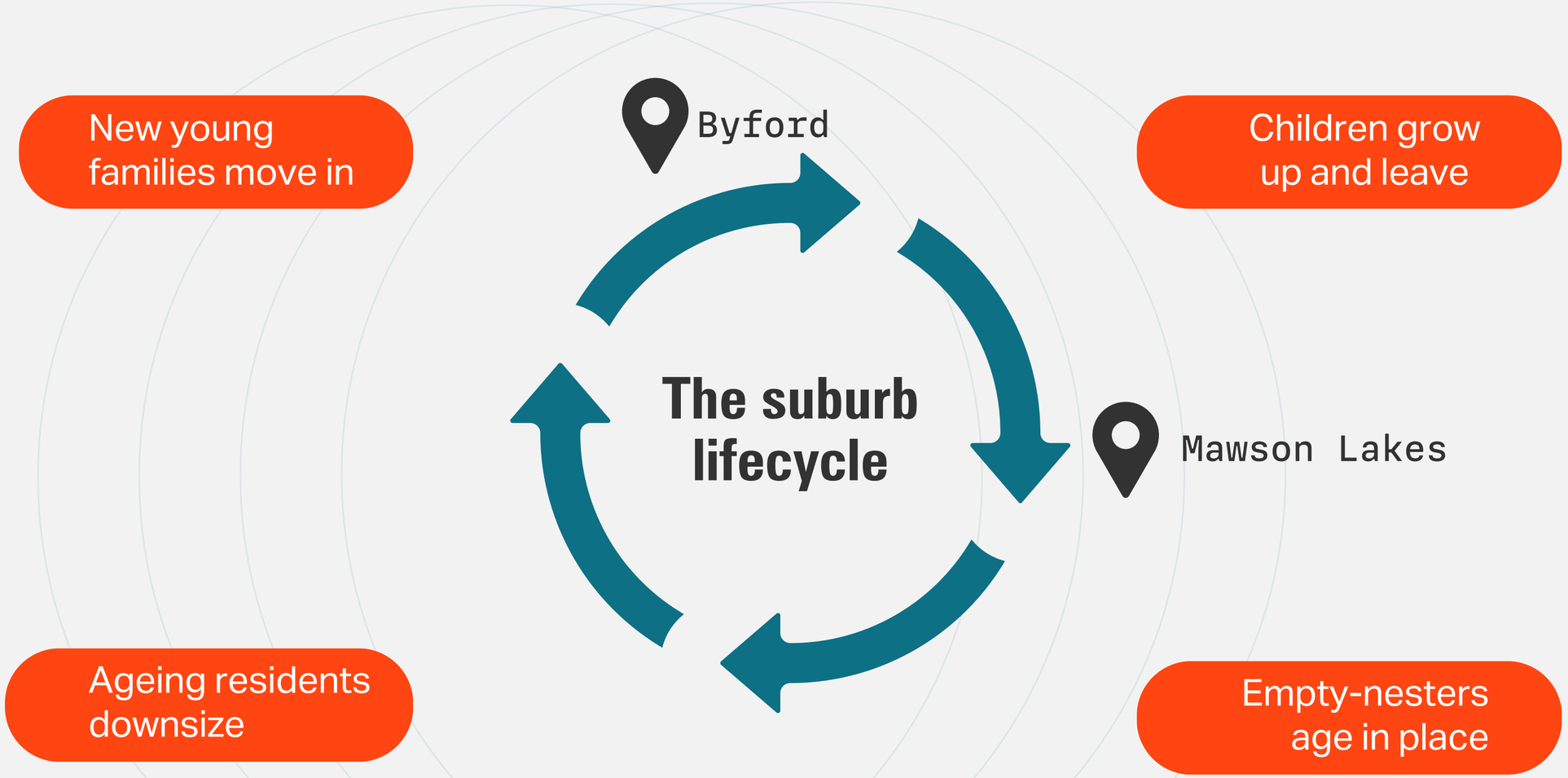
# Understanding the local context

Glenn Capuano
Demographer
.id (informed decisions)

