

PATTERNS OF RELIGIOUS RESIDENTIAL CONCENTRATION IN VICTORIA: CHANGES 1996-2001

Gary D. Bouma and Ian R. Dobson

Drawing on data from Australia's 1996 and 2001 Census of Population and Housing, this paper enumerates and examines the distribution of Victoria's population according to people's religious identification. The number of both Christians and non-Christians increased over this five-year period, but the Christian proportion of the Victorian population declined. Patterns of religious residential concentration have remained largely the same, but the degree of concentration has increased for Jews in Caulfield and Muslims in the northern suburbs.

INTRODUCTION

The subject of religious concentration concerns city planners, and policy makers in areas of multicultural affairs, migration and settlement. Following the London bombings in July 2005 and the fact that the United Kingdom finally introduced a religious identity question in its 2000 census, the pattern of Muslim settlement in Britain became apparent and much more concentrated than many had thought. Trevor Philips, Chair of the British Commission for Racial Equality recently fulminated that, 'some districts are becoming "fully fledged ghettos"'.¹ He warned that, 'we are a society which, almost without noticing it, is becoming more divided by race and religion'.² Philip's concerns about 'residential segregation' is shared by others. This is because such segregation can be a form of social division that shapes not only the life chances of those individuals within the enclaves but may also serve to produce communities that are less a part of the society. A more sober and academic tone is reflected in Johnston, Forrest and Poulsen's analysis of the existence of ethnic enclaves in England, in which they examined *ethnic* residential concentrations.³

This paper examines *religious* residential concentration in Victoria, first of all to ascertain whether such

concentrations exist and whether they are increasing or decreasing. While there will be some overlap between religious and ethnic patterns of residential concentration this is far from absolute. Just as an example, in the 2001 census Australians identifying as Muslims reported more than 60 countries as their places of birth. Similarly Australians identifying as Buddhists declared more than thirty countries of origin. While associated with ethnicity in some ways, religious identification has its own dynamic and distribution. The discussion will also raise issues about the nature and consequences of such residential concentrations.

In 2000 Bouma and Hughes examined Australia's pattern of religious residential concentration following the 1996 census and concluded that, while several groups had substantial concentrations, they did not constitute 'ghettos'. These concentrations reflected voluntary settlement patterns based on the availability of such services as new housing stocks ready for immigrants when they settled, faith-based schools, and appropriate food.⁴ But these conclusions were based on a single point in time snap-shot. Now that appropriate data have become available from the 2001 census, it is possible to ascertain current trends in religious residential concentration in

Australia. Since the analysis of the 1996 census focussed on the State of Victoria, this analysis will continue that focus and ask first about change and then explore the issues raised by such changes as are detected.

Data used for this paper were drawn from Australia's 1996 and 2001 Censuses of Population and Housing, as undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). These data, and the changes in them between the two censuses, are summarised in Table 1.

The table shows that Victoria's population increased by over 271,000, or 6.2 per cent between 1996 and 2001. Within this state-wide growth, the number of persons specifying a religious identification increased by over 121,000, or 3.9 per cent. The number of persons who specified 'no religion' declined by over 16,000, or 2.0 per cent. However, a higher proportion of Victoria's growth between 1996 and 2001 came from 'other' persons, 'other' being those who did not indicate a religious identification or who did not specify that they had no such identification. According to the Basic Community Profiles produced by the ABS for 1996 and 2001, numbers in this 'other' category (which includes overseas visitors as well) increased by over 166,000, or 39.9 per cent. The breakdown includes consid-

erable numbers of persons who provided an inadequate description of their religious identification,⁵ or who did not respond to the question.

Enumeration of religious groups in Victoria

Table 1 showed that the number of Victorians providing a religious identification at the time of the 2001 Census was 3,262,645, an increase of 3.9 per cent over the 1996 Census. Table 2 shows that, in 2001, numbers of Christians (nearly three million or 64.0 per cent of all Victorians) far out-weighed numbers of non-Christians (fewer than 288,000 or 6.2 per cent), and that the number and proportion of persons specifying a religious identification of some kind had increased between 1996 and 2001. Numbers of Christians increased by over 30,000, or 1.0 per cent, much less than the 6.2 per cent of total population increase, whilst the numbers identifying with other religious groups increased by nearly 91,000, or 46.2 per cent.

