

1.1 Location and physical environment

The Cradle Coast Region of Tasmania is a large and expansive region, stretching from Cape Grim at the north west tip of the state along the closely settled north coast to Badger Head and the Asbestos Range National Park (east of Port Sorell), and extending south across the length of the west coast of Tasmania to Port Davey and the Davey River in the south. King Island in Bass Strait is also included in the Region. The Region covers an area of 22,492 square kms or 33.1% of the total area of Tasmania. It is renowned for its unique and diverse environment including rugged mountainous areas, extensive forests, old mining towns and verdant farm lands.

The Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Burnie, Central Coast, Circular Head, Devonport, Kentish, King Island, Latrobe, Waratah/Wynyard and West Coast make up the Region. In terms of ABS statistical geography used throughout this Profile these LGAs are divided and grouped into three distinct areas, called Statistical Subdivisions (SSDs). (Note: these areas are shown on the map on the front cover):

- **Burnie–Devonport SSD** encompasses the urban/coastal strip and immediate surrounds from Sisters Beach, approximately 15 kms from Wynyard in the west, to Port Sorell in the east. Although only covering 2.8% of the Region's total area, much of the Region's population is concentrated in the towns and cities along this coastal stretch. The Burnie–Devonport SSD includes Devonport City Council and the predominantly urban parts of the Burnie, Central Coast, Latrobe and Waratah/Wynyard council areas. Devonport and Burnie–Somerset are Tasmania's third and fourth largest towns respectively. Devonport is often the first place visitors to Tasmania see, as it is the port for the Melbourne passenger and freight service. Burnie is also an important port and an industrial centre for the area. Intensive agriculture is also a major activity throughout the rural parts of this subdivision.
- **North Western Rural SSD** includes the predominantly rural parts of the Burnie, Central Coast, Latrobe and Waratah/Wynyard council areas as well as the municipalities of Circular Head, Kentish and King Island. This subdivision covers just over half of the Region's total area and is a mixture of rich farm land which supports herds of dairy and beef cattle, vegetables and other horticulture, and mountains covered in forests, where activities are based on the timber and mining industries. Waratah, situated near Mount Bischoff, was once the largest tin mine in the world, while the nearby Savage River is the state's only iron ore mine. Smithton is the largest town in the subdivision and is the centre of one of Tasmania's principal forestry areas.
- **Lyller SSD**, which consists of only the West Coast municipality, covers 42.6% of the Region's total area and contains only 5.0% of the Region's total population. Mining is the main activity in this part of the Region. Queenstown, the largest town on the West Coast, emerged when gold and other mineral ores were discovered at the Mount Lyell field. Strahan is the West Coast's only port and a popular spot for tourists.

It should be noted that the Cradle Coast Region Tasmania equates precisely with the ABS geographical area 'Mersey–Lyller Statistical Division'.

- *The Cradle Coast Region Tasmania is a large and expansive area covering some 22,492 square kms or 33.1% of the total area of Tasmania. It is renowned for its unique and diverse environment including rugged mountains, extensive forests, rich agricultural farmland and old mining towns. The mainstays of the economy are agriculture, forestry, manufacturing and mining.*

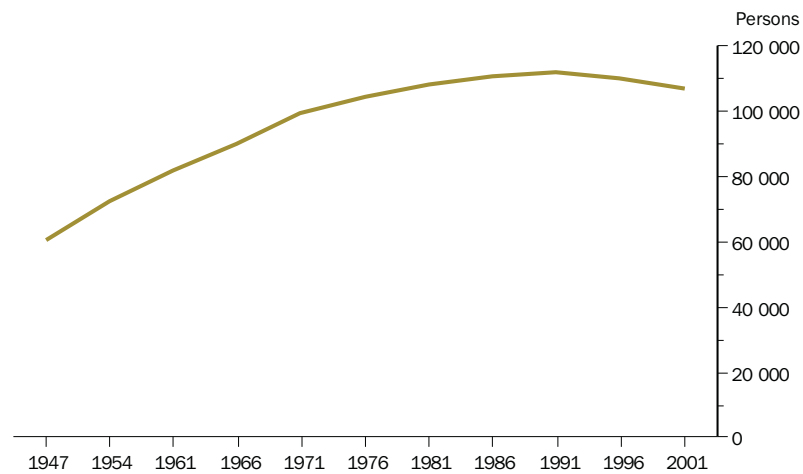
1.1 Location and physical environment *continued*