# Suburb lifecycles shape patterns of demand



# Growth in outer areas

## Case study: Byford, Western Australia

POPULATION GROWTH
BYFORD, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

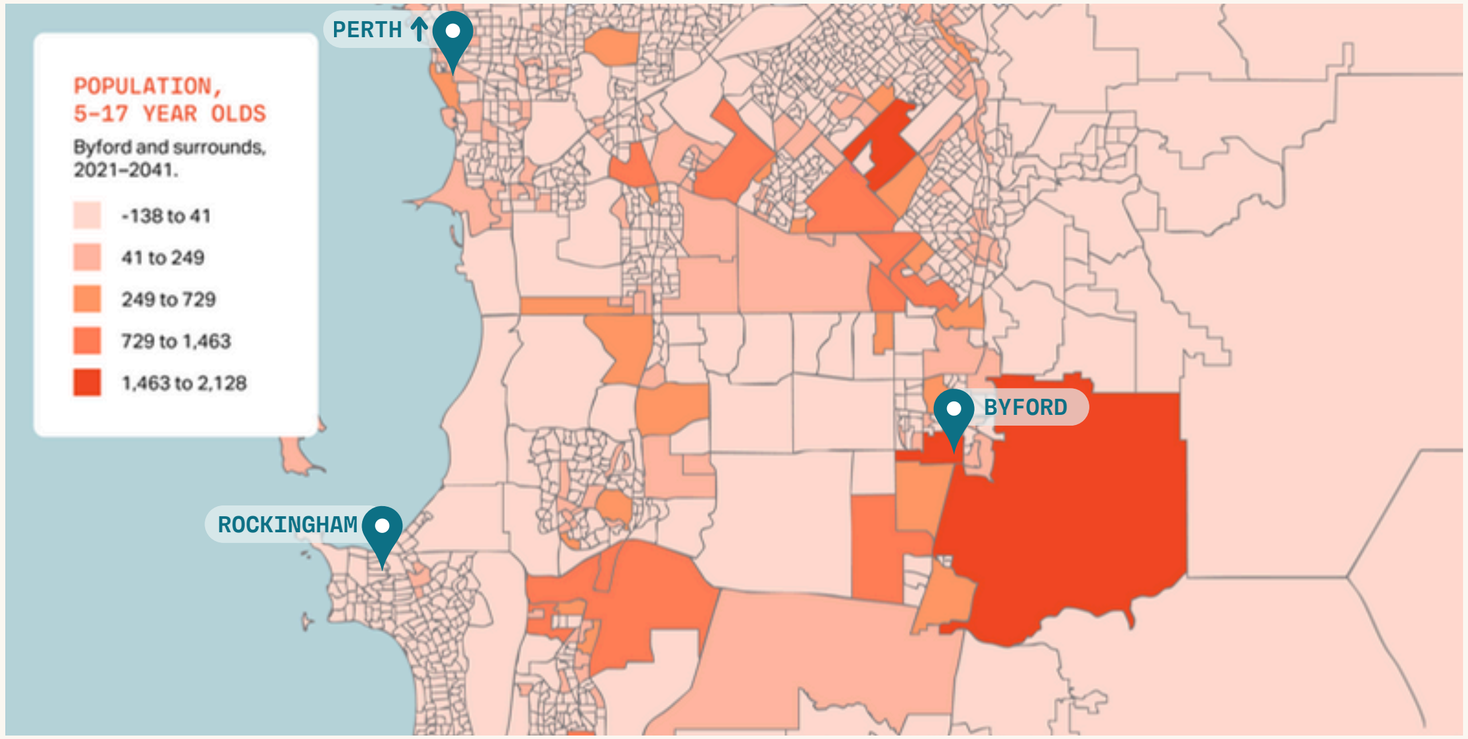
2011
7,000

TODAY
24,500

2046
FORECAST
48,000

GROWTH AREA DEMAND DRIVEN BY YOUNG FAMILIES MOVING IN

Forecast change in total school aged population (5–17), Byford and surrounds, 2021 to 2041.