Among Christian denominations, Catholics and Anglicans are numerically dominant, followed by the Uniting Church, Orthodox and the Presbyterians. In terms of change since 1996, there have been substantial increases in numbers of Catholics (+48,313 or 3.8 per cent),

Table 1: Victoria's population 1996 and 2001

	1996		2001		Variation	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Persons specifying a religion	3,141,161	71.8	3,262,645	70.2	121,484	3.9
Persons specifying 'no religion'	815,014	18.6	798,393	17.2	-16,621	-2.0
Other Persons:						
Religion inadequately described	11,278	0.3	93,773	2.0	82,495	731.5
Religion not stated	386,673	8.8	457,286	9.8	70,613	18.3
Overseas visitor	19,394	0.4	32,853	0.7	13,459	69.4
Sub total, other persons	417,345	9.5	583,912	12.6	166,567	39.9
Total	4,373,520	100.0	4,644,950	100.0	271,430	6.2

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Basic Community Profiles Table B10, 1996 and 2001

Table 2: Persons specifying religious identification or not, Victoria: 1996 and 2001

Persons specifying a religion	1996		2001		Variation	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Christian:						
Anglican	716,356	16.4	705,110	15.2	-11,246	-1.6
Baptist	62,155	1.4	66,421	1.4	4,266	6.9
Brethren	4,240	0.1	3,737	0.1	-503	-11.9
Catholic	1,262,077	28.9	1,310,390	28.2	48,313	3.8
Churches of Christ	20,887	0.5	16,658	0.4	-4,229	-20.2
Jehovah's Witnesses	14,427	0.3	14,159	0.3	-268	-1.9
Latter Day Saints	7,712	0.2	8,813	0.2	1,101	14.3
Lutheran	42,529	1.0	41,531	0.9	-998	-2.3
Oriental Christian	7,344	0.2	8,933	0.2	1,589	21.6
Orthodox	205,359	4.7	217,764	4.7	12,405	6.0
Pentecostal	32,446	0.7	36,342	0.8	3,896	12.0
Presbyterian and Reformed	168,718	3.9	155,013	3.3	-13,705	-8.1
Salvation Army	16,186	0.4	15,332	0.3	-854	-5.3
Seventh-day Adventist	7,907	0.2	8,319	0.2	412	5.2
Uniting Church	319,901	7.3	296,773	6.4	-23,128	-7.2
Other Protestant	11,038	0.3	10,922	0.2	-116	-1.1
Other Christian	45,069	1.0	58,619	1.3	13,550	30.1
Sub total Christian	2,944,351	67.3	2,974,836	64.0	30,485	1.0
Non-Christian:						
Buddhism	62,784	1.4	111,498	2.4	48,714	77.6
Hinduism	16,708	0.4	24,328	0.5	7,620	45.6
Islam	67,047	1.5	92,742	2.0	25,695	38.3
Judaism	35,963	0.8	38,374	0.8	2,411	6.7
Other religions	14,308	0.3	20,867	0.4	6,559	45.8
Sub total Non-Christian	196,810	4.5	287,809	6.2	90,999	46.2
Sub-total: Persons specifying a religion	3,141,161	71.8	3,262,645	70.2	121,484	3.9
Persons specifying 'no religion'	815,014	18.6	798,393	17.2	-16,621	-2.0
Other						
Inadequately described	11,278	0.3	93,773	2.0	82,495	731.5
Not stated	386,673	8.8	457,286	9.8	70,613	18.3
Overseas visitor	19,394	0.4	32,853	0.7	13,459	69.4
Sub total: Other	417,345	9.5	583,912	12.6	166,567	39.9
Total	43,73520	100.0	4,644,950	100.0	271,430	6.2

Source: ABS Basic Community Profiles Table B10, 1996 and 2001

Orthodox (+12,405 or 6.0 per cent) and 'Other Christians' (+13,550 or 30.1 per cent), but a considerable decline in numbers of Anglicans (-1.6 per cent),

Churches of Christ (-20.2 per cent), Presbyterian (-8.1 per cent) and Uniting Church (-7.2 per cent).

