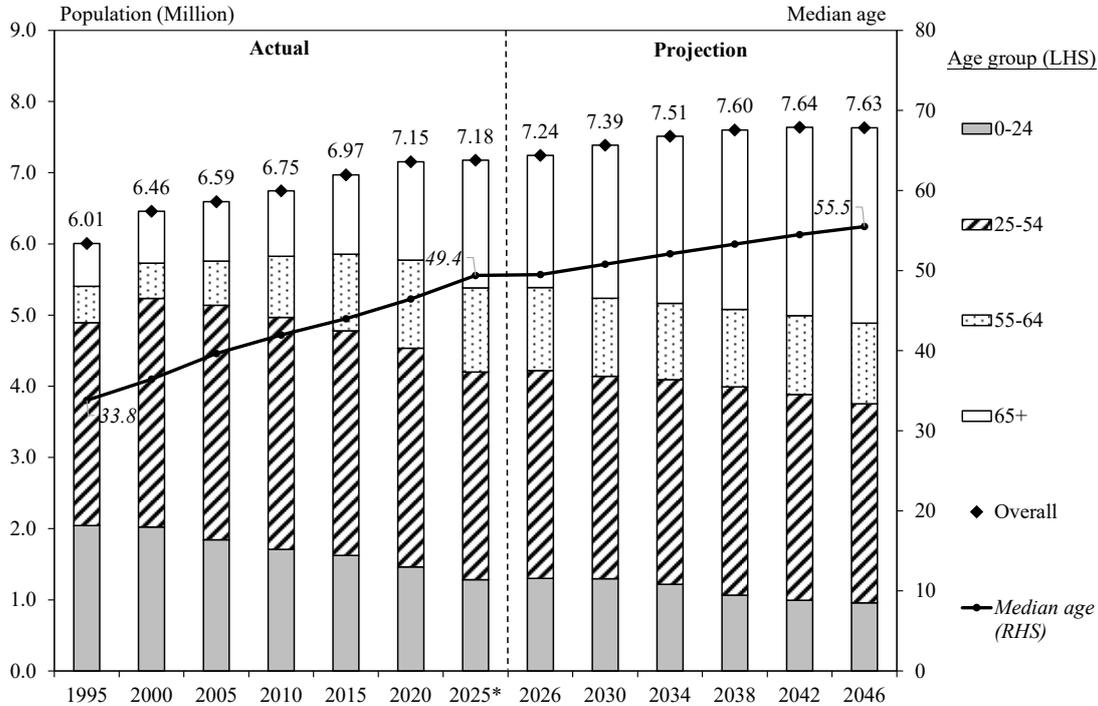


Box 6.1

Opportunities and challenges of population ageing in Hong Kong

Population ageing is a global issue, and Hong Kong is no exception. According to the statistics published by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the number of persons aged 65 and above in Hong Kong surged from 0.60 million⁽¹⁾ in 1995 to 1.79 million in 2025, with their share in total population more than doubled from 10.0% to 25.0% (*Chart 1*). The median age of Hong Kong’s population rose notably in tandem from 33.8 to 49.4.

Chart 1: Hong Kong’s population⁽²⁾ by age group and median age



Note: (*) Provisional figures.
Source: C&SD.