The Region contains several natural and cultural heritage areas such as Kutikina Cave, the Franklin and Gordon Rivers and Cradle Mountain. National Parks include Savage River, Rocky Cape and Narawntapu. Cradle Mountain, one of Tasmania’s most popular tourist attractions, was first developed as a tourist focal point in 1912. It is renowned for its pristine wilderness, rugged mountains and spectacular landscapes. The **Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area**, which includes Cradle Mountain, Lake St Clair, the Franklin and Gordon Rivers and much of west and south-west Tasmania was entered on the World Heritage list in 1982.

The mainstays of the economy of the Cradle Coast Region Tasmania are agriculture, forestry, manufacturing and mining. Each of these industries have been subject to major changes over the last decade which have contributed to recent population decline throughout the Region.

After World War II, the Region shared in the prosperity of both the Australian and Tasmanian economies. The post-war baby boom and gains from overseas immigration resulted in strong population growth. From 1947 to 1954 the population in the Region increased by 20%, from around 60,700 persons to 72,700. From 1954 to 1971, average annual population growth continued strongly at around 2.0% per annum reaching just under 100,000 persons in 1971 (37% increase for the period). Over the next twenty years however, from 1971 to 1991, the population growth was much more subdued, increasing by 12,200 persons or at an annual average rate of 0.6%. With structural changes occurring over the last decade in the mining, manufacturing and timber industries in particular, the population has declined by around 5,100 persons. Tasmania’s total population has also experienced an overall population decline in the period 1996 to 2001. The declining population in recent years has resulted from net losses of people moving to mainland Australia.

1.1.1 Population Change, Cradle Coast Region Tasmania—1947 to 2001



Source: ABS, 1947 to 1971 Censuses and ABS, Estimated Resident Population, 1976 to 2001.

■ *The post-war baby boom and gains from overseas immigration resulted in strong population growth from 1947 to 1971. However, major changes to the forestry, mining and manufacturing industries in particular, have contributed to population decline over the last decade.*

1.1 Location and physical environment *continued*

Climate

With Tasmania's island location in the middle latitudes, the Cradle Coast Region Tasmania enjoys, for the most part, a temperate maritime climate with temperatures moderated by proximity to the sea. The prevailing westerly airstream and a mountainous landscape leads to a marked variation of cloudiness, rainfall and temperature across the state. The west coast and highlands are generally cool, wet and cloudy. Summers are warm and mild and winters are not excessively cold.

The weather is subject, at times, to strong winds particularly on the west and south-west coasts. The mid-latitude westerlies, a belt of winds squeezed between the subtropical ridge and the sub-Antarctic trough and known as the 'Roaring Forties', affect the Region, and Tasmania, directly. The greatest strength and persistence of these winds occur during late winter and early spring. The highest recorded wind gust in Tasmania was 176 kms per hour, measured at Cape Grim in July 1998.

Burnie exhibits the temperate, maritime climate with summer maximums averaging 20°C and minimums 12°C. In winter, Burnie's average maximum temperature is 13°C and its minimum 6°C. Queenstown, in the middle of the west coast area, has similar maximum temperatures to Burnie for each month of the year, however, owing to its more inland and more elevated location, its average minimum temperatures are consistently lower.

