



**The Federal Redistribution 2008
Tasmania**



Public Objection Number 29

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15 Page(s)

The 2008
Proposed
Redistribution
Of Tasmania
Into Electoral Divisions

**Response to the
Redistribution Committee's
Proposal**

**Brian Dowse
September 2008**



1. Introduction

First I apologise that I have been a late entrant into discussion of the Redistribution. I had seen the initial submissions and the current figures for Tasmanian Divisions and assumed that there was no serious contention that would change the present status. At that stage there was no submission from the West Coast.

I feel that this last point deserves further consideration. The effect of West Coast's submission being described as a response meant that (a) it was easily overlooked and (b) that it could not be countered before the Committee deliberated. This is not the intention of the Act and should not be allowed to become common practice.

2. Criteria and outline response

I believe that the Committee has been misled by a small number of submissions into producing a proposal that fails on five counts to fulfil the requirements of Section 63 of the Act. In outline these are:

2.1 Numerical

There was no need to depart from the present distribution on numerical grounds. The decisions of previous committees in 1984 to remove the West Coast from Braddon, and later to include Latrobe, had led to a very stable balance between Braddon and Lyons that would survive at least to the 2115 Redistribution, when further changes could be made.

2.2 Economic social and regional interests and community of interest

The essential question on community of interest is not whether the West Coast has an affinity with Braddon but whether it has a closer community of interest than Latrobe and the rest of Braddon. The proponents of change have failed to make any case to demonstrate this. They have also failed to observe the very real sociological differences within the Mersey Lyell Statistical Division

2.3 Physical features and area

Nothing in the physical geography of the Mersey-Lyell Statistical Division suggests that the West Coast has greater claim than Latrobe to be included in Braddon. The present Division is basically self contained and homogeneous.

2.4 Means of communication and travel

Arguments based on means of communication similarly ignore Latrobe's closer location and are based on flawed methodology.

2.5 Boundaries of existing divisions

The proposal, although unnecessary for numerical reasons and unjustifiable on other criteria, seeks to move three Local Government Areas. While this criterion has a lower priority under the Act the effects are so extensive that it deserves more consideration and the proposal should be justified by necessity, which it is patently not. It also involves an LGA that has not expressed any desire for change.

3. Detailed response on criteria

3.1 Numerical and growth considerations

Table 1 in the appendix shows changes in the population of the Mersey-Lyell Statistical Division over the last 20 years. It shows clearly the comparative loss in the western and the growth in the eastern LGAs. As a result the population centre of the Division has moved from about Sulphur Creek to the Leven River. This is about 27km from the Latrobe town centre.

The table also projects the likely numbers by 2015 if the present pattern continues. Note that by then, if the AEC's projections for the total state electorate are accurate, possibly all of Mersey Lyell could be contained in Braddon at the mid-point between then and the next redistribution.. However the entry of Kentish and West Coast should wait on that population change and Kentish would certainly have a priority on the community of interest criterion. It would be quite ridiculous if Latrobe were to be moved now and returned in a comparatively short time

3.2 Physical features and area

The industrial and occupational characteristics of a region, and ultimately its community of interest, are determined by the circumstances of its physical geography: that is, its landforms, geology, climate, soils and natural vegetation. In all these aspects there is a clear division between the North West Coast and the townships of Western Tasmania (referred from now on as the Coast and the West).

The Coast is a natural region bounded by the Asbestos Range in the east, by the Western Tiers extending to St Valentine's Peak and then by the Hellyer and Arthur Rivers to the Indian Ocean. This area consists of coast plains and a low plateau intersected by short rivers. Most land is below the 300 metre contour. The only extrusions south of this line are the sparsely inhabited areas of the Arthur Pieman (part of Circular Head) and the former municipality of Waratah – an orphan adopted by Wynyard when Municipal amalgamation occurred in 1993. By contrast the West is a mountainous area with little settlement at sea level, mountains rising to more than 1500 metres to the east and including the uninhabited south-west corner of the island.