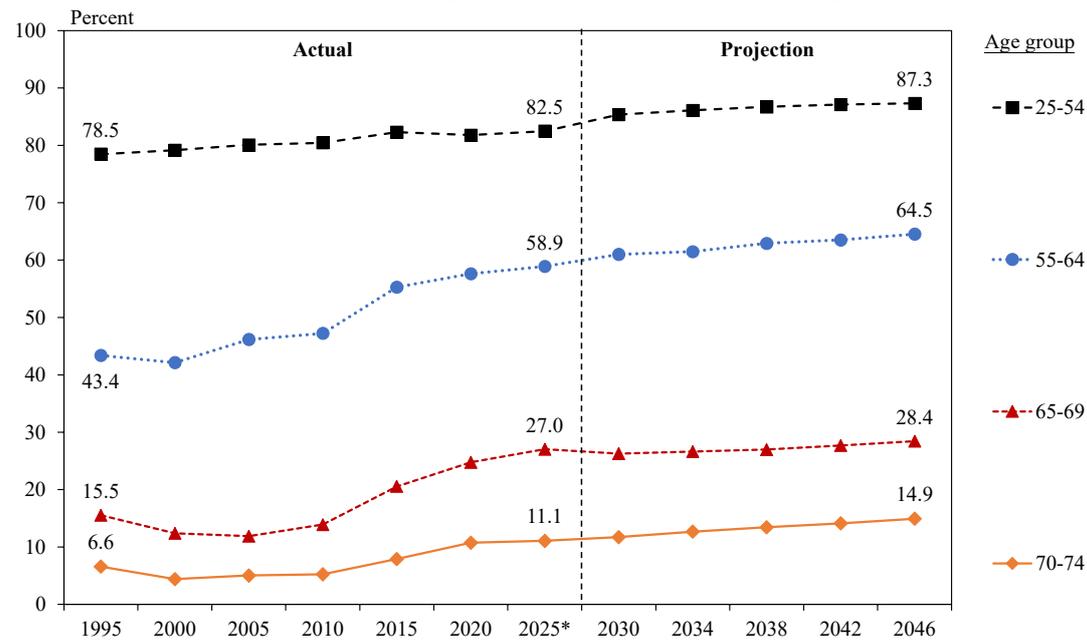
There are two major forces driving population ageing in Hong Kong. First, fertility of Hong Kong was on a downtrend in the past few decades, with the total fertility rate decreasing visibly from 1 295 live births per 1 000 females in 1995 to 841 in 2024, far below the replacement level of 2 100. Second, people in Hong Kong are living longer. The life expectancy at birth of male and female in Hong Kong reached 82.7 years and 88.2 years respectively in 2024, one of the highest in the world and much higher than their respective levels of 76.0 and 81.5 in 1995. Such trends of low fertility and increasing life expectancy are expected to persist. According to C&SD’s projections, the life expectancy at birth of male and female will rise further to 86.4 and 91.8 in 2046 respectively, and the total fertility rate will stay low at 938. As a result, population ageing is projected to intensify further going forward, with the share of persons aged 65 and above reaching 36.0% of Hong Kong’s population in 2046.

(1) Population and labour statistics quoted in this article exclude foreign domestic helpers.
(2) Refers to mid-year population figures.

Box 6.1 (Cont'd)