Among other religious groups,

Buddhists are in the majority in 2001, and their numbers increased the most between 1996 and 2001. In 2001, Buddhists represented 2.4 per cent of all persons, but 38.7 per cent of all non-Christians (excluding people with no religion). Their numbers swelled by nearly 49,000 or 77.6 per cent between 1996 and 2001. Numbers of Muslims increased by nearly 26,000 (38.3 per cent) between 1996 and 2001, but their proportion of those identifying with non-Christian groups declined from 34.1 per cent to 32.2 per cent. Growth in numbers of Jews occurred at about the same rate as the overall population growth of Victoria (+2,411 or 6.7 per cent), but their proportion of all non-Christians declined from 18.3 per cent to 13.3 per cent.

Suburban residential concentration of religious groups 2001

This section of the paper uses postcodes to analyse concentrations of religious groups in Victoria. Postcodes are used for two reasons. They to provide continuity with the previous analysis of the 1996 Census and they postcodes have a great deal of meaning for Victorians, who often refer to their postcode and the name associated with it as 'their suburb'. The level of analysis is the suburb. Smaller collection units could have been used for a more detailed analysis, but then the unit of analysis would have shifted to the neighbourhood. Given the way postcode-defined suburbs are perceived in Victoria, we argue that the postcode provides the level appropriate to this analysis. A larger unit of analysis, such as the city, would have been useful if the issue were potential electoral strength, but this is not our focus. These data have been drawn from the 2001 Basic Community Profiles made available by the ABS from the Australian census.

In 2001, Victoria was divided into about 650 postcodes, varying consid-

erably in size and geographic extent. The average number of inhabitants in a postcode was about 7,000, but about 230 postcodes had populations exceeding this average.

Like Table 1, Table 2 shows clearly that just over 70 per cent of Victorians self-identify with a religious group. It also shows that, of these, the majority identify with a Christian denomination. These proportions changed little between 1996 and 2001. The numerical predominance of Christians is such that 96 Victorian postcodes contained no one who identified with any other religious group. A further 140 postcodes contained ten or fewer people identifying with other religious groups. These postcodes tended to be smaller and usually Melbourne metropolitan area. Further, a total of 529 postcodes included fewer than five per cent non-Christians. Non-Christians were not in the majority in any postcodes, and represented in excess of 20 per cent of residents in a total of only 12 postcodes (comprising about 179,000 Victorians). The highest concentrations of non-Christians were to be found in postcodes 3161, 3162 (Caulfield, including Caulfield North and Caulfield South in Melbourne's inner south-eastern suburbs) and 3048 (Coolaroo in the northern suburbs).

To look at residential concentrations more closely, Table 3 provides information on each religious group reported in the 2001 Census' Basic Community Profile. The highest concentration for any single Christian denomination occurred in Greenvale (postcode 3059, northern suburbs), where nearly 60 per cent of all persons identified as Catholic. Of other religious groups, the highest concentration is that of Jews in Caulfield (postcode 3161).