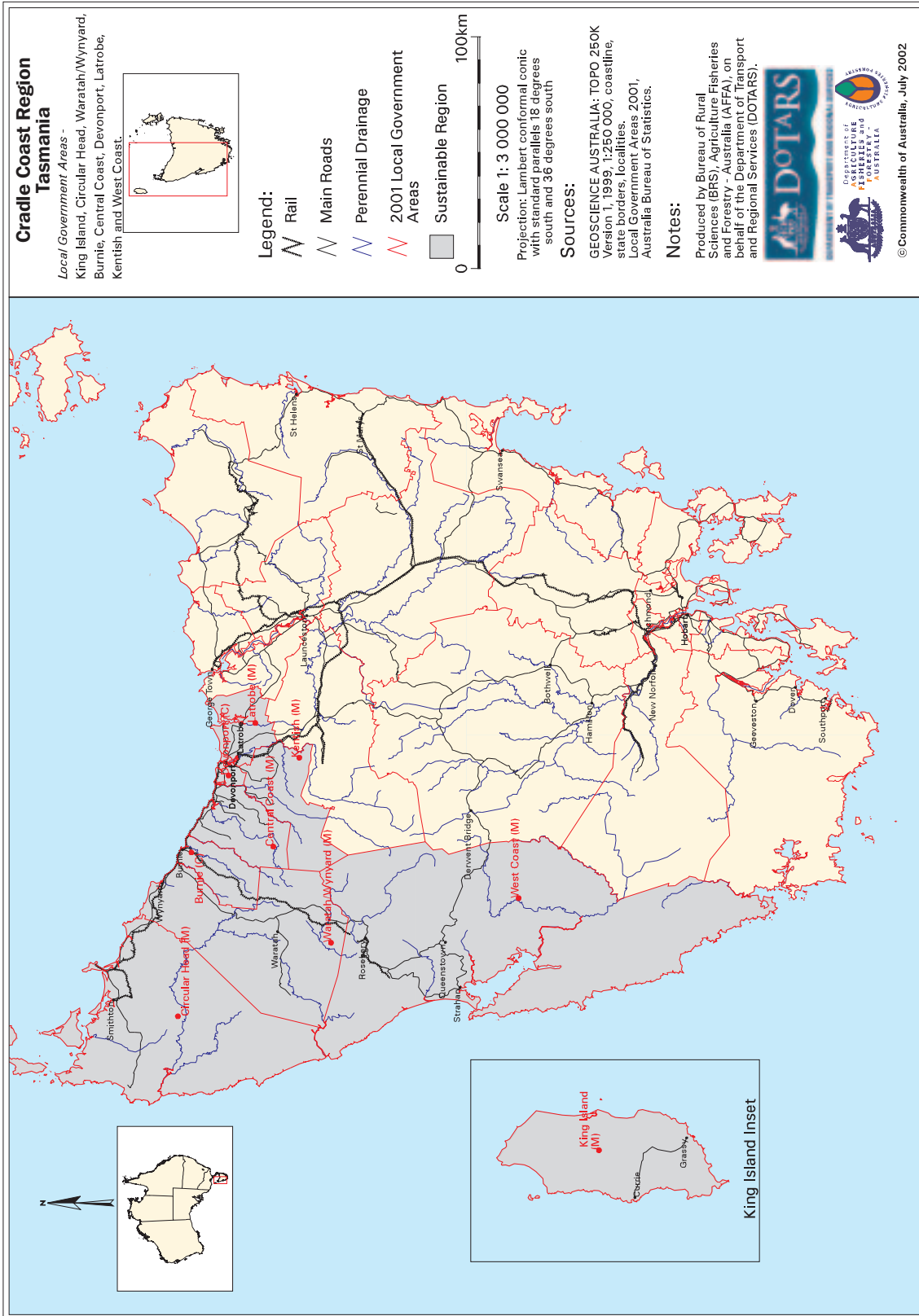
Rainfall in the Region is relatively high. The densely populated strip between Wynyard and Devonport has an average rainfall of 800–1,000 mm per annum. Queenstown, however, has exceptionally high rainfall averaging 2,420 mm per annum and rivals parts of Far North Queensland as one of the wettest areas in Australia. Rainfall in the Region is higher in winter than in summer. Whilst Tasmania experiences a generally reliable rainfall, there are periods when rainfall is significantly below or above the average. These are due mainly to changes in the broad scale meteorological and oceanographic conditions (e.g the effects of El-Nino or the Southern Oscillation Index), which governs the number of rain-bearing systems over the state. Rainfall tends to be less reliable over the eastern half of the state than in the western half.