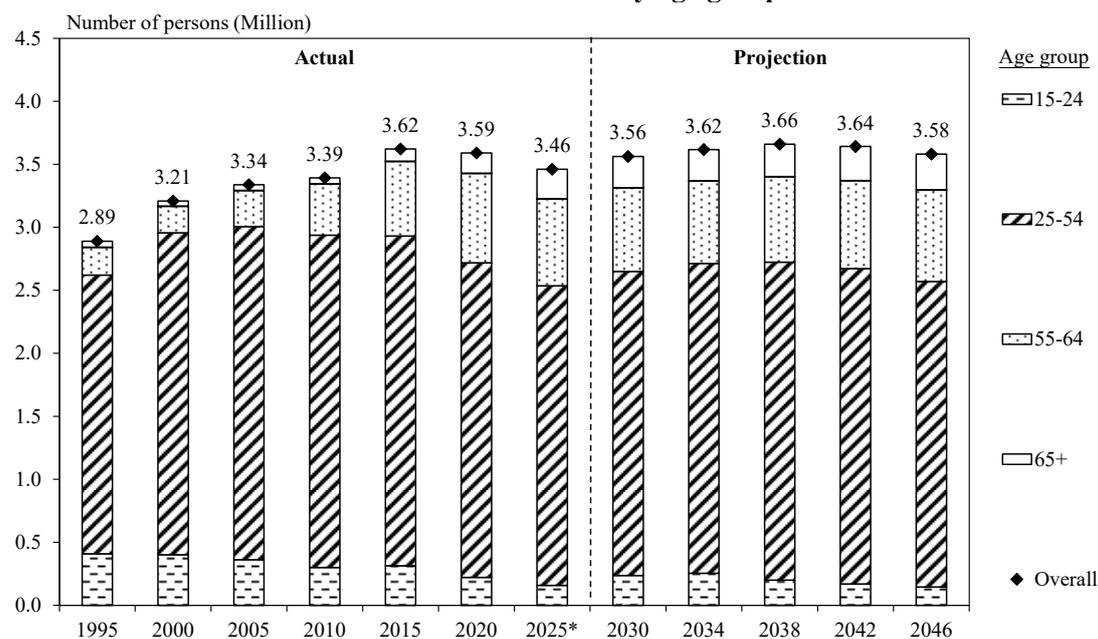
As a larger proportion of people in Hong Kong are expected to approach retirement, the overall labour force will be subject to increased downward pressure. That being said, it is noted that the labour force participation rates of prime-age adults (i.e. those aged 25-54) and older age groups (i.e. those aged 55-74) in Hong Kong have been trending up according to C&SD's figures and projections (*Chart 2*). The latter implies that more older people stay active in the labour market, with the labour force aged 55 and above increasing from 0.3 million in 1995 to 0.9 million in 2025, and projected to rise further to 1.0 million in 2046. This will partly offset the drag of population ageing on labour force growth. Taking these factors into consideration, the labour force of Hong Kong is projected to remain relatively stable in size over the next two decades and peak in 2038 followed by a decline (*Chart 3*).

Chart 2: Labour force participation rate of selected age groups



Note: (*) Provisional figures.
Source: C&SD.

Chart 3: Labour force by age group



Note: (*) Provisional figures.
Source: C&SD.

Box 6.1 (Cont'd)

The projected relatively stable labour force reflects the Government's multi-pronged strategy to mitigate the impact of population ageing on the economy. A number of measures have been launched in recent years to 1) provide stronger incentives for childbirth: measures ranging from newborn baby bonus and tax concessions for eligible parents to giving priority to families with newborns in the allocation of public housing; 2) promote stronger participation in the labour market: the Re-employment Allowance Pilot Scheme (launched in July 2024) to encourage more locals to join the workforce and more aided child care centres to facilitate more parents to stay in the labour market after childbirth; and 3) leverage outside talents: the Top Talent Pass Scheme and various enhanced talent admission regimes (e.g. General Employment Policy and Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals) proactively trawl for outside talents and inject fresh vitality into the workforce.

Separately, various initiatives have been implemented to enhance labour productivity. These include the enhancement of skills-based training for the workforce via the Employees Retraining Board. The Digital Transformation Support Pilot Programme will also include artificial intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity digital solutions to encourage small and medium enterprises to use AI to enhance their competitiveness.

While population ageing poses challenges, it also brings about opportunities. With an increasing proportion of elderly in the population, the prominence of the silver economy will be on the rise, creating a sizable demand for related products and services. It is crudely estimated that the consumption expenditure of persons aged 60 and above will increase from \$342 billion in 2024 to \$496 billion in 2034. To better seize the opportunities brought by the silver economy, the Government set up a Working Group on Promoting Silver Economy in 2024, and announced 30 measures in May 2025 covering five areas, namely boosting "silver consumption"; developing "silver industry"; promoting "quality assurance of silver products"; enhancing "silver financial and security arrangements"; and unleashing "silver productivity".

To tackle the challenges brought about by an ageing population and further promote the development of silver economy, the Government has set up a Working Group on Ageing Society Strategies led by the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration, with all the 15 policy bureaux as members. The Working Group will look into how community resources and market participation may be capitalised to drive cross-sector collaboration and synergise with government policy initiatives to formulate timely and strategic responses to ageing society. The Working Group will submit a report to the Chief Executive this year.