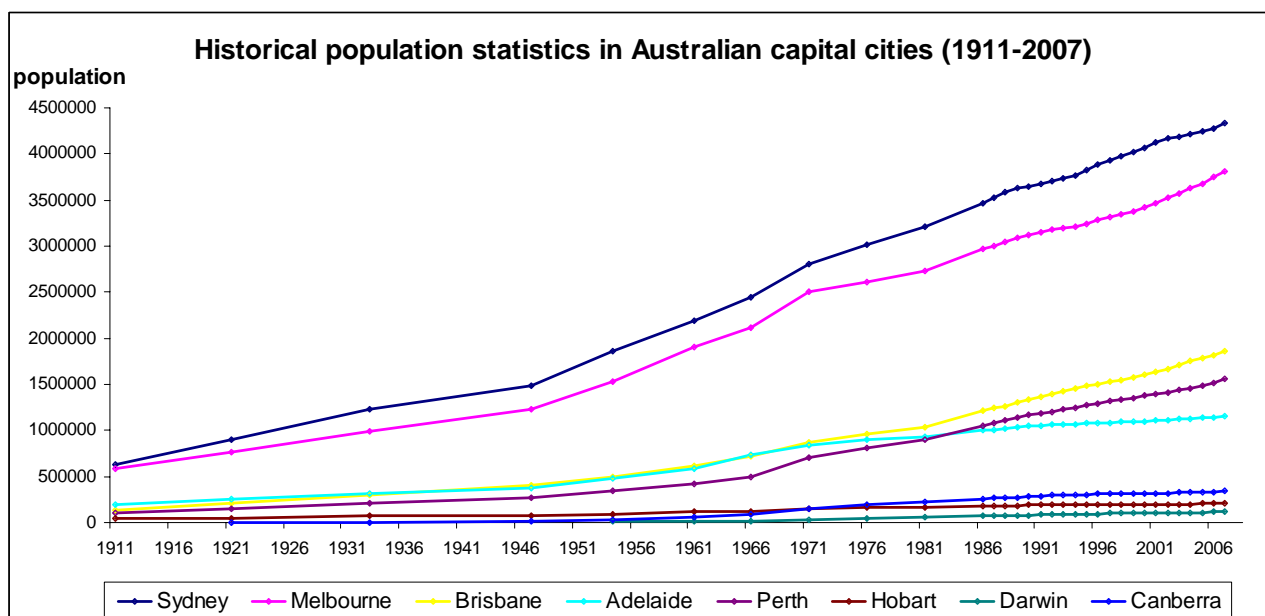


Historical distribution of population in Australian capital cities

1.1 Population distribution across Australian capital cities has grown significantly since federation in 1901. In particular, since the late 1940s, the post-war boom and increased emigration has contributed to the rapid growth in Australia's population. Figure 1 charts the positive growth in population across Australian capital cities.

Figure 1: Historical population growth in Australian capital cities since 1911 ¹



1.2 Hugo (2002) complements this trend in his analysis of the population distribution of Australia, noting that the pattern of population distributions has always been “not just one of concentration in urban centres, but a growing dominance of the largest metropolitan centres.” ² This is evidenced by the growing number of urban centres since the late 1960s, which has increased in number by over 60 per cent in a 30 year period, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Distribution of population by settlement size from 1966 to 2006 ³

Settlement size	Number of urban centres				Percentage of population			
	1966	1981	1991	1996	1966	1981	1991	1996
500,000 and over	5	5	5	5	56.0	55.5	53.3	53.1
100,000 – 499,999	4	8	8	8	5.4	8.9	9.1	9.2
75,000 – 99,999	1	1	1	2	0.8	0.7	0.5	1.0
50,000 – 74,999	5	9	6	6	2.4	3.8	2.2	2.1
25,000 – 49,999	5	12	17	25	1.5	3.2	3.3	4.6
20,000 – 24,999	11	12	22	17	2.1	2.1	2.9	2.1