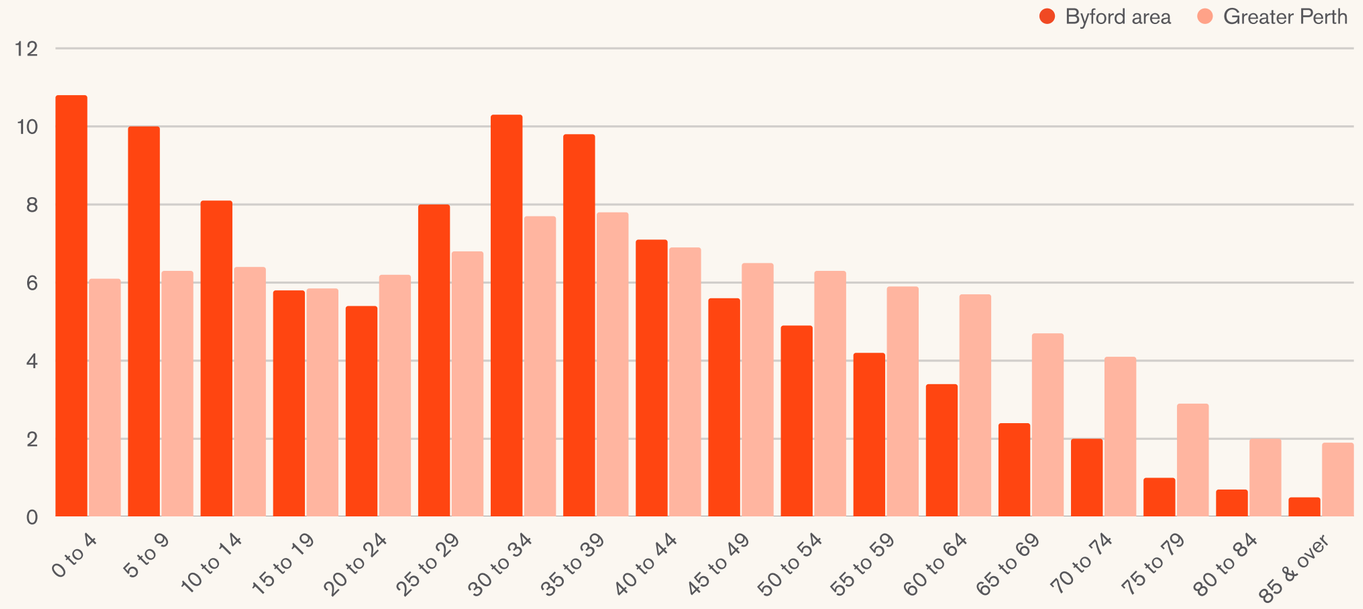

Source: National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

# Growth in outer areas

## Case study: Byford, Western Australia

### BYFORD HAS ONE OF THE YOUNGEST AGE PROFILES IN PERTH

Age structure – five year age groups, 2021. Byford area compared with Greater Perth.