One distinct pattern which emerges is

Table 3: Residential concentrations of religious groups: Victoria, 2001

	Total persons		No. Post-codes => State Average	Highest Concentration				Highest Concentration in a Postcode >7,000 declaring a religious identification			
	No.	Per cent		Post-code	Name	Total persons	Per cent	Post-code	Name	Total persons	Per cent
Anglican	705,110	15.2	483	3889	Bemm River*	151	39.1	3930	Mt Eliza	16,219	27.8
Baptist	66,421	1.4	207	3537	Boort*	1,262	9.7	3130	Blackburn	27,600	4.5
Brethren	3,737	0.1	114	3509	Underbool*	331	3.6	3820	Warragul*	13,195	1.4
Buddhism	111,498	2.4	89	3171	Springvale	18,093	27.8	3171	Springvale	18,093	27.8
Catholic	1,310,390	28.2	175	3059	Greenvale	9,121	59.3	3059	Greenvale	9,121	59.3
Churches of Christ	16,658	0.4	201	3391	Brim*	156	8.3	3400	Horsham*	12,926	1.9
Hinduism	24,328	0.5	114	3150	Glen Waverley	51,690	3.1	3150	Glen Waverley	51,690	3.1
Islam	92,742	2.0	69	3048	Coolaroo	18,591	32.4	3048	Coolaroo	18,591	32.4
Jehovah's Witnesses	14,159	0.3	207	3750	Wollert*	343	4.4	3939	Rosebud	12,108	1.6
Judaism	38,374	0.8	45	3161	Caulfield	13,538	42.2	3161	Caulfield	13,538	42.2
Latter Day Saints	8,813	0.2	175	3720	Bonnie Doon*	356	2.8	3976	Hampton Park	20,527	0.7
Lutheran	41,531	0.9	238	3423	Jeparit*	600	25.5	3400	Horsham	12,926	9.6
Oriental Christian	8,933	0.2	84	3043	Gladstone Park	16,681	1.4	3043	Gladstone Park	16,681	1.4
Orthodox	217,764	4.7	99	3074	Thomastown	21,760	28.5	3074	Thomastown	21,760	28.5
Pentecostal	36,342	0.8	216	3921	French Island*	87	6.9	3802	Endeavour Hills	26,005	2.9
Presbyterian and Reformed	155,013	3.3	384	3324	Lismore*	368	26.9	3300	Hamilton*	11,485	10.1
Salvation Army	15,332	0.3	233	3469	Elmhurst*	300	4.0	3995	Wonthaggi*	8,168	1.5
Seventh-day Adventist	8,319	0.2	183	3778	Narbethong*	326	4.3	3140	Lilydale	13,665	1.3
Uniting Church	296,773	6.4	412	3395	Beulah*	315	44.8	3400	Horsham*	12,926	23.0

Source: ABS Basic Community Profile, Table B10, 2001
 Table 3 excludes 'Other Christian', 'Other Protestant' and 'Other Religion'.
 *Regional centres.

the relatively higher concentrations of some religious groups in regional and suburban fringe areas. For instance, among Christian denominations, 'with the exception of Catholics, Oriental Christian and Orthodox', the highest concentrations of persons declaring a religious identification occur outside the Melbourne metropolitan region. This

pattern was identified by Bouma and Hughes who claimed that it reflected early settlement patterns in Victoria and the residential decisions made by post-war migrants to Melbourne.⁶ Those identifying with other-than-Christian religious groups, or with one of the three Christian groups mentioned above are much more metropolitan. In particular,

the non-Christian groups tend to have little or no presence in most regional areas.

Table 3 also shows the highest concentration of each religious group in a postcode of at least average population (> 7,000). The location of most Christian concentrations are in either regional areas or on the suburban fringe of Melbourne.

Some religious groups are more widely dispersed than others. The column 'No. Postcodes = /> State Average' shows how many postcodes each religion is represented in at least at the state-average level for that religious group. As can be seen, non-Christian religious groups tend to occur at their state average level in fewer postcodes, a reflection of their relative urban concentration. People identifying as Oriental Christians and Orthodox also tend to be located at their state average level in relatively few postcodes. Again this reflects a degree of concentration in a small number of postcodes. Those identifying as Uniting, Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Jehovah's Witness, Pentecostal and Catholic tend to be the most ubiquitous and thus more evenly spread throughout the state.

A description of the residential concentrations of these religious groups which have comparatively high levels of density in urban areas follows. In all cases these concentrations are found in suburbs of metropolitan Melbourne.

Buddhists

In 2001, Buddhists comprised 2.4 per cent of all persons in Victoria. Their concentration was greatest in Springvale (3171) in Melbourne's southeast, where they comprised 27.8 per cent of that suburb's 18,093 persons. Other areas of relatively high concentration include Springvale South, Keysborough and Noble Park (postcodes 3172, 3173 and

3174) also in the southeast, and Footscray/Seddon, Albion/ Sunshine and St Albans (postcodes 3011, 3020, and 3021) in the west, and North Melbourne, Collingwood and Abbotsford (postcodes 3051, 3066 and 3067) in the north. This northern suburbs concentration is possibly related to the status of some Buddhists as recent immigrants, and to the location of Ministry of Housing estates. As we have seen, few Buddhists live in regional areas.