1.1.2 Meteorological Data, Cradle Coast Region Tasmania

Month	BURNIE (57 year averages).....			Month	QUEENSTOWN (31 year averages).....		
	Temperature.....		Rainfall		Temperature.....		Rainfall
	Maximum mean °C	Minimum mean °C	Mean mm		Maximum mean °C	Minimum mean °C	Mean mm
January	20.9	12.5	43.5	January	21.0	8.3	149.9
February	21.1	13.1	48.8	February	22.0	8.6	98.8
March	19.9	11.8	52.0	March	19.7	7.6	147.2
April	17.6	9.8	78.0	April	16.5	6.5	211.3
May	15.2	8.3	98.2	May	14.3	4.6	248.5
June	13.3	6.5	105.3	June	12.2	2.7	219.7
July	12.6	5.7	130.4	July	11.6	2.4	268.6
August	13.0	5.9	110.4	August	12.4	3.1	267.5
September	14.2	6.6	87.2	September	13.5	4.0	248.5
October	15.9	7.9	88.6	October	16.0	5.0	209.9
November	17.6	9.5	71.1	November	17.5	6.4	183.7
December	19.4	10.9	65.2	December	19.4	7.9	168.1
Monthly average	16.7	9.0	81.6	Monthly average	16.4	5.6	201.8
Annual total			978.7	Annual total			2 421.7

Source: Bureau of Meteorology, Australia, <www.bom.gov.au>.

1.2 Reference map



1.3 Summary of settlement and development

When the sea level rose flooding the Bassian Plains, some 12,000 years ago, the Aboriginal population of Tasmania became separated from the rest of Australia. The creation of Bass Strait brought about the cultural and physical isolation of the Tasmanian Aborigines. At the time of British settlement, in the early years of the nineteenth century, it is believed that Tasmanian Aborigines comprised nine tribes, each of which had a number of 'bands'¹. As a predominantly nomadic people, their movements followed the seasonal changes in food supply, such as shellfish, seabirds, wallaby and a variety of vegetable foods. At the time of European settlement the population is thought to have been in the range of 4,000 to 8,000 over the whole of Tasmania.

In the Cradle Coast Region Tasmania, the North tribe inhabited what is now the Burnie–Devonport area and included the Punnilerpanner band (Port Sorell), the Plairhekehillierplue (Emu Bay) and the Noeteeler (Hampshire Hills inland from Burnie). The North West tribe included the Tommeginer (Table Cape), the Parperloihener (Robbins Island), the Pennemuker (Cape Grim), the Pendowte (Studland Bay), the Peerapper (West Point), the Manegin (Arthur River mouth), the Tarkinener (Sandy Cape) and the Peternidic (Pieman River mouth). The South West tribe included the Mimegin (Macquarie Harbour) and the Lowreenne (Low Rocky Point).

The Tiagarra Aboriginal Culture Centre and Museum, located on the prominent Mersey Bluff overlooking Devonport, features a one kilometre circuit walk which highlights over 250 rare Aboriginal rock engravings, as well as various displays of local artefacts and exhibits explaining traditional lifestyles.

The first European settlement in the Region was a penitentiary on remote Sarah Island in Macquarie Harbour on the west coast which operated from 1822 to 1833. The prisoners there were used to work the valuable huon pine forests around the Gordon and King Rivers. With the discovery of tin in 1879 and copper in 1883, there was a rush of people to the west coast.

The early history of the north-west region of Tasmania is inextricably bound up with the Van Diemen's Land Company which was operating around Circular Head and Emu Bay from the 1820s. Indentured labourers brought out from Britain and also assigned convicts made up the bulk of the Van Diemen's Land Company's workforce in the early years.

