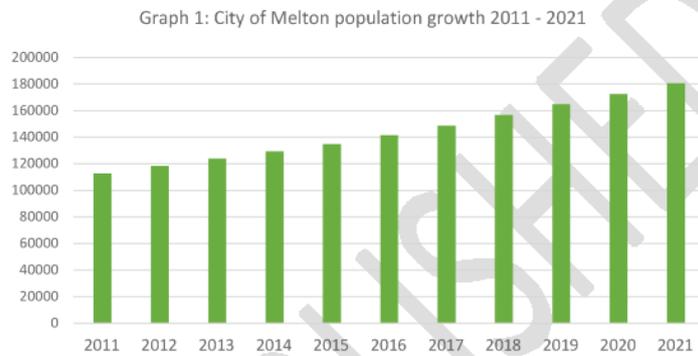


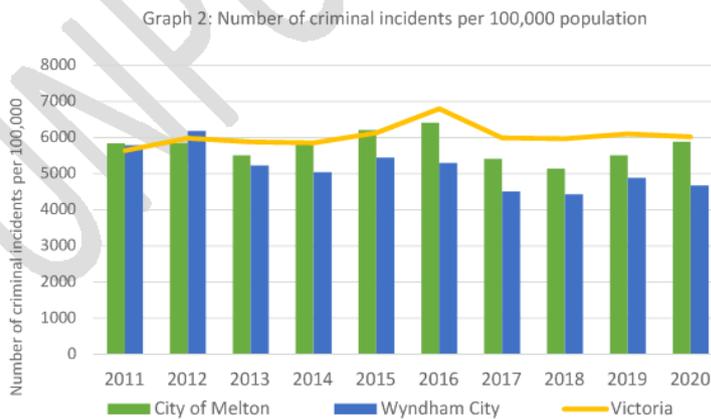
Analysis of police numbers, crime rate and population increases in the City of Melton

This report has been prepared in response to a Councillor request for information on the connection between police numbers, crime rate and population growth in the City of Melton. It outlines the relevant statistics across each of these data points before concluding with a brief analysis and key learnings derived from the available information.

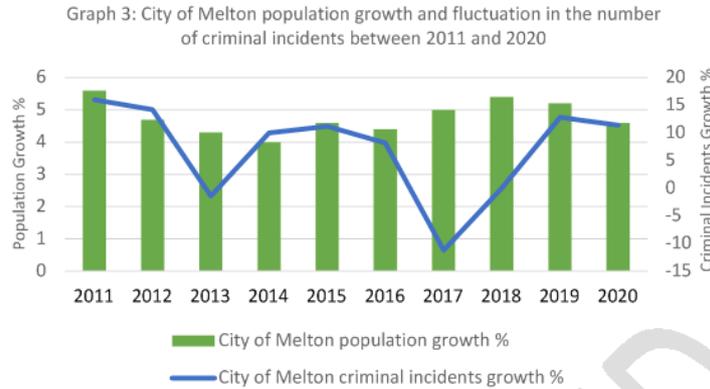
The City of Melton has seen a population increase between 4 and 5.6 per cent over the last decade, making it the second fastest growing municipality in Victoria. This pattern is projected to continue, with the current estimated population of 180,636 expected to grow to more than 450,000 people by the year 2051.



In 2020 there were 5,880 criminal incidents per 100,000 population in the City of Melton. This was higher than the number of incidents in the neighbouring City of Wyndham (4,673), but lower than the Victorian average of 6,019 incidents. This reflects a consistent pattern over the last decade, with the exception of 2011, 2012 and 2015 (see Graph 2).

