

## ***Sunda Marine Region - social profile***

- The Sunda Marine Region (SMR) comprises the Australian external territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the Indian Ocean located 2,200 and 1,200 kilometres respectively from Exmouth in north-west Western Australia.
- At the 2001 Census no employment in fishing-related industries was recorded, however, subsistence-fishing activities take place in the region, supplying local communities with fresh seafood.
- The region had a total population of approximately 2,067 people. The Cocos (Keeling) Islands is composed of around 27 coral islands, and has a population of approximately 619 people from European and Cocos Malay origin. Christmas Island has a population of nearly 1,448, the majority of whom are from Chinese and Malay origin.
- Indigenous Australians accounted for 1.1 per cent of the total region's population, with a larger representation of Indigenous Australians across Cocos (Keeling) Islands (2.2%)
- Between 1996 and 2001, the region's population declined by nearly 470 persons, at an average annual rate of 4.1 per cent. Much of the decline occurred in Christmas Island where population has declined at an annual average rate of 5.4 per cent since 1996.
- The population sex ratio was 121.5 males per 100 females, indicating a substantially greater number of males than females in the region. This is a factor of the concentration of mining activities in Christmas Island.
- The region had a median age of 36 years, indicating that 50 per cent of the population is younger than 36 years and 50 per cent is older. In the five years to 2001 the region's population aged by 4 years. This is a substantial increase in median age, and may reflect out-migration of young persons to mainland Australia.
- The total dependency ratio was 50.9 per cent, indicating that there were 50.9 persons under 15 years and older than 64 years for every 100 persons of working age. Splitting into its components, the region had a low elderly dependency ratio of 6.2 per cent and a high child dependency ratio of 44.7 per cent.
- Low-income households with a weekly income of less than \$300 accounted for 7.1 per cent of all households across the region, while the proportion of high-income households earning \$1,200 or more per week made up 29.5 per cent.
- The industry employment variance was 41.5 per cent, indicating that over 40 per cent of the region workforce is concentrated on only three industries (Mining, Education Services, and Government Administration and Defence).