Strahan is the West Coast's only port and up to the 1960s catered for the mining activities in the area. Strahan is a popular destination for visitors with cruises on Macquarie Harbour and the Gordon River. A recent addition to the tourism infrastructure of the Region is the restored West Coast Wilderness heritage railway that operates between Strahan and Queenstown. It was opened by the Prime Minister in April 2003. **Queenstown**, the largest town on the West Coast, emerged from the discovery of gold and other minerals at the 'Iron Blow' at Mount Lyell. The thick forests surrounding Queenstown were cut down to fuel the copper smelter and the sulphur fumes from the smelter killed off the rest of the vegetation and stained the slopes. The legacy of this today is the unusual 'moonscape' appearance of the surrounding hills. North of Queenstown is **Rosebery**, another mining town. The area surrounding the town has remarkable ancient rainforests. **Zeehan**, in its heyday, boasted 26 hotels and Australia's largest theatre.

Burnie is situated on the shores of Emu Bay on the North West Coast of Tasmania. It is the state's fourth largest town and is a major industrial centre with a busy container port. Minerals, timber, agricultural produce and paper are shipped from the port. Burnie was first settled in 1827 by the Van Diemen's Land Company and was called Emu Bay. The name was changed in 1828 in honour of William Burnie, a director of the Van Diemen's Land Company. **Somerset** is situated at the mouth of the Cam River, 7 kms east of Burnie, at the junction of the Bass and Murchison Highways. It has grown to become a residential satellite of Burnie. The population of Burnie–Somerset urban centre is around 18,100 persons.

Wynyard is situated at the mouth of the Inglis River, near the picturesque Table Cape. Table Cape, a large promontory of 170 metres, was named by George Bass and Matthew Flinders. The Waratah/Wynyard region is the centre of a prosperous farming district with soils most suitable for the growing of vegetables such as potatoes, peas, onions and corn and the raising of sheep and cattle. In more recent times cultivation of poppies, pyrethrum and tulips have emerged. The Table Cape Butter and Bacon Factory was formed in 1892 and has continually produced export butter and now cheese. Other major industries in the area include timber and plywood mills. Wynyard is the site of the Burnie Airport.

1 Source: *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*, Lyndall Ryan, Allen and Unwin, 1996 (Second Edition).

1.3 Summary of settlement and development *continued*

Major centres in the Central Coast district are the coastal towns of Ulverstone and Penguin. **Ulverstone** is situated at the mouth of the Leven River which, together with **Turners Beach**, are popular holiday destinations. The first permanent settler in the Ulverstone district arrived in 1840 with the prospect of opening up cropping land. Timber getters also moved into the area to harvest the bountiful timber. The Central Coast is home to colonies of fairy penguins that nest along the foreshore. The town of **Penguin** was named after the fairy penguins.

Devonport is situated at the mouth of the Mersey River. The discovery of coal in the Latrobe area to the south in the early 1850s brought increased shipping activity and small townships on both sides of the Mersey grew. These were centred around shipbuilding, trading, farming and a sawmill. In 1890 these small townships on both sides of the river amalgamated to form the new town of Devonport. Today, Devonport is the largest town on the north coast with a town population of around 21,600 persons. Its port is still its lifeblood as well as farming, mainly vegetables, and manufacturing. Devonport is the arrival place for the Bass Strait passenger ferry service between Melbourne and Tasmania.

The municipality of Latrobe covers an area of 600 square kms and includes the townships of Latrobe, Port Sorell, Shearwater, Hawley, Wesley Vale, Moriarty and Tarleton.

Latrobe is the major centre in the district and is situated on the Mersey River 9 kms south-east of Devonport. The town has turn of the century streetscapes that lend an olden day character to the town. Major industries in the district include agriculture, orchards, brickworks and a paper mill.

Port Sorell is a popular seaside town with a growing population.