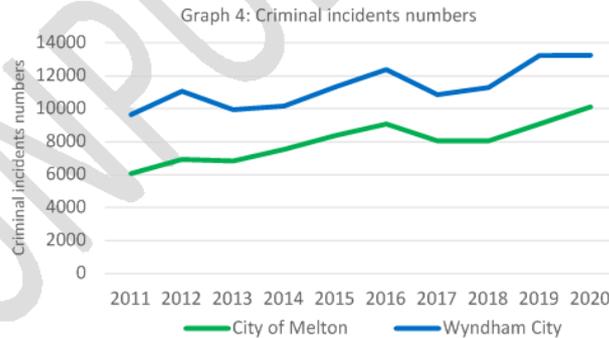


While there has been a gradual increase in the number of criminal incidents occurring annually over the ten year period, there are some notable fluctuations in the data, as depicted in Graph 3. For instance, the years 2014 and 2019 saw an increase of 10 per cent and 12.8 per cent incidents respectively, while there was a slight drop in 2013 (-1.4 per cent) and 2017 (-11.2 per cent).

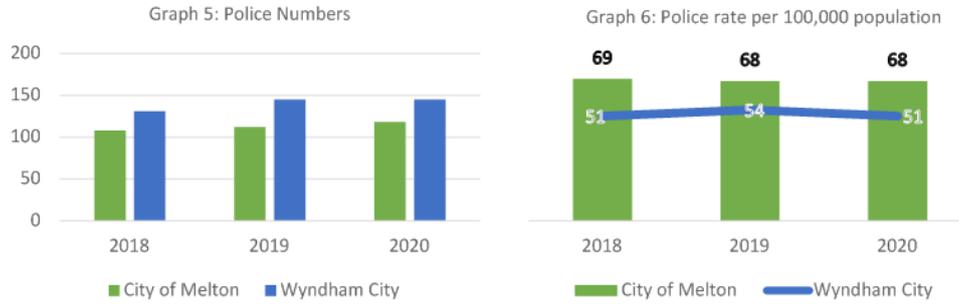


In the ten year period there has been an overall increase in the number of criminal incidents across the City of Melton from 6,065 to 10,113. This represents a total growth of more than 4,000 incidents, or 65 per cent. Meanwhile, the population of the City of Melton has grown from 112,643 people to 180,686 in 2020, an increase of almost 70,000 people or 66 per cent. The increase in criminal incidents across the municipality is therefore considered to be relatively proportionate to the population growth.

In the City of Wyndham, the number criminal incidents have grown from 9,639 in 2011 to 13,246 in 2020, representing an increase of just under 4,000 incidents, or 40 per cent. The population of the neighbouring local government area has simultaneously increased from 166,699 to 283,294 people, reflecting a growth of more than 110,000 or nearly 70 per cent. The City of Melton has therefore seen a higher overall increase in criminal incidents compared to the City of Wyndham over the last decade, but from a lower base number (see Graph 4).



Data relating to police numbers is not available prior to the year 2018. However, in this three year period (2018-2020), the number of police officers in the City of Melton increased from 108 to 118, an increase of ten officers or nine per cent. During the same time, the population in the City of Melton grew from 156,718 people to 172,500, reflecting an increase of more than 15,000 people, or ten per cent. This indicates that the population has increased at a slightly faster rate than the number of police officers across the Melton service area.



The number of police officers in the Wyndham service area have grown from 131 in 2018 to 145 in 2020. This represents an increase of 14 officers, or 10.7 per cent. However, when looking at the number of police officers at a rate per 100,000 population, the Melton service area is better resourced, as evidenced in Graph 6.

In summary, there was a proportionate growth of the population and crime rate in the City of Melton over the last decade. Comparatively, data for the City of Wyndham is more uneven, with a higher population growth and a lower rise in crime. Over the past three years police numbers have been increasing in both municipalities, but the City of Melton continues to have a higher police rate (69 police officers per 100,000 population) than the City of Wyndham (51 police officers per 100,000 population), suggesting that our municipality is comparatively better resourced in this area.

It is important to note that there are a number of contributing factors to the rate of crime in a municipality. Therefore, an increased number of police may not necessarily result in a decrease of criminal incidents. The City of Melton will continue to work closely with Victoria Police and address the determinants of community safety and wellbeing.