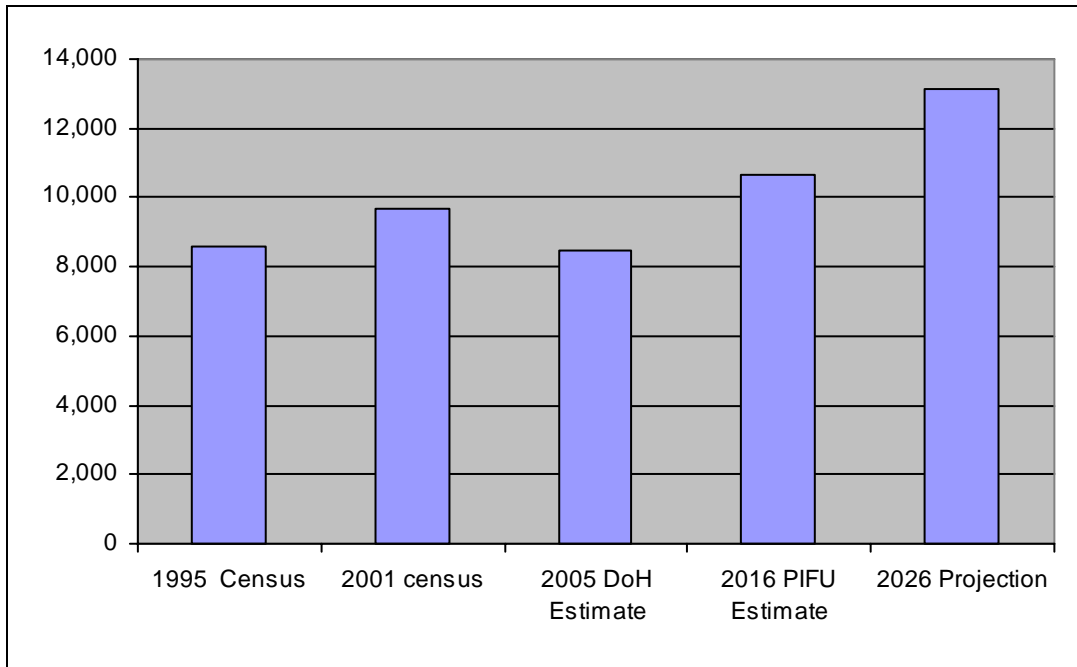


Figure 2.7 Population of the Torres Strait



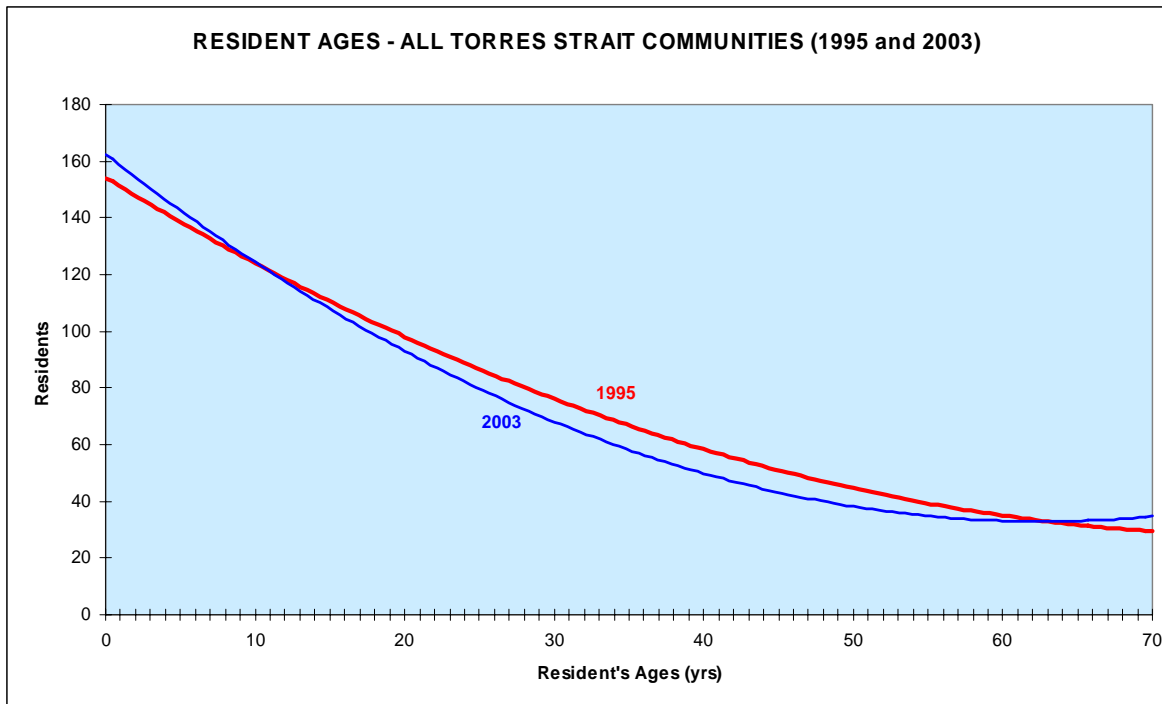
Source: ABS, Dept of Housing & PIFU

2.4.3 Age Profiles

According to the ABS census data, the median age of the whole Torres Strait population rose from 23 in 1995 to 25 in 2001. The median age of the indigenous population is however lower (20 in 2001) as opposed to the median age of the Queensland population (35 in 2001).

