The census was held on the 5th of March 2013, two years after it was cancelled as a result of the 2011 Christchurch earthquake and seven years after the previous census. The census is a snapshot in time that indicates how the profile of our population is changing. Consideration of these changes is crucial to the planning of future health services in South Canterbury.

Our Aging Population

South Canterbury’s resident population has increased by 3.2% since 2006. We are continuing to see our older residents making up a greater proportion of our population. 20.4% of our population are now aged 65 years or older. This is the highest proportion of any DHB in the country.

Figure 1 illustrates our aging population in comparison to other South Island DHBs:

There has been a decrease in the number of younger people in South Canterbury since 2006. Whilst there has been an increase of 291 children aged 0-4 years, there has been a decrease of 864 young people aged between 5-19 years. There are now 2.1% fewer families with dependent children in South Canterbury than in 2006.

Figure 2 illustrates the makeup of our population by age group:

What We Do Not Know

Updated population projections and estimates

The current Statistics New Zealand population projections are still based on the 2006 Census results. Projections based on the 2013 Census results will not be made available until December 2014. The current Statistics New Zealand population estimates (which our funding is based on) are also still based on the 2006 Census results. Updated population estimates will be made available in August 2014.

Data source: Statistics New Zealand, Census of Population and Dwellings, 2013