There is a similar clear distinction in the geology of the two regions. The West is dominated by Precambrian metamorphic rock from Cradle Mountain south to Port Davey. On the western and northern fringes of this is the arc of the Mt Reid volcanic area which reaches into Kentish but not into Braddon. On the Coast the dominant formation is tertiary basalt of igneous origin with tertiary and quarternary sedimentary deposits around Smithton, Wynyard and Latrobe.

The basic structures of the two regions are worked on by varied climates to produce distinct patterns of soils and natural vegetation. Coastal temperatures are typically 3-5°C higher as a result of altitude, latitude and distance from the sea. The most marked difference, however, is in annual mean rainfall; the West having generally in excess of 150cm while that on the Coast varies between 75cm in the east and 100cm in the west.

The higher rainfall in the West produces extensive yellow podzols, a leached acidic soil that encourages growth of timber but little else. Soil patterns on the Coast are more varied but at the lower altitudes the typical red- brown krasnozems, deep, friable, well-drained soils, are the basis of the region's agricultural productivity.

For both areas the original natural vegetation was temperate rainforest with some alpine heath and sedgeland in the West. However, the varieties of gum differed with *E. Oliqua* (stringy bark) dominant on the Coast and *E. Delegatensis* (gum top stringy bark) in the West, which also contains the only supplies of native softwood - huon pine, myrtle, and celery top pine – as well as greater quantities of peppermint gum.

Note that all the characteristics of the Coast are shared by Latrobe but that there is a clear contrast against the West.

3.3 Economic social and regional interests and community of interest

3.3.1 Industry and occupations

The distinctive geography of the Coast has determined its industries, which have a strong agricultural base. Traditionally this was based on growing potatoes and peas, running beef and dairy herds and fat lambs, and orcharding. This now supplemented by production of a wider range of vegetables, pyrethrum, poppies and cut flowers. Processing of these products accounts for a great part of the Coast's secondary industry eg fruit and vegetable packaging and processing, three vegetable canning and freezing plants, poppy and pyrethrum processing plants, meat processing at Devonport and Smithton, butter and cheese factories at Devonport, Burnie and Wynyard, and research establishments in Latrobe, Forth and Yolla. A great part of the Coast's service industries cater for the needs of these primary and secondary producers.

The centrality of agriculture to the Division is seen in Regional Statistics Tasmania (ABS 2007) which shows that in 2001 Mersey Lyell had 1,785 (almost 40%) of the state's farms and produced almost 42% of the state's agricultural income. To this activity the West's contribution was extremely small with only 0.74% of the region's rated land.

While much of the Coast's manufacturing industry processes agricultural produce there are other major operations. Devonport's carpet factory and weaving mill are major employers, as are the paper making operations at Wesley Vale and Burnie. ABS figures show 248 manufacturing locations in Mersey Lyell, employing 5611 people. The West Coast has 12 locations employing 57.

Though the West has 4.7% of Mersey-Lyell's population it has a much larger share of persons employed in the food and accommodation industries (15.7%). And, of course, it has almost all of the state's miners.

What is again apparent is that the relationship between the West and the Coast, as in its physical geography, is more notable for its differences than its similarities.

3.3.2 Demographic characteristics

Various factors shape the demographic pattern of an area. They include population growth, industry and agriculture, types of industry, and the attractiveness of an area.

The age-sex diagrams for West Coast and Braddon (see appendix) show the fairly typical Tasmanian pattern of loss of the 20-29 age group in both sexes with some recovery in the 40-49 cohort as people return or are joined by mainland "mid-lifers", with a steady decline thereafter and longer life expectancy for women. The differences are that the West has less in the older groups as people retire to other areas. This is also reflected in the lower median age, 37, compared with 40 in Braddon and the masculinity ratio (number of males per 100 females) 111.4 in the West and 95.5 in Braddon.

As is usually the case in more isolated areas current attendance at an educational institution is lower at 19.7% than in Braddon 21.3%, and those who attended year 12 or have a post school qualification are also about 2% lower in each case.