Department of Housing HAMS data indicates that, overall, there may be a slight increase in the birth rate and that the proportion of older people is also slightly increasing. Given that some of this data is known to be inaccurate, and is heavily affected by movement of people on and off communities, no reasonable long term prediction can be made from the data.

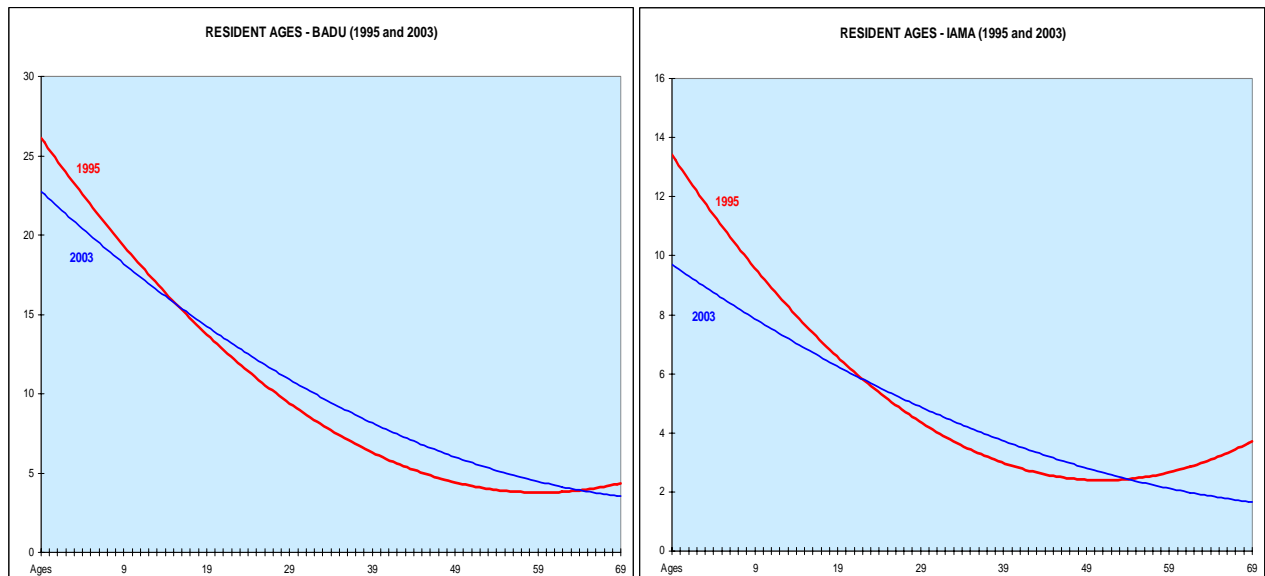
Figure 2.8 Age Profile for the Whole of Torres Strait



Source: Dept of Housing

Communities that have experienced significant infrastructure development, such as Badu, or have rapidly growing populations, such as Yam, would seem to have gone against the general trend of the region as a whole, having flattened the age profiles. This could be due to more young people staying in the community, or growing standards of living and improved education.

Figure 2.9 Age Profile for Selected OTSI communities



Source: Dept of Housing

2.4.4 Vehicle and Boat Ownership

Data sourced from the 2001 ABS Census of Population and Housing showed the following vehicle ownership statistics, as listed in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2 Car Ownership in the Torres Straits