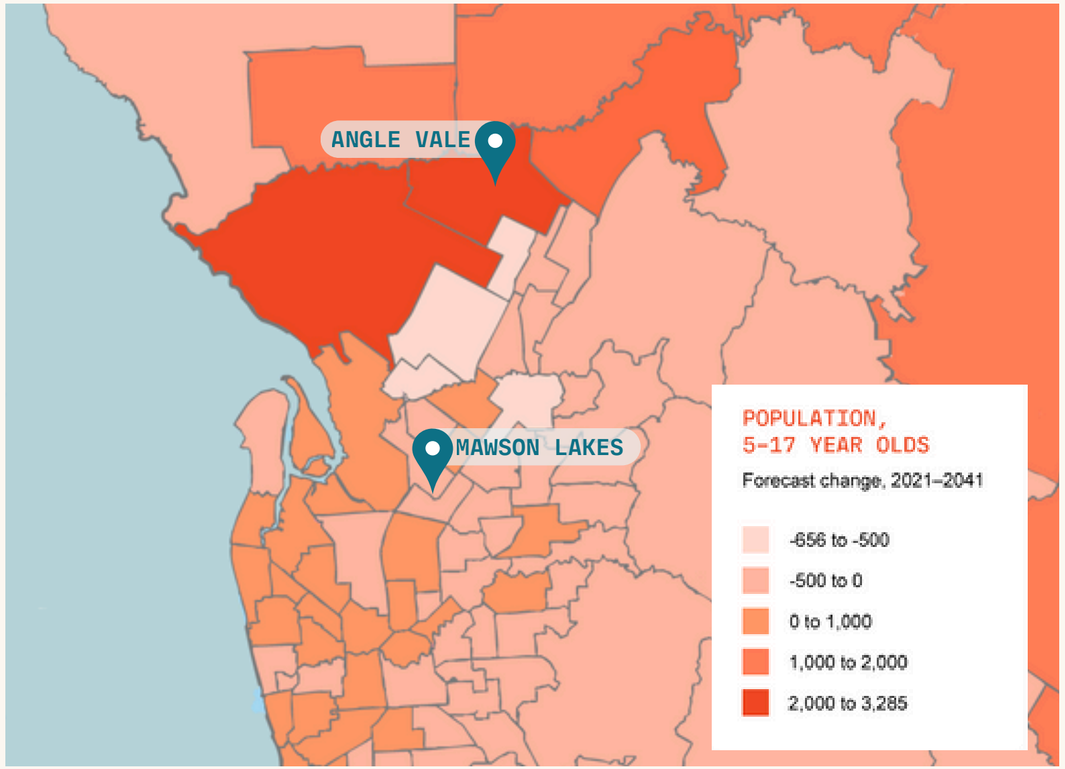
UNDERSTANDING THE LOCAL CONTEXT

# Decline in established suburbs

## Case study: Mawson Lakes, South Australia

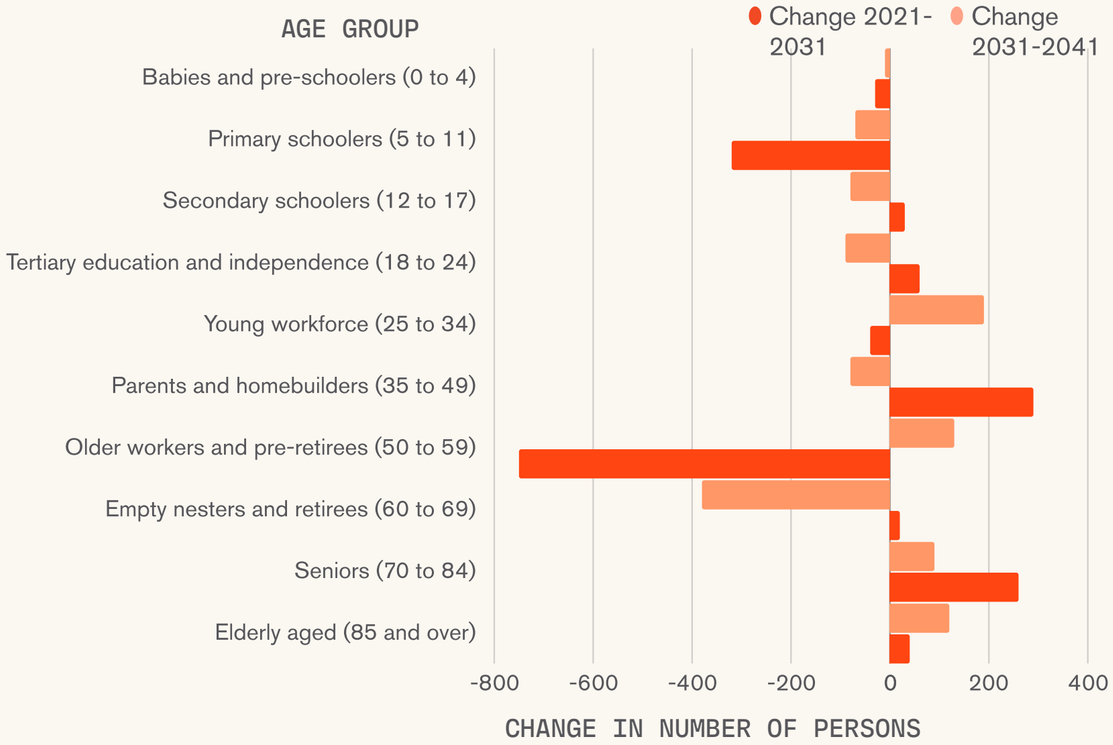
### FORECAST DECLINE IN DEMAND FOR SCHOOL PLACES IN MAWSON LAKES

Forecast change in primary-school aged population, Northern Adelaide, 2021 to 2041




### PRIMARY SCHOOL NUMBERS FALLING AS MAWSON LAKES AGES

Forecast change in service age groups, Mawson Lakes – Globe Derby Park, 2021 to 2041.