The most pronounced differences arise from the prominence of mining and tourism in the area. Both of these are typically "gypsy" industries. They attract workers prepared to move to locations all round the country, or to move in or out of the industry as conditions vary. In recent years miners tend to work abnormal shifts of longer hours (typically 12 hrs) with 4 or 5 days on and off. The hospitality workers also expect seasonal variations with long summer hours and the possibility of "a long holiday" out of season. The effect on a community and on family life is disruptive. Sports teams cannot recruit, week-ends and public holidays are irrelevant. Wives and families do not come to the area and husbands drive in and out, living in group households during their days on. This is reflected in the 38% of non family households compared with 28% in Braddon.

The other very notable differences in the West are the patterns of income and of housing costs. Tasmanian Regional Statistics show that in 1998-1999 mean taxable incomes in the West were nearly \$10,000 per year higher than in Mersey Lyell. However, the 2006 Census also shows that median individual incomes are less in the West. This implies that the lower income groups are probably paid less than their coastal counterparts. This also implied in housing costs where the median loan repayment is \$500 compared with Braddon's \$806 and in median rent payments of \$90 against \$120.

All the inferences from the Census and other sources of statistics emphasize the difference, rather than the community of interest with the Coast. It is the constant claim of the West Coasters that "It's another world down here. Things are different." They are right.

3.3.3 Government

There are still some Tasmanian Government departments that manage on a regional basis, but this is a decreasing trend. The Education department now manages schools directly, and technical and senior secondary colleges have always been outside the regional framework. Many other branches of government are organised on a needs basis, eg agriculture and forestry. Whatever the department, Latrobe is always in the same group as its Coastal neighbours.

At the Local Government level there are important day to day links between the four eastern councils in Mersey-Lyell. All are part of Cradle Water, until its take-over by the State Government. All combine in the Dulverton waste management authority, in emergency management, and in the Cradle Coast Tourist Group. Previously the four local government areas through their Port Authority representatives managed the Devonport (Latrobe) Airport. There are other bilateral arrangements. The Mersey Lawn Cemetery was run under a joint agreement until 2007 and continues to serve the three eastern LGAs. At present Latrobe and Devonport are negotiating a Master Plan to develop industrial land that forms part of both LGAs and Latrobe's sewerage effluent is treated at the East Devonport plant.

3.3.4 Social life

Nearly all aspects of normal social life are contained within the four LGAs at the eastern end of the Coast. C Max-Cinema and nightclubs in Devonport cater for the whole sub-region. The Devonport Choral Society and Repertory Societies in Devonport and Ulverstone draw members from the same area, as do a number of other clubs and societies, quite often under the name Mersey or Mersey-Leven. The various annual events, summer cycling carnivals, Devonport Show, Henley on Mersey, Ulverstone Rodeo, Apex Regatta and others, are part of a program that is enjoyed by the 60,000 people in this relatively small catchment area.

Team sports are organised generally on a Coastal basis. This applies to basketball, hockey and cricket but footballers take part in a Northern Association or at a lower level, the NTFA and the Darwin Football Association support 1 West Coast team.

Latrobe and Devonport, especially, have some important symbioses. Many people from Devonport have built homes for their retirement in the Port Sorell – Hawley area. They have tended to continue to shop and visit mainly in Devonport, and in recent years have been joined by people seeking a rural lifestyle, living in Latrobe but still working in Devonport. This is complemented by the large number of workers at Wesley Vale who live in Devonport.

A similar crossover of work and residence is apparent at the Mersey Hospital and in the Health and Human Services centre in Devonport.

3.4 Means of communication and travel

There seems to be a perception that there is a community of interest when two locations are linked by transport. This, it is maintained in a few submissions, establishes a commonality of

social and economic life even when, as in the case of Burnie and Queenstown, the distance involved is 152km. On this basis, there is a community of interest between Sydney and Melbourne because they are at either end of the Hume Highway, or between Esperance and Port Augusta via the Nullarbor Highway. To maintain such arguments would, of course, be ridiculous, but no more so than maintaining there is a greater community of interest between Latrobe and Launceston than between Latrobe and Devonport and the rest of the Coast.