Catholics

Catholics were represented in every Victorian postcode in 2001 and they resided in above average numbers in 175 postcodes. Their highest concentration occurred in Greenvale (postcode 3059), a suburb in Melbourne's north, in which they represented about 60 per cent of all persons. They made up 50 per cent or more of the population in seven postcodes, and between 30 per cent to 50 per cent in a further 121 postcodes. They predominate in particular in Melbourne's northern and western suburbs. In this sense, Catholics represent the most residentially concentrated religious group, but given their percentage of the population and patterns of migration, as well as the importance of being near Catholic schools, this pattern is not surprising.

Hindus

Hindus represent only 0.5 per cent of Victoria's population, but were present at rates of 2.0 per cent to 3.1 per cent in several suburbs, predominantly in Melbourne's southeast. Hindus are comparatively few in number, however, and only six postcodes had more than 500 Hindu residents.

Muslims

The number of Muslims in 2001 was

nearly 93,000, or 2.0 per cent of all Victorians. Muslims represented 32.4 per cent of the population of Coolaroo (postcode 3048), and high proportions of neighbouring suburbs of Broadmeadows, Coburg, Glenroy and Reservoir (postcodes 3047, 3058, 3046 and 3073, respectively), all suburbs in Melbourne's north. Muslims are also represented at much higher rates than their overall presence in Victoria in south-eastern suburbs such as Keysborough, Noble Park, Dandenong and Endeavour Hills (postcodes 3173, 3174, 3175 and 3802). This pattern of distribution is explained largely by the choices available to Muslims as they migrated to, settled near, and established such infra-structures as mosques, schools, and halal food outlets.⁷

Jews

Jews account for just 0.8 per cent of Victoria's population, but are highly represented in Caulfield and Caulfield South (postcodes 3161 and 3162, with concentrations of 42.2 per cent and 34.0 per cent respectively), and in the two adjoining suburbs of Balaclava and Elsternwick (postcodes 3183, 20.7 per cent and 3185, 15.2 per cent), all in Melbourne's inner southeast. But the proportion of the population identifying as Jewish exceeds 10 per cent in only six postcodes. No Jews at all live in 365 of Victoria's 650 postcodes. About 80 per cent of Victoria's Jews live in just ten postcodes, making this the most specifically concentrated religious group in Australia. By way of comparison, 80 per cent of people identifying as Muslims reside in around 60 postcodes and thus are much more dispersed across Melbourne than are Jews.

Oriental Christian

Only a small proportion of Victorians are

Oriental Christians (<0.2 per cent). They are spread quite widely across Melbourne and other parts of Victoria, but in small numbers.

Orthodox

Orthodox Christians represented 4.7 per cent of Victoria's population in 2001, with high concentrations in some suburbs. The population of Thomastown (postcode 3074) in the north for instance, was 28.5 per cent Orthodox. Adjoining northern suburbs had high concentrations as well: Lalor (postcode 3075, with 28 per cent), Northcote (postcode 3070, with 16.0 per cent), Thornbury (postcode 3071, with 15.1 per cent), Epping (postcode 3076 with 13.6 per cent) and Mill Park (postcode 3082 with 18.5 per cent). Western suburbs such as St Albans, Ardeer, Deer Park and Sunshine also had relatively high concentrations.

Has there been any change between 1996 and 2001?

The narrative above identified a number of postcodes with high concentrations of people identifying with one religious group or another. Table 4 has taken a number of these postcodes, and a few others relevant to the discussion of Victoria's religious concentrations, and compared the change between 1996 and 2001. The table shows that the degree of concentration has declined for some religious groups and increased for others. Anglicans, for instance, have declined in their level of concentration in all but one of the postcodes examined.