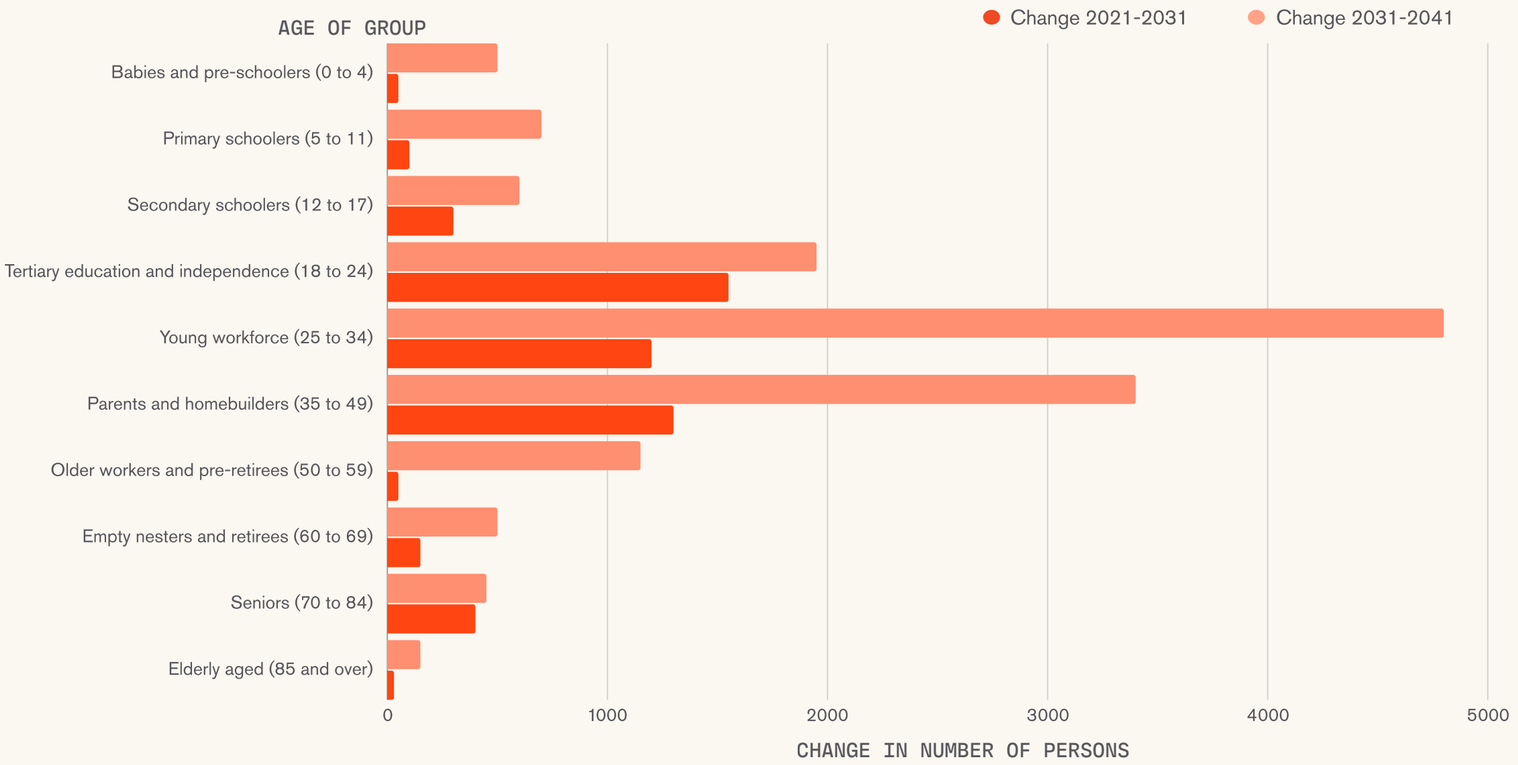

Source: National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

# Inner city resurgence

## Case study: North Melbourne, Victoria

FORECAST GROWTH DRIVEN BY YOUNG ADULTS AND FAMILIES

Forecast change in service age groups, North Melbourne, 2021 to 2041.