The Act refers to means of communication and travel within the region. The Coast is served principally by the Bass Highway, which carries its highest volumes between Latrobe and Devonport. It is a dual carriageway of national standard as far as Heybridge but is of lower standard to the west where volumes are lower, though substantial upgrades are in progress, North-south minor roads intersect with the highway to serve the interior townships. At the eastern end the Highway through Latrobe is supplemented by the Old Bass Highway through Spreyton, The Port Sorell Road and the Exeter Highway. Each of the four carries more traffic than the Murchison Hwy.

Tasmania's rail network is decrepit, undersize and single tracked. It also carries more traffic along the Coast than in the section from Burnie to Melba Siding. Even so, the carriage of zinc to Hobart from Rosebery has no benefit for coastal industry since it merely passes through the region.

Air travel from Melbourne and King Island is through Burnie and Devonport airports at Wynyard and Latrobe. Both carried about 88,000 passengers in 2006-07. The presence of the airport in Latrobe only emphasises its role in servicing the eastern Coastal community.

The daily journey to work is the essence of travel within the Coastal region, the greater part being within each LGA or to its immediate neighbour. There are Metro bus services in the major centres but the only long distance passenger services are part of the State network, which includes the West Coast. The metro service in the east includes regular services between Latrobe and Devonport

3.5 Boundaries of existing divisions

This criterion, as is made clear in the Act, is generally of lesser importance than the others. However there is a case to be made that in Tasmania it should carry slightly more weight because the House of Assembly Divisions coincide with those of the House of Representatives. It has also been considered preferable to include whole LGAs in Divisions because of the use of common rolls. The criterion should also carry more weight in this instance because the Committee's proposal affects not only the two Federal members, but also the ten members of the House of Assembly. This is aggravated by the extent of the change which affects the populations of three Local Government areas and represents a severe disruption to the political linkages that have been established over the years.

4. Responses to previous submissions

4.1 Paul Fenton

Mr. Fenton's suggestion is that federal divisions should be made to coincide with Legislative Council Electorates. This is an interesting prospect of the tail wagging the dog. Since the Legislative Council has been reduced to 15 members there is a much stronger case for its divisions be each one third of the Federal division and each group of three to be contained in a federal division. I am aware that MLCs have advanced reasons why this should not be so, but those reasons do not conform with the criteria in their own Act.

4.2 W Tamar Council

This submission supports the wish of the West Coast Council to be part of Braddon. It does not give reasons for this or for a suggested movement of Latrobe. As the Committee points out, the proposal does not meet the requirements of the Act

4.3 Linda Luther

This submission maintains that the relationship between the west coast towns and Burnie is close but does nothing to substantiate that statement. No reason is given to separate Latrobe from its close neighbours. The numerical requirements of the Act are also not met.

4.4 Hon Ruth Forrest MLC

This submission claims a “much more significant community of interest with the North West Coast” and to support it cites links through the mining industry, through education, through travel for shopping or to go interstate or overseas, through hospitalisation of some patients at Burnie and through tourism. In each instance the claim does not indicate a community of interest but a complementary arrangement with another area. Many of these links do in fact exist either in Lyons or other regions, in particular the relatively recent Cradle Mountain link road through Kentish providing an outlet to Launceston for cheaper air travel. That road also provides the main route for supplies for the West Coast’s supermarkets, and for a number of miners whose home base is Launceston or the mainland. The comments on tourism ignore the existence in Lyons of Cradle Mountain, the Central Plateau Lakes, the Derwent Valley and Strathgordon.

The most serious flaw in Ms Forrest’s submission is her dismissal of Latrobe as “geographically close to the Launceston region”, with no more than that to justify its separation from its natural partners. At 98km from Launceston (in the Bass electorate) Latrobe can scarcely be called geographically close, yet even that is somewhat less than the 118km between Burnie and Rosebery, let alone the more distant West Coast towns.

4.5 Cradle Coast Authority

This submission is a clear case of “two bob each way” and without any substantiation. Perhaps “two cents each way”.