Catholics, while still the largest single religious group, have declined in concentration in most of the postcodes shown in Table 4. Nevertheless they remain the single most numerous religious group in most of these postcodes. However, Catholic declines

Table 4: Selected postcodes with highest residential concentrations, 1996 and 2001

	Postcode	Footscray/ Seddon	Glenroy	Broad- meadows	Coolaroo	Greenvale	Northcote	Thomastown	Lalor	Mill Park	Caulfield	Caulfield South	Springvale	Mt Eliza
		3011	3046	3047	3048	3059	3070	3074	3075	3082	3161	3162	3171	3930
		Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Anglican	1996	6.9	11.2	11.7	8.2	8.2	5.0	5.0	5.7	9.5	8.7	9.7	6.4	30.4
	2001	6.7	10.6	9.6	6.4	6.1	7.4	3.8	5.0	7.7	7.4	8.1	5.3	27.7
Buddhism	1996	10.7	0.9	1.7	2.8	0.6	1.9	2.1	2.3	1.4	1.1	0.8	17.2	0.4
	2001	14.7	1.6	1.8	4.1	0.7	2.7	5.5	4.1	2.4	1.5	1.7	27.8	0.6
Catholicism	1996	27.0	45.7	31.5	32.1	57.9	27.7	37.1	37.1	41.3	12.4	16.0	29.4	20.5
	2001	25.3	41.9	29.1	29.1	59.3	25.8	33.9	33.3	40.4	11.4	14.6	25.1	20.4
Hinduism	1996	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.7	1.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.0
	2001	1.7	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.8	1.5	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.2
Islam	1996	3.3	5.3	20.7	24.1	4.0	1.6	6.8	5.4	1.8	0.4	0.4	3.3	0.2
	2001	4.0	8.5	24.7	32.4	5.7	1.4	9.9	9.0	2.8	0.3	0.4	2.6	0.2
Judaism	1996	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	39.3	29.6	0.1	0.2
	2001	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	42.2	34.0	0.1	0.2
Orthodox	1996	9.5	6.0	4.5	3.8	7.1	17.2	29.6	28.9	15.7	3.3	4.9	7.5	1.0
	2001	8.5	5.9	4.8	3.6	8.9	16.0	28.5	27.5	18.5	3.1	5.2	6.7	1.2
Other	1996	52.2	31.5	31.3	30.9	22.4	47.9	21.1	22.2	30.2	35.5	24.2	52.9	47.7
	2001	39.0	31.1	29.6	23.6	18.9	46.1	17.7	20.3	26.7	33.4	35.6	31.9	49.5
Total Persons	1996	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	2001	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ABS Basic Community Profiles Table B10, 1996 and 2001

have been offset by the growth of other groups, with the result that they have slipped behind the numbers of Muslims in Coolaroo (3048), and those of Buddhists in Springvale (postcode 3171).

The number of Jews in Caulfield and Caulfield South (postcodes 3161 and 3162) is such that they remain the most numerous religious group in these suburbs and the residential concentration of Jews in these two postcodes has increased from 1996 to 2001. As was noted earlier, Jews are sparsely distributed in most other postcodes. The movement of Jews to these two postcodes is partly explained by the presence of synagogues, several Jewish faith-based primary schools and secondary colleges, as well as the proximity to other

well-regarded private schools.

The concentration of people identifying as Orthodox has remained high, but declined slightly between 1996 and 2001 in areas such as Northcote, Thomastown and Lalor (postcodes 3070, 3074 and 3075). Their proportion increased by nearly three per cent in Mill Park (postcode 3082). Changes in patterns of religious residential concentration may reflect either first or later generation settlement. There is some evidence of second generation settlement resulting in religious residential concentration in suburbs such as Northcote and Mill Park. These locations have relatively high proportions of Australia-born residents (about

two-thirds), but continue to show high proportions of Orthodox persons. These concentrations reflect the movement of Greece-born and Greek descent families from inner city sites of original settlements to suburban locations. The presence of co-ethnics and their institutions (schools, places of worship) appear to explain the striking level of Orthodox adherents in these locations. These changes in patterns of relative residential concentration require further research.

The concentration of Buddhists has increased in those suburbs in which they were in highest concentration in 1996: Footscray, Collingwood and Springvale (postcodes 3011, 3066 and 3171). The increase in concentration has been particularly high in Springvale (postcode 3171), where the proportion of Buddhists increased by over ten per cent to 27.8 per cent. As was shown in Table 2, the number of people identifying as Buddhists increased more than those identifying with any other religious group between 1996 and 2001.