Smithton is situated at the mouth of the Duck River and is the headquarters of the Circular Head shire. The shire gained its name from the unusual land formation at Stanley, known as 'The Nut'. The Nut rises 152 metres above sea level and is formed from solidified lava. It is estimated to be 13 million years old. The Circular Head council area is dominated by forestry plantations and agricultural land, which along with fishing and aquaculture provide the area's main employment opportunities. The district is the state's largest dairying and prime beef producing area. Smithton is the centre of one of Tasmania's principal forestry areas. Access to the forestry reserves is from Edith Creek, just south of Smithton.

Stanley is one of the oldest settlements in north-west Tasmania. It is the birthplace of Joseph Lyons, Australia's only Tasmanian-born Prime Minister while his widow, Dame Enid, was the first female member of Federal Parliament. Stanley was the headquarters of the Van Diemen's Land Company in the early nineteenth century. There is an iron ore pelletising plant at **Port Latta** which also has off-shore loading facilities for iron ore from Savage River. The Bass Highway ends at **Marrawah**, the most westerly town on mainland Tasmania.

Sheffield is the main centre for the Kentish district and is the northern gateway to the Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park. In 1841 Nathaniel Kentish, a government surveyor, explored the area and the district was named after him. Sheffield was established by 1877. Sheffield itself is renowned for its series of murals which depict the history of the area. The town of **Railton** has a large cement manufacturing plant.

King Island is situated on the western side of Bass Strait, midway between Cape Otway in south-western Victoria and Cape Grim on the north-western tip of Tasmania. The island covers over 1,000 square kms and comprises pockets of rainforests, nature reserves and beaches. King Island was discovered in 1798 by Captain Reid and named in 1801 in honour of the Governor of New South Wales, Governor King. The island's administrative headquarters and major centre is **Currie**, situated on the western coast of the island. **Grassy** and **Naracoopa** are also notable towns on the island. Scheelite mining occurred at Grassy until 1990 when the mine was closed. King Island is well known for its shipwrecks which can be found around the island, and for having Australia's tallest lighthouse. It is also well known for its much sought after dairy produce, such as its Brie cheese, for its kelp which is exported to Scotland, and also its excellent crayfish and beef. These delicacies have made the name King Island synonymous with gourmet food products.

1.4 Selected summary indicators as a proportion of Tasmania

Graph 1.4.1 below and table 1.4.2 on the following page show selected indicators for the Cradle Coast Region Tasmania expressed as a proportion of total Tasmania. For each indicator, the Region's share of the state's total for each characteristic can be compared.

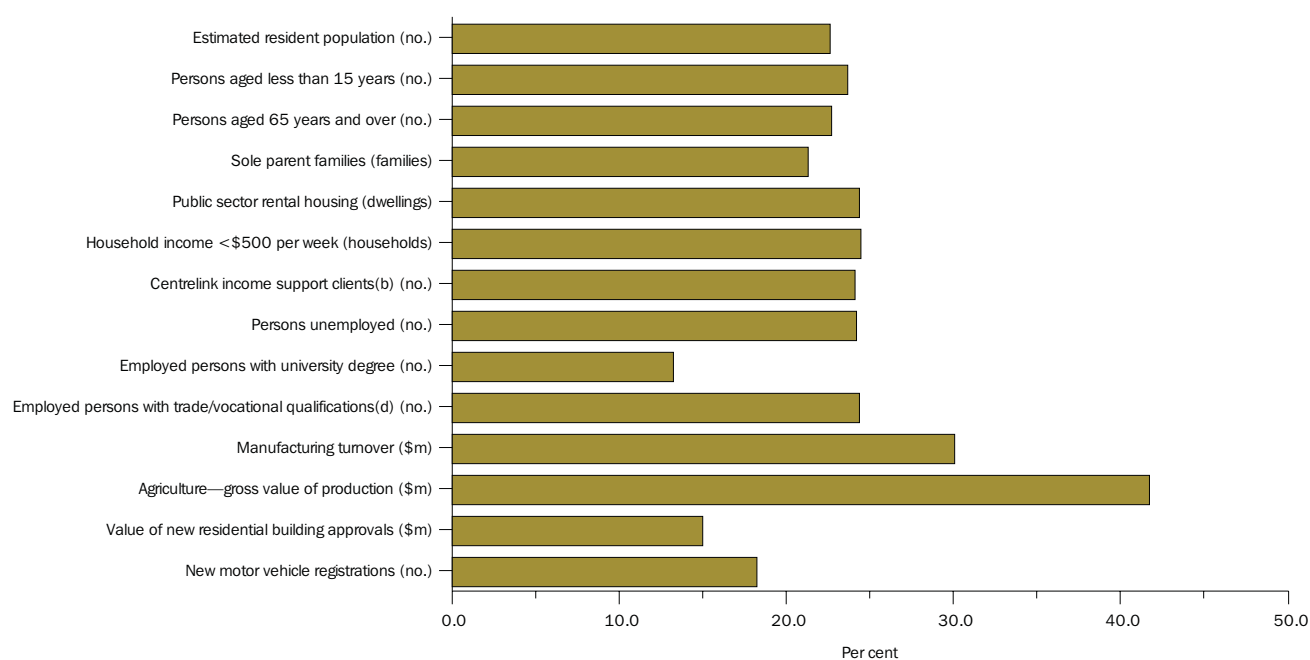
In 2001 the Cradle Coast Region Tasmania contained 22.6% of Tasmania's total population. Children in the Region (i.e. persons aged 0–14 years) comprised 23.7% of Tasmania's children and its older people (i.e. persons aged 65 years and over) comprised 22.7%, so it can be seen that the Region's age structure is very similar to that of Tasmania as a whole (see also Section 2.3).