4.6 West Coast Council

This submission is essentially superficial. It represents wishful thinking without regard to the consequences of its proposal. The statement “radical boundary adjustments will be unnecessary and only minor adjustments or massaging of other areas may be necessary” illustrates its lack of attention to the requirements of the Act. Not surprisingly, the submission ignores the prior claims of Latrobe. It presents a list of organizations that now service the West Coast, each of which also services Latrobe and in each case from a much closer centre either in Burnie or Devonport. Each of the instances cited in the paragraph on means of communication and travel also applies to Latrobe. Where distances from the West Coast to other locations are quoted the distance from Rosebery is used rather than the southern towns. From Strahan, for instance, the distance to Burnie is 183km, and to Hobart 289km, which is not a difference of 150km.

The fact that West Coast product passes through Braddon sea and airports is of no consequence in considering community of interest, any more than the import of petrol through any Tasmanian port creates a community of interest with some other part of the country. The same is basically true of West Coasters’ use of the North West air and sea ports, although the lower numbers using those facilities suggests that West Coasters have found air travel through Launceston much cheaper. The “drive in, drive out” workers mentioned in (ii) (i) are by no means exclusively based on the Coast, with some resident in Hobart and an increasing number in Launceston.

The section on 'Physical features etc.' refers to geological commonalities which are in fact all in Lyons and not Braddon. It also refers to links with tourist attractions that are also in Lyons and not the Coast.

5. Summary

At this time there is no reason for change in the composition of the Braddon Electorate, and certainly no reason for the radical change envisaged by the Committee. Nor is that change supported by the criteria in the Act. If present trends continue there may be a possibility of extending the Division to include Kentish and the West Coast. The community of interest criterion on all counts of industry and occupation, demography, governance and social life dictates that Latrobe has the closest interest, followed by Kentish and then the West Coast. Provided that there are not unforeseen developments in population change or in the organization of Local Government, the entry of those LGAs into Braddon should follow that pattern.

Appendices

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**Brian Dowse
September 2008**

Mersey-Lyell. Population Change 1988-2015

	1988	2007	2015 Projected	Electors 70% of pop
Strahan	530			
Lyell	3711			
Zeehan	4201	5148	4500	3150
West Coast				
Waratah	1550			
Wynyard	12591			
Waratah- Wynyard	14141	13889	13500	9450
King Is.	1760	1723	1700	1190
Circular Head	8041	8228	8500	5950
Burnie	21062	19692	19000	13300
West	53446	48680	47200	33040
Penguin	5501			
Ulverstone	14451			
Central Coast		21253	22000	15400
Devonport	25293	24961	25000	17500
Latrobe	6341	9071	10500	7350
Kentish	4781	6052	6500	4550
East	56367	61337	64000	44800
Mersey Lyell	109813	110017	111200	77840

Present Braddon	70140
Present Braddon plus Kentish	74690
Present Braddon plus West Coast	73290
Projected State Average (73007+1730)	74737

Ref 3.1.



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1362.6 - Regional Statistics, Tasmania, 2007

Latest ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 06/02/2006 Ceased

Contents >> Agriculture >> Gross value of agricultural production

In 2000-01, agricultural establishments in the Mersey-Lyell Region made the most valuable contribution to Tasmania's gross value of production, contributing 41.7% (\$315.1 million) of the state's production. The major contributor to the gross value of production in the Mersey-Lyell Region was crops (including pastures, grasses and fruit), which contributed 48.5% of the region's total gross value of production.

In 2000-01, the Northern Region contributed 37.2% (\$280.6 million) of Tasmania's gross value of production. Crops (including pastures, grasses and fruit) accounted for 40.5% of the gross value of production for the Northern Region, and livestock 37.0%.

The Greater Hobart-Southern Region contributed 21.1% (\$159.3 million) of Tasmania's gross value of production in 2000-01, with crops contributing 52.4% of the region's total production.

GROSS VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, Tasmanian regions(a)

	Greater Hobart-Southern		Northern		Mersey-Lyell		Tasmania	
	1996-97	2000-01	1996-97	2000-01	1996-97	2000-01	1996-97	2000-01
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Crops (includes fruit)	79.2	83.5	85.5	113.7	133.2	152.9	297.9	350.1
Livestock slaughterings	28.6	29.1	47.9	63.1	40.6	68.2	117.1	160.4
Livestock products	45.5	46.8	94.5	103.7	85.8	93.9	225.8	244.4
Total agriculture	153.3	159.3	227.9	280.6	259.6	315.1	640.8	755.0

(a) For 1996-97, crops data relate to the year ended 31 March and livestock slaughterings and livestock products data relate to the year ended 30 June. For 2000-01, all data relate to the year ended 30 June.