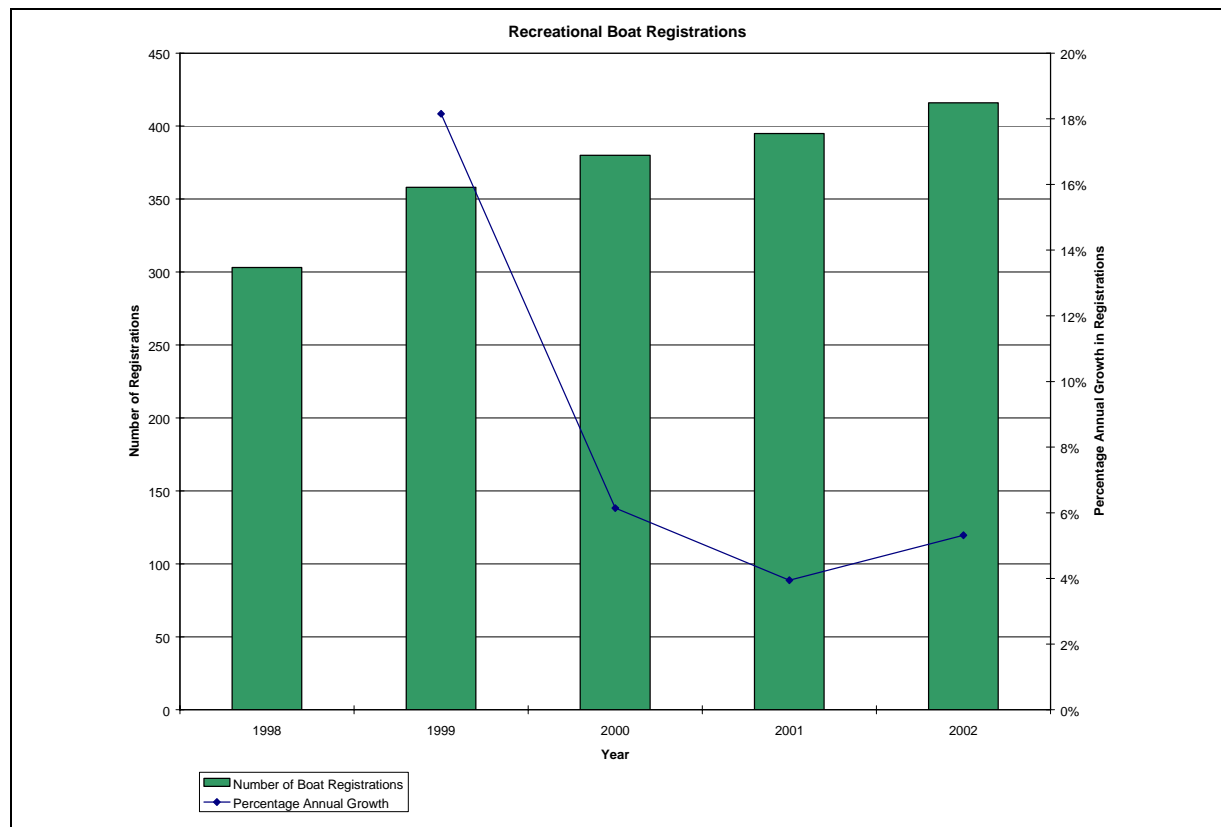
Car Ownership	Number of Households	Percentage
None	1,088	46%
1 car	633	27%
2 cars	203	9%
3 or more cars	62	3%
Not stated	402	17%
Total	2,388	100%

Source: 2001 ABS Census of Population and Housing

Long-term observations of communities and statistics on motor vehicle ownership confirm that most households in the OTSI communities, and many families around the major centre, travel to most local destinations on foot, with only small numbers of cars and motorbikes on most islands, with few of these being privately owned.

For most OTSI community members, water travel is commonplace and many families own at least one outboard powered dinghy which is used for family travel, recreational and commercial fishing, and for emergency transport. Water travel is expensive, often risky and relatively uncontrolled.

Figure 2.10 Recreational Boat Registrations in the Torres Strait Local Government Area