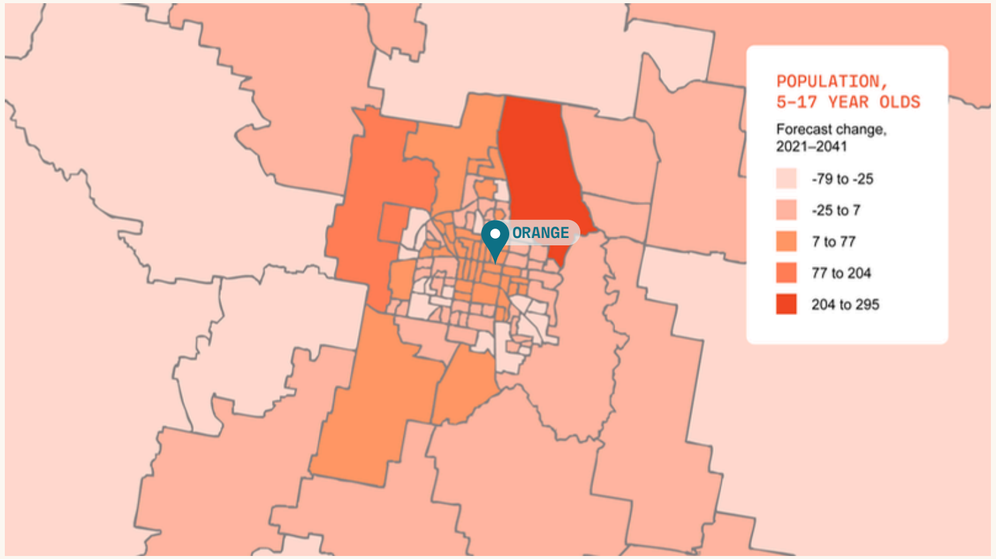

Source: National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

# Regional growth

## Case study: Orange, New South Wales

### FORECAST STUDENT GROWTH CONCENTRATED AROUND NEW DEVELOPMENTS

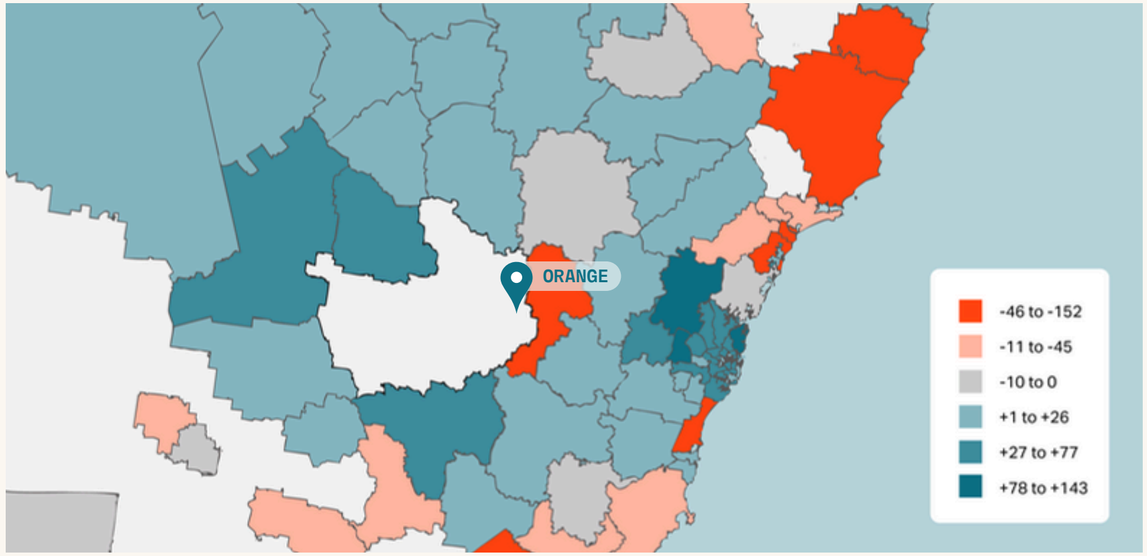
Forecast increases in school aged children are concentrated on the northern urban fringe, where new housing is planned to accommodate incoming families.




Source: National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions)

### PEOPLE LEAVING GREATER SYDNEY FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE REGIONS

Net migration gains and losses, 2016 to 2021. Orange and surrounding Local Government Areas, Central West New South Wales.




Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Regional Internal Migration Estimates (RIME) by LGA, 2021-2024

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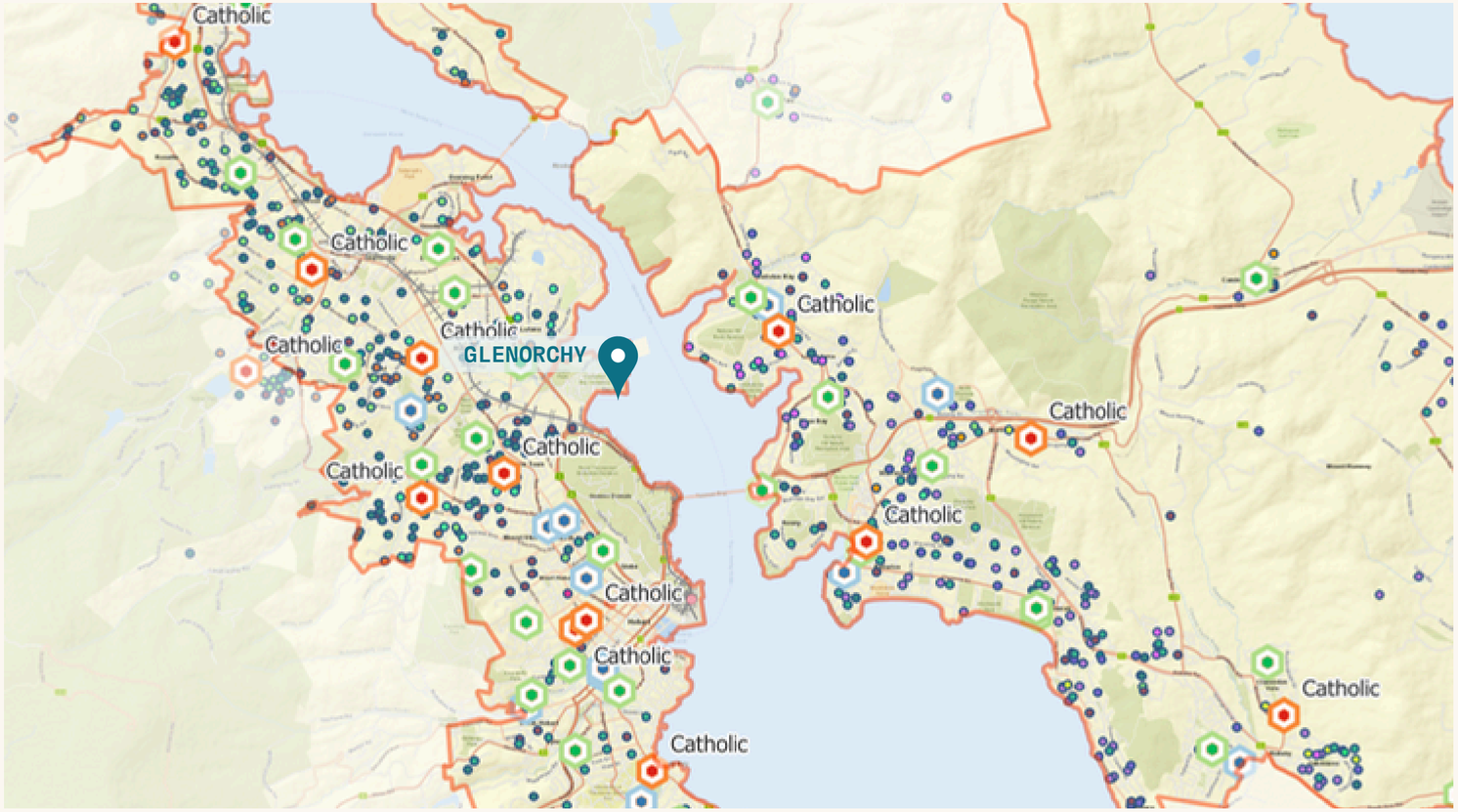
# Case study: An evidence-based approach to school planning