Source: ABS data available on request, Agricultural Census.

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Australian Bureau of Statistics

1362.6 - Regional Statistics, Tasmania, 2007

Latest ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 06/02/2006 Ceased

Contents >> Agriculture >> Establishments

The Mersey-Lyell Region continues to have Tasmania's largest number of agricultural establishments, (farm) with 37.9% of the state's 4,286 farms in 2000-01. This was followed by the Northern Region, with 35.8% of all farms, and the Greater Hobart-Southern Region, with 26.3%.

The Northern Region had Tasmania's largest area of holding, (farm size) in 2000-01, with 840,809 hectares or 44.1% of the state's total of 1,906,759 hectares. The Greater Hobart-Southern Region had 742,247 hectares, 38.9% of Tasmania's total, and the Mersey-Lyell Region had 323,703 hectares, 17.0% of the total.

The Greater Hobart-Southern Region had the largest average farm size, in 2001, with 659.2 hectares. This was followed by the Northern Region, with an average farm size of 548.1 hectares and the Mersey-Lyell Region with 199.1 hectares. The Tasmanian average farm size was 444.9 hectares in 2001.

AGRICULTURAL ESTABLISHMENTS AND AREA OF HOLDING, Tasmanian regions (a)

Region	Agricultural establishments		Area of holding		Average area of holding 2001
	1997	2001	1997	2001	
	no.	no.	ha	ha	ha
Greater Hobart-Southern	1,146	1,126	723,377	742,247	659.2
Northern	1,605	1,534	867,132	840,809	548.1
Mersey-Lyell	1,785	1,626	329,439	323,703	199.1
Tasmania	4,536	4,286	1,919,948	1,906,759	444.9

(a) 1997 data relate to the year ended 31 March; 2001 data relate to the year ended 30 June.

Source: ABS data available on request, Agricultural Census.

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2.10 MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS — 1996-97

	Locations at 30 June	Employment at end of June(a)	Wages and salaries(b)	Turnover
Local government area	no.	no.	\$m	\$m
Greater Hobart-Southern				
Brighton	5	38	1.1	3.6
Central Highlands	1	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Clarence	54	381	8.5	60.7
Derwent Valley	10	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Glamorgan/Spring Bay	7	134	n.p.	n.p.
Glenorchy	132	4 638	159.1	1 033.5
Hobart	121	1 589	52.2	250.0
Huon Valley	34	442	11.2	81.4
Kingborough	59	382	n.p.	n.p.
Sorell	21	262	6.2	39.7
Southern Midlands	10	40	n.p.	n.p.
Tasman	6	18	0.3	1.3
Total(c)	460	8 505	281.7	1 877.2
Northern				
Break O'Day	11	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Dorset	22	533	20.0	115.6
Flinders	1	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
George Town	16	1 473	78.0	595.7
Launceston	210	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Meander Valley	37	406	14.2	70.7
Northern Midlands	23	478	15.6	95.7
West Tamar	22	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Total(c)	343	6 925	249.3	1 422.2
Mersey-Lyell				
Burnie	51	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Central Coast	39	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Circular Head	18	679	n.p.	n.p.
Devonport	79	1 655	48.0	277.7
Kentish	11	231	n.p.	n.p.
King Island	6	190	n.p.	n.p.
Latrobe	7	394	n.p.	n.p.
Waratah/Wynyard	25	251	n.p.	n.p.
West Coast	12	57	2.0	7.1
Total(c)	248	5 611	200.3	1 420.6
Tasmania(c)	1 050	21 040	731.3	4 719.9

(a) Includes working proprietors.