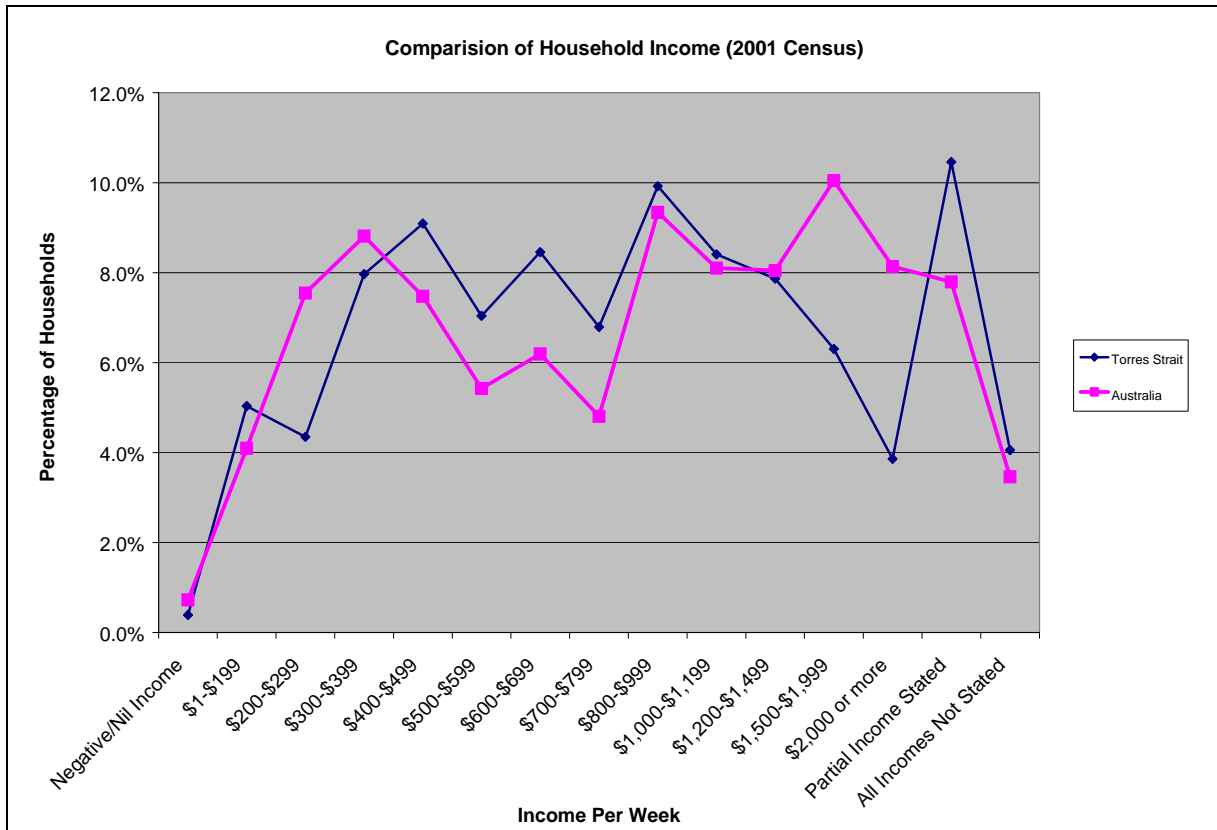


Source: QT

2.4.5 Income

ABS Census figures for household income indicate a similar pattern to that of the rest of Australia for weekly incomes less than \$1,500 per week. However household sizes in indigenous Torres Strait communities and Port Kennedy are more than twice the size of those of mainland Australia. Department of Housing 2003 HAMS data indicates an average of 5.2 persons per household for OTSI communities, (compared with ABS figures of 2.6 persons per household for Australia) meaning that average individual incomes are in fact much less than the Australian average.

Figure 2.11 Comparison of Household Incomes



Source: 2001 Census

The ABS also reports that median weekly income in 2001 was around half of that of non-indigenous residents of the Torres Strait (an average of \$200 - \$299 per week as compared with \$500 - \$599). Many residents of the OTSI communities are employed under the Australian Government's Community Development Employment Program, giving an average wage equivalent to social security unemployment benefits. Employment in the major centre, and for some on OTSI communities, is predominantly in government areas such as health, education and social services, with a much smaller number working in small businesses.

The low income levels support affordability as a major goal of future transport planning.

3.0 Existing Transport Network

There are three major transport needs for the people of the Torres Strait, being:

- Goods flowing through Port Kennedy and, to a lesser extent, the facility at Seisia;
- Passenger travel to and from the regional centre, and onwards to southern ports; and
- Travel within the region for family, recreational and administrative reasons.

For the majority of OTSI community residents, travel to access basic services and supplies is perceived to be difficult, costly and not particularly safe for those who utilise small boats and small planes.

The entire region is largely dependent on marine transport to obtain almost all the requirements of daily life. Other transport is also very important and transport planning must take into account the social and historical linkages, and not overemphasise just the cost benefits that transport improvements may make to commercial or administrative capacities.

3.1 Sea Infrastructure and Services

As an island region, marine transport supports all life and commerce within the Torres Strait, with vessels ranging from large freight carriers to small dinghies, forming a vital network of freight and passenger transport.

Four distinct marine transport sectors operate, as shown in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1 Types of Marine Transport Vessels

Sector	Comprising	Servicing
Large scale freight carriage (see Figure 3.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal freighters ex-Cairns to Port Kennedy (Seaswift) and Seisia (Seaswift & Endeavour) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Port Kennedy and NPA communities and transhipping to OTSI communities
Barge freight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three landing barges (Seaswift) on scheduled services plus chartered barges from Seaswift and Endeavour Shipping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All OTSI communities receive a weekly barge service from Port Kennedy
Passenger ferries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three commercial ferry operators based at Port Kennedy • Hammond Island Council Ferry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday, Horn, Prince of Wales, Hammond Islands and Seisia passengers • Hammond and Thursday Island school and other passengers
Small boats (see Figure 3.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privately owned outboard powered dinghies carrying passengers and supplies • Fishing dinghies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All communities have significant numbers of privately owned small boats meeting the need for a flexible inter-community transport at lower cost than higher cost ferry services