In 1996, the main concentrations of Muslims occurred in Melbourne's northern suburbs of Coolaroo, Broadmeadows, Thomastown and Lalor (postcodes 3048, 3047, 3074 and 3075), with concentrations of 24.1 per cent, 20.7 per cent, 6.8 per cent and 5.4 per cent respectively. By 2001, the concentration of Muslims increased in these postcodes to 32.4 per cent, 24.7 per cent, 9.9 per cent and 9.0 per cent respectively.

These patterns of concentration for Buddhists and Muslims are consistent with various studies of people movement in areas of high non-English-Speaking Background (NESB) concentration.⁸ The pattern has been for a higher rate of out-movement of Australia-born and English-speaking residents than of NESB residents, from such locations. Low income, recently

arrived NESB migrants tend to settle in these areas because of the presence of co-ethnics and because these areas usually feature relatively low-cost housing.

The residential concentration of religious groups 2001 in suburbs — a different view

Tables 3 and 4 considered populations of a range of postcodes and the distribution of religious groups within each. Table 5 looks at the proportion of all Victorians identifying with a religious group who reside within each postcode and the changes between 1996 and 2001. The table highlights those postcodes in which more than three per cent of those identifying with a religious group reside. As noted earlier, the most specifically concentrated religious group are Jews in the postcode of Caulfield. Caulfield is 42.2 per cent Jewish and 14.9 per cent of Victorian Jews live there. The table shows that there was little proportionate change in the propensity for Jews to congregate in those suburbs in which they are most commonly resident. Muslims and Buddhists are more widely distributed than Jews, but their proportionate distribution changed little between 1996 and 2001. Among larger Christian groups, only the Orthodox represented more than three per cent in any single postcode.

CONCLUSION

The data from the 1996 and 2001 censuses demonstrate that there are instances of religious residential concentration in Melbourne and that the pattern is fluid. It would be inappropriate to refer to any of these concentrations as 'ghettos' as they are the result of free choice in an open residential market. When compared with patterns of African American residential concentration in the United States and ethnic enclaves in the United Kingdom,

Table 5: Religious residential concentrations by religious group (maximum concentration of any one group > three per cent), 1996 and 2001

Post-code	Suburb	Buddhist		Hindu		Islam		Judaism		Orthodox	
		1996 Per cent	2001 Per cent	1996 Per cent	2001 Per cent	1996 Per cent	2001 Per cent	1996 Per cent	2001 Per cent	1996 Per cent	2001 Per cent
3020	Sunshine	3.5	3.5								
3021	St Albans	4.9	6.0			4.0	3.6			3.5	3.2
3047	Broadmeadows					5.7	4.9				
3048	Coolaroo					6.3	6.5				
3058	Coburg					4.3	3.0				
3142	Toorak							4.3	4.2		
3150	Glen Waverley	1.8	2.0	4.8	6.6						
3161	Caulfield							14.7	14.9		
3162	Caulfield South							11.7	13.6		
3163	Carnegie			2.1	2.1			4.6	5.4		
3165	Bentleigh							3.3	3.5		
3171	Springvale	5.3	4.5								
3172	Springvale South	3.6	3.3								
3174	Noble Park	3.5	3.2			2.0	2.4				
3175	Dandenong			3.4	3.7	4.4	5.1			1.9	2.0
3183	Balaclava							10.5	9.4		
3185	Elsternwick							4.6	4.3		
3187	Brighton							3.4	3.0		
3204	Bentleigh/ McKinnon							3.4	3.5		
Other Suburbs		77.4	77.5	89.7	87.6	73.3	74.5	39.5	38.2	94.6	94.8
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ABS 1996 and 2001

Note: The highest concentrations of Anglicans and Catholics in any single suburb were 1.6 per cent and 1.7 per cent respectively in 2001

the levels of religious residential concentration in Victoria are also quite low. To qualify as 'segregated' a suburb in the United States needs to be at least two-thirds African American and for some analysts over 80 per cent.⁹ Poulsen reports that, 'some 13.6 per cent of the Indian community in Leicester (in the United Kingdom) now live in isolated communities, in which they make up more than two-thirds of the population, up from 10.8 per cent in 1991'.¹⁰ Victoria's patterns of religious residential concentration are a long way from these instances.