Johnny Barnard
Population forecaster, Consultant
.id (informed decisions)

CASE STUDIES

# A real example: How evidence builds confidence

MAPPING SUPPLY, DEMAND AND CATCHMENTS




"Condition, capacity and demographics are the three data sources I need to make a capital works decision.

If the demographics aren't adding up, it makes it very hard for me to make that decision."

CRAIG GRACE

SYSTEM MANAGER, CAPITAL PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE
TASMANIAN CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

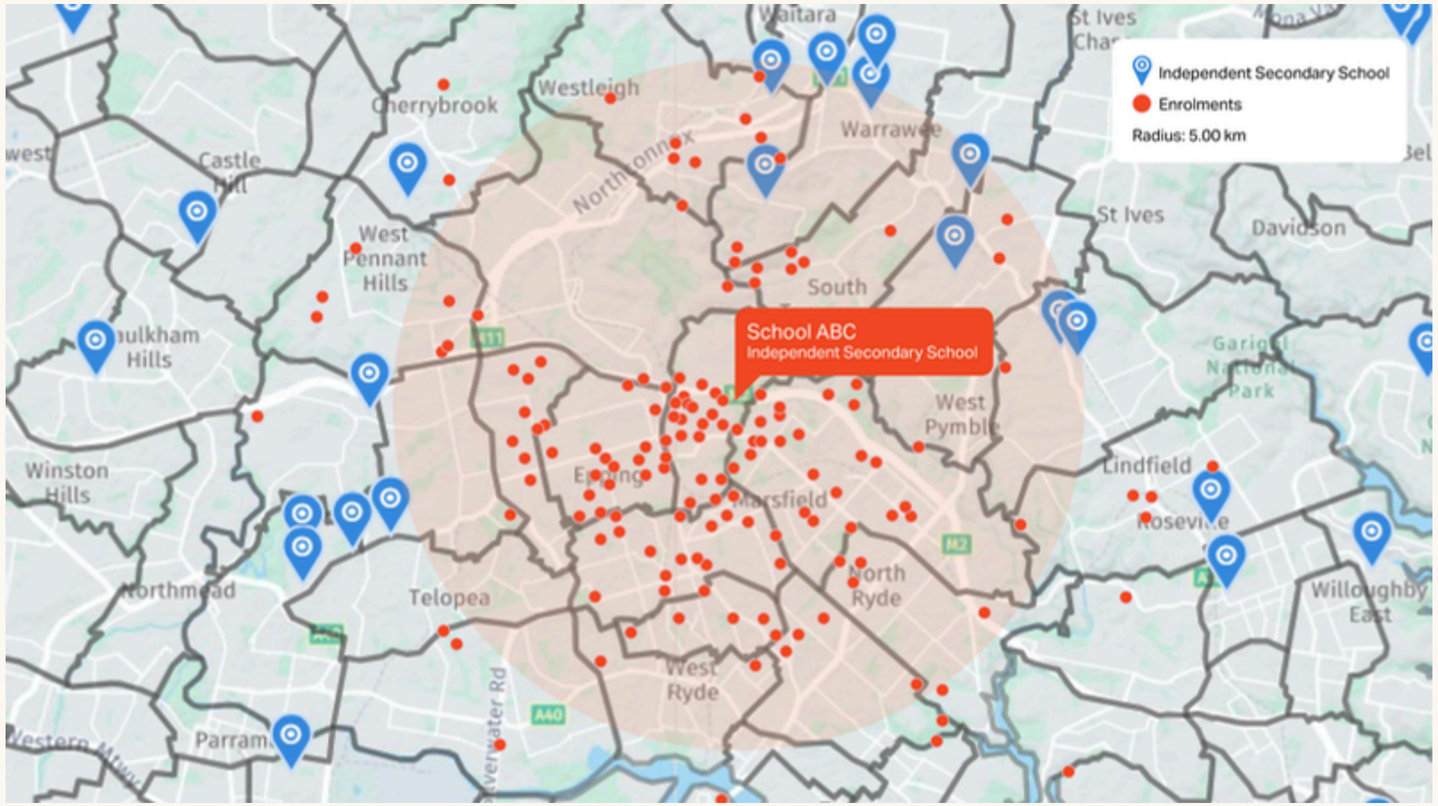
Source: National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