¹ ABS, 3105.0.53.001 – Australian historical population statistics, 2008

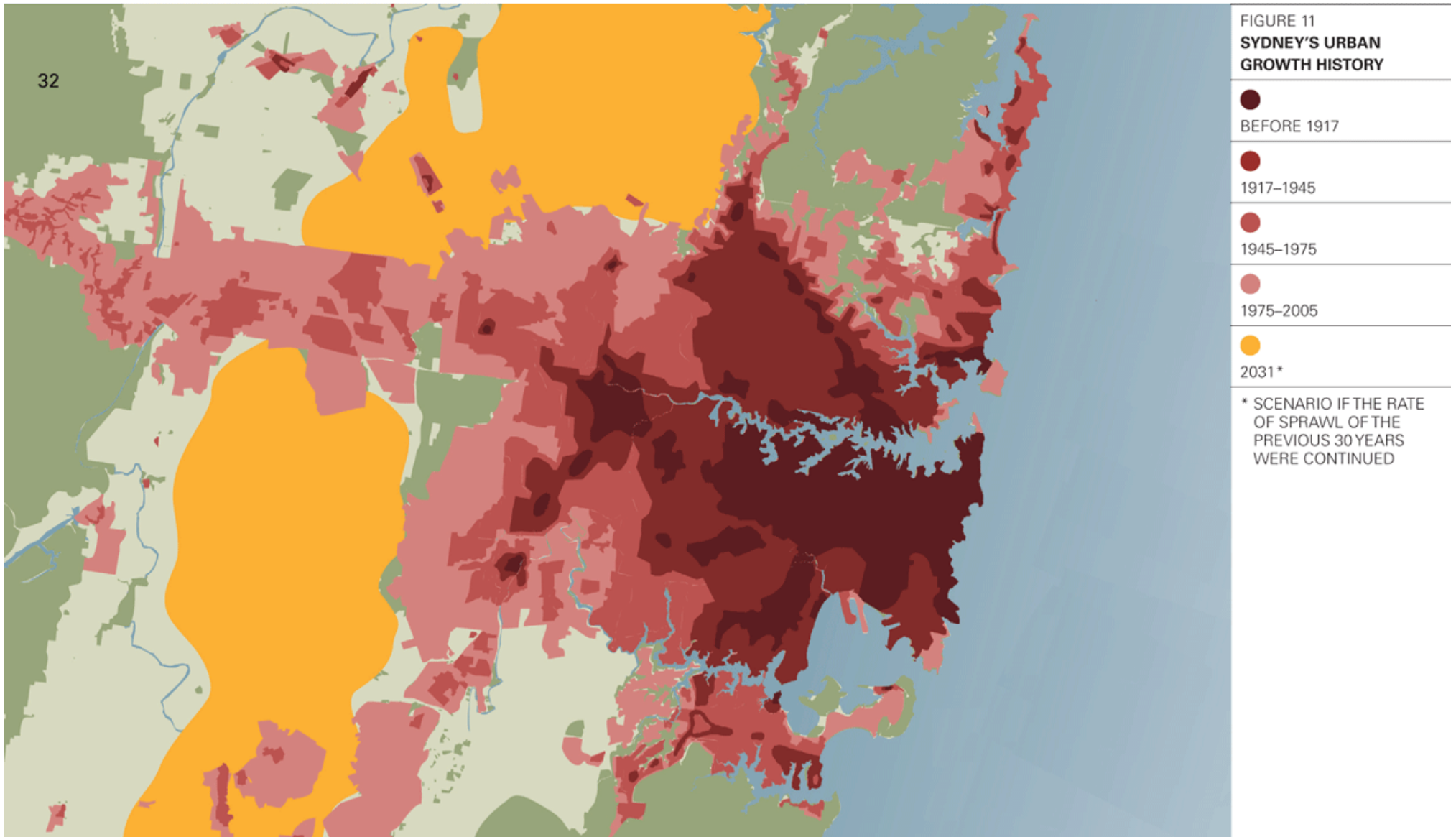
² Hugo, G., Changing patterns of population distribution in Australia, *Joint special issue: Journal of Population Research and NZ Population Review*, September 2002, p.6

³ Hugo, G., Changing patterns of population distribution in Australia, *Joint special issue: Journal of Population Research and NZ Population Review*, September 2002, p.6

Settlement size	Number of urban centres				Percentage of population			
	1966	1981	1991	1996	1966	1981	1991	1996
15,000 – 19,999	17	21	14	14	2.5	2.9	1.5	1.3
10,000 – 14,999	19	17	36	37	2.0	1.7	2.5	2.5
5,000 – 9,999	61	84	89	86	3.8	4.9	3.7	3.5
2,500 – 4,999	103	122	153	165	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.2
2,000 – 2,499	50	59	75	64	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8
1,000 – 1,999	178	213	280	312	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.5
Total urban	459	563	706	741	82.9	85.7	85.1	86.0
Total rural					16.9	14.2	14.8	14.0
Total percentage					100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total population ('000)					11,599	14,576	16,851	17,892