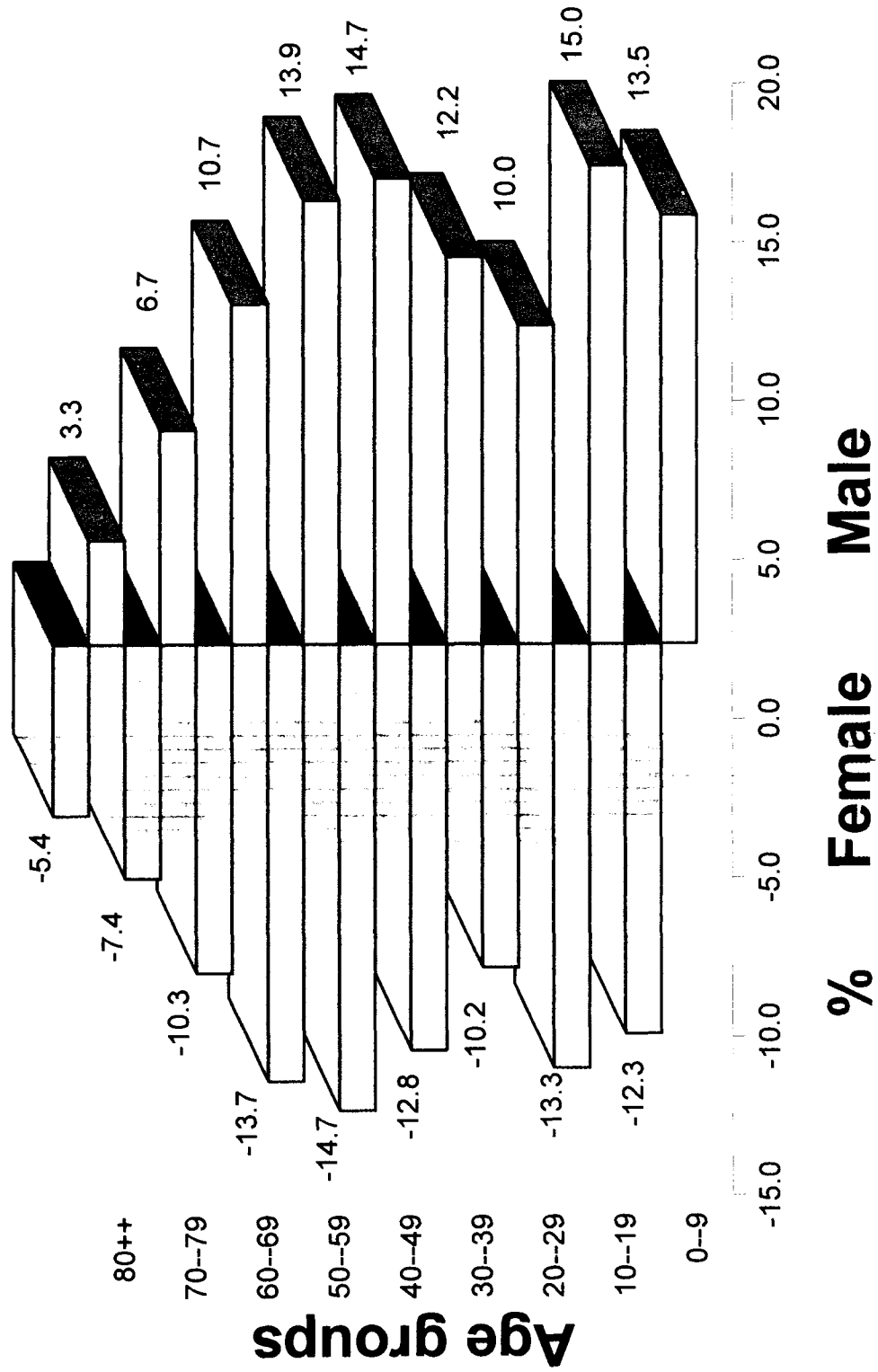
(b) Excludes the drawings of working proprietors. Includes provision expenses for employee entitlements.

(c) Discrepancies may occur between sums of component items and totals, because manufacturing locations data is proportionally allocated from establishment information.

Source: ABS data available on request, Manufacturing Industry Survey.

Ref to 3.3 i

Age-sex Braddon



Age-sex West Coast