Using the population share of 22.6% as a benchmark, other selected characteristics can be compared. Those with proportions higher than 22.6% include employed persons with trade/vocational qualifications (24.4%), public housing (24.4%), low income households (24.4%), Centrelink income support customers (24.1%) and unemployed persons (24.2%).

Those characteristics lower than the benchmark 22.6% include employed university graduates (13.3%), sole parent families (21.3%) and new motor vehicle registrations (18.3%).

In terms of economic activity, new residential building approvals comprise around 15.0% of Tasmania's total, agricultural production 41.7%, while manufacturing turnover is around 30.1% of the state's total.

1.4.1 Selected Summary Indicators(a), Cradle Coast Region Tasmania as a Proportion of Tasmania



(a) Latest data available.

(b) Source: Department of Family and Community Services, *Centrelink Customers by Postcode*.

(c) Monthly average.

(d) Certificate levels I to IV.

1.4 Selected summary indicators as a proportion of Tasmania *continued*

1.4.2 Selected Summary Indicators(a), Cradle Coast Region Tasmania as a Proportion of Tasmania

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Reference period</i>	<i>Cradle Coast Region Tasmania</i>	<i>Tasmania</i>	<i>%</i>
Estimated resident population (no.)	June 2001	106 826	471 795	22.6
Persons aged less than 15 years (no.)	June 2001	23 437	99 081	23.7
Persons aged 65 years and over (no.)	June 2001	14 742	64 885	22.7
Sole parent families (families)	2001 Census	4 366	20 476	21.3
Public sector rental housing (dwellings)	2001 Census	2 808	11 515	24.4
Household income <\$500 per week (households)	2001 Census	15 747	64 439	24.4
Centrelink income support clients(b) (no.)	June 2001	32 473	134 496	24.1
Persons unemployed(c) (no.)	2001–02	4 600	19 000	24.2
Employed persons with university degree (no.)	2001 Census	3 689	27 721	13.3
Employed persons with trade/vocational qualifications(d) (no.)	2001 Census	9 309	38 214	24.4
Manufacturing turnover (\$m)	1996–97	1 421	4 720	30.1
Agriculture—gross value of production (\$m)	2000–01	315	755	41.7
Value of new residential building approvals (\$m)	2001–02	33.6	224	15.0
New motor vehicle registrations (no.)	2000–01	2 941	16 091	18.3

(a) Latest data available.

(b) Source: Department of Family and Community Services, *Centrelink Customers by Postcode*.

(c) Monthly average.

(d) Certificate levels I to IV.