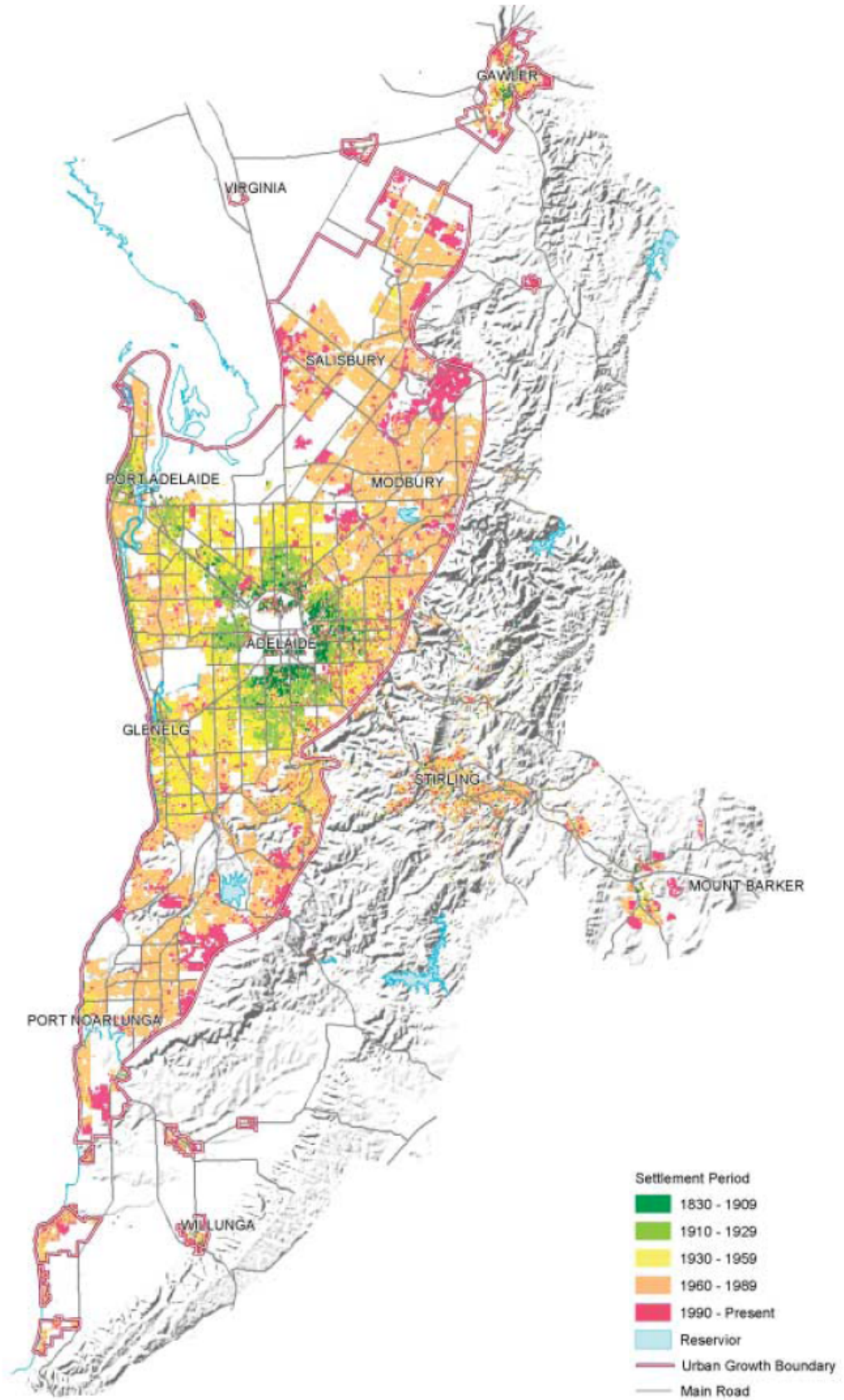
1.3 The following figures illustrate the pattern of urban growth in Australian capital cities. Again, these highlight the fact that human settlement has always tended to sprawl out from key urban centres.

Figure 2: Sydney's urban growth history ⁴



⁴ Department of Planning, *City of cities: A plan for Sydney's future*, December 2005, p.32

Figure 3: Adelaide's urban growth history ⁵



⁵ Environment Protection Authority, *State of the Environment report for South Australia 2003 – Supplementary report*, November 2003, Chapter 6, p.31.

