

The Territory's annual resident population growth was estimated to be 2.0% in December 2008. Territory population growth continues to remain above national population growth levels in December 2008, despite population growth trending down since the peak in December 2007, (see Chart 1).

Population

	NT	Aust
Annual population growth (%)	2.0	1.9
Estimated Resident Population (000)	221.68	21 643.98

In December 2008 the Territory recorded the third highest annual growth of the jurisdictions behind Western Australia (3.1%) and Queensland (2.5%), and above national growth of 1.9% (see Chart 2).

Net Interstate Migration

Net interstate migration is highly volatile in the Territory and reflects the young and transient nature of the Territory's population. In the December quarter 2008 net interstate migration was 5, compared to 256 recorded in the September quarter 2008.

Annual net interstate migration in the Territory was 691 and has remained positive since early 2007. This recent growth in interstate migration is linked to strong economic and employment growth associated with the resources boom in recent years.

Net Overseas Migration

The ABS has recently developed a new method for estimating net overseas migration (see data statement on following page). Net overseas migration was -47 persons in the December quarter 2008, compared to 261 in the September quarter 2008.

Annual net overseas migration continues to decline since the peak in June 2006 (chart 3).

Weakening economic conditions, resulting in reduced demand for 457 (employer-sponsored) visa workers and the Commonwealth Governments decision to cut the skilled migrant intake could see a continuing downward trend in net overseas migration numbers.

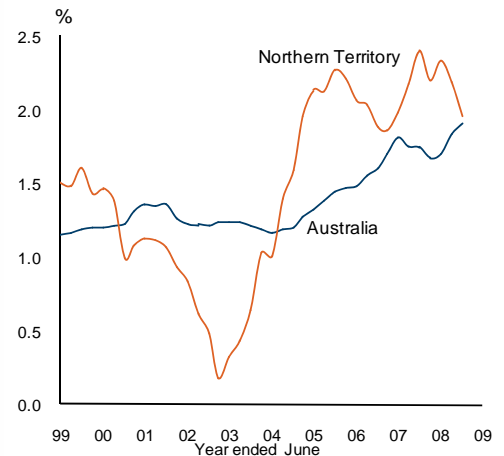
Natural Increase

Natural increase (births less deaths) is a fairly stable contributor to the Territory's growth rate. In the December quarter 2008 natural increase contributed 669 persons, compared to the 720 persons reported in the September quarter 2008. There were 920 births and 251 deaths registered in the quarter. The Territory's fertility rate of 2.28 babies per woman is above the national rate of 1.94.

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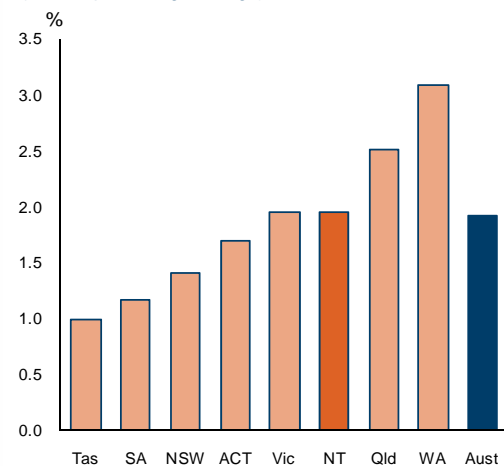
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Chart 1: Population Growth
(annual percentage change)



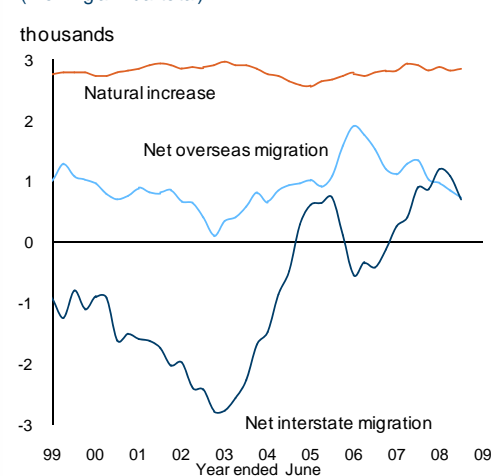
Source: ABS Cat. No. 3101.0

Chart 2: Population Growth
(annual percentage change)



Source: ABS Cat. No. 3101.0

Chart 3: Territory Population Components¹
(moving annual total)



Source: ABS Cat. No. 3101.0

New methods are introduced into the calculation of net overseas migration from September quarter 2006

Estimated Resident Population and Components of Change

	December Quarter		change		
	quarter	year to date	quarterly ¹	annual ²	year on year ³
Northern Territory					
population growth	627	4 247			
natural increase	669	2 849			
<i>births</i>	920	3 942			
<i>deaths</i>	251	1 093			
net migration					
<i>overseas</i>	- 47	707			
<i>interstate</i>	5	691			
total population	221 682		0.3%	2.0%	2.2%
Australia					
population growth	101 502	406 083			
total population	21 643 987		0.5%	1.9%	1.8%

¹ compares the latest quarter with the previous quarter

² compares the latest quarter with the same quarter last year

³ compares the 4 quarters up to and including the latest quarter with the previous 4 quarter period

Caution is advised when using monthly data for the Territory, which is often derived from small samples and highly volatile.

Source: ABS Cat. No. 3101.0

Interstate Migration Model

Northern Territory Treasury has ongoing concerns over the ability of the ABS interstate migration model, to accurately estimate interstate flows to the Territory and therefore population growth.

The ABS model for estimating interstate migration flows is based on Medicare 'change of address' information with adjustments for defence personnel not covered by Medicare. While this model balances at a national level and works well for most large jurisdictions, it performs poorly in the estimation of movements to and from the Territory. The Territory has a much higher level of population transience compared to other states. In a typical year, around 8% to 10% of the total population of the Territory will move. The youth and mobility of those migrating to the Territory and their low propensity to use medical services means their 'place of residence' record with Medicare is often incorrect. Hence, the Medicare model (using Medicare Australia data, formerly the Health Insurance Commission) probably under enumerates the residence of many short-term migrants to the Territory. Compounding this is the typically older and higher health care user profile of those migrating from the Territory. This type of person is more likely to update their Medicare 'place of residence' record once settled in another state. Under-estimation of the Territory's population has a significant impact on population-based funding the Territory receives from the Commonwealth.

Data Statement

The current interstate migration model has been revised to include updated expansion factors, based on Census 2006 data. Expansion factors are used to account for an under coverage of Medicare data by various ages and sex.

ABS has developed a new method for estimating net overseas migration (NOM) which is expected to better reflect movements of travellers and whether they should be included in the Australian resident population. Results of the new NOM method are final up to June 2007, all estimates onwards are revised preliminary.

ABS advises that ERPs for 30 June 2006 and the 2001-06 intercensal period are now final. All estimates from September quarter 2006 onwards are preliminary.

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