Religious residential concentrations help religious groups to maintain their distinctive cultures in a deliberately

multicultural society. And they can do this without inhibiting interaction between religious and ethnic groups in Melbourne because residents in these areas otherwise carry out their lives in the company of others. Moreover, a suburb that has a concentration of one religious groups is also likely to have concentrations of other religious groups as well. This is due in part to the fact that several religious and ethnic groups arrived in Australia at similar times. It is also true that religious and ethnic groups are not set off against each other either in the search for housing or the attainment of the good things of life. In Australia, individuals compete for housing, not groups, and there is no systemic religious or ethnic block to

obtaining housing, schooling, or employment. These conditions mean that potential negative consequences of residential concentration — social exclusion, educational segregation, negative images of the host society¹¹ — are less likely to develop, while the likelihood of the potential advantages — formation of sustaining social networks, reduction of isolation, and ‘ethnic entrepreneurship’ is enhanced.¹²

While Catholics demonstrate the highest number of substantial residential concentrations, this does not seem to concern people and of course they are the largest religious group in Victoria. Moreover, in the course of the 20th century they achieved full acceptance into Australian society. Given the Protestant hegemony characteristic of Australia’s 19th and 20th centuries, Catholics provide an example of the way ‘minority’ religious groups move into full participation in Australian society.

Some religious groups are more visible than others. Muslim women wearing head coverings or other distinctive dress and

Orthodox Jewish men stand out, rather like Roman Catholic nuns and clergy once did. Such visibility may give the impression that a suburb is more concentrated than it actually is, as may the presence of shopping strips catering to the needs of particular religious groups. The utility of this analysis of the census data by postcode is to present the nature and levels of religious residential concentration and to put to rest myths that there are suburbs dominated by, or exclusively populated by, this or that religious group.

Between 1996 and 2001 there have been increases in some religious residential concentrations. In 2001 there were more Jews in Caulfield than before, more Muslims in the northern suburbs and, as Buddhist numbers grew more than those of any other group, there were also increased Buddhist concentrations in some areas. However, none of these suburbs look like tipping over to being dominated by one group and, given the fluidity of Melbourne’s residential market, they are unlikely to do so.

References

- ¹ *The Australian*, 19 September 2005, p. 13
- ² *ibid.*
- ³ R. Johnston, J. Forrest and M. Poulsen, ‘Are there ethnic enclaves/ghettos in English cities?’, *Urban Studies*, vol 39, no. 4, 2002, pp. 591-618.
- ⁴ G. Bouma and P. Hughes, ‘Religious concentrations in Australia’, *People and Place*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2000, p. 26
- ⁵ For a more complete analysis of these changes and particularly the increase in responses categorised ‘inadequately described’ see G. Bouma, ‘Globalisation and recent changes in the demography of Australian religious groups: 1947-2001’, *People and Place*, vol. 10, no. 4, 2002, pp. 17-23.
- ⁶ Bouma and Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 22
- ⁷ G. Bouma, *Mosques and Muslim Settlement in Australia*, Bureau of Immigration and Population Research, Canberra, 1994
- ⁸ L. Carroll, ‘Mobility of the Vietnam-born in Sydney: A re-assessment after the the 2001 Census’, *People and Place*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2003, pp. 50-64; E. Healy and B. Birrell ‘Metropolis divided: the political dynamic of spatial inequality and migrant settlement in Sydney’, *People and Place*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2003, pp. 65-87
- ⁹ I. Burnley, ‘Levels of immigrant residential concentration in Sydney and their relationship with disadvantage’, *Urban Studies*, vol. 36, 1999, pp. 1295-1315; M. Poulsen cited in D. Adam, ‘UK Asians isolated in city enclaves’, *The Guardian*, September 1, 2005 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,5275142-103690,00.html>>
- ¹⁰ Poulsen, *op. cit.*
- ¹¹ Johnston et al., *op. cit.*, p. 594
- ¹² *ibid.*