CASE STUDIES

# Mapping supply and demand

## MAPPING CURRENT ENROLMENTS AND COMPETING SCHOOLS REVEALS RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

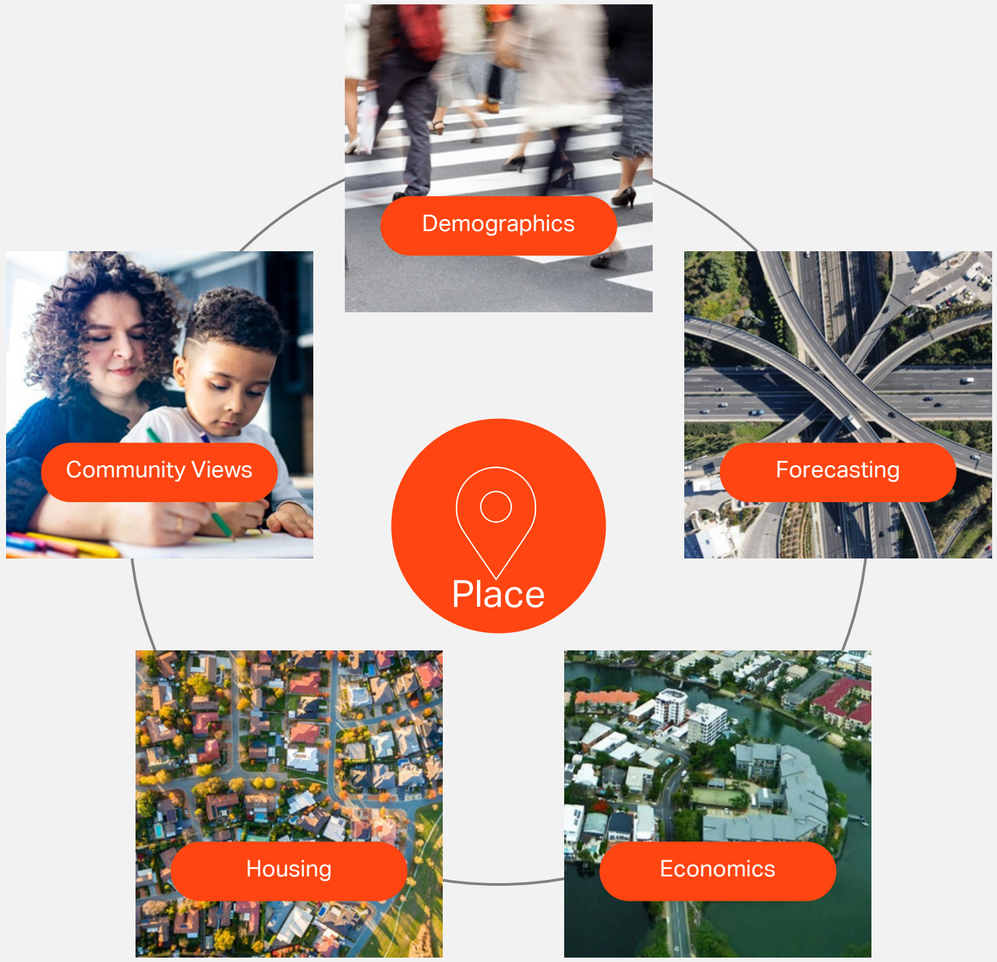
A hypothetical Independent school and current student enrolments within 5km radius.




Source: Independent school points provided by ACARA, 2025

Microgeographic forecasts enable accurate analysis of school catchments.

# An evidence base to navigate rapid change

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## We help organisations like yours in two ways

1

First with interactive tools and data solutions that give your team access to hyper-local insights and place-based analysis.

2

Second through consulting services that support strategic planning, scenario modelling and evidence-based investment decisions.

# Q&A

A copy of the webinar recording, slides and other resources will be sent to to all registrants.

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