

Annual population growth in the Northern Territory and nationally continued to moderate in the June quarter 2010 (chart 1). Nationally, this was driven by a large fall in net overseas migration (NOM), while in the Territory it was driven by lower levels of NOM and declining net interstate migration (NIM).

Population

	NT	Aust
Annual population growth	1.5%	1.7%
Estimated Resident Population (000)	229.7	22 342

Compared to the March quarter 2010, the Territory's resident population increased by 0.5% to 229 675. Growth was driven by a large increase in net overseas migration over the quarter. In annual terms, growth in the Territory's resident population moderated to 1.5% in the June quarter 2010 primarily driven by lower levels of NOM and declining NIM over the year. The Territory recorded the fourth lowest annual population growth rate of the jurisdictions behind Western Australia (2.2%), Queensland (2.0%), Victoria (1.8%) and the Australian Capital Territory (1.8%). Nationally, the annual population growth rate moderated to 1.7% (see Chart 2).

Net Interstate Migration

NIM is highly volatile in the Territory and reflects the young and transient nature of the Territory's population. In the June quarter 2010, NIM declined by 168 persons, compared to a decline of 375 persons in the March quarter 2010.

In 2009-10, NIM in the Territory declined by 842 persons. This was primarily driven by a 6.3% decrease in the number of persons arriving from interstate jurisdictions. This may reflect the impact of the national economic recovery on the number of interstate workers migrating to the Territory looking for work.

Net Overseas Migration

The ABS has developed a new method for estimating net overseas migration (see data statement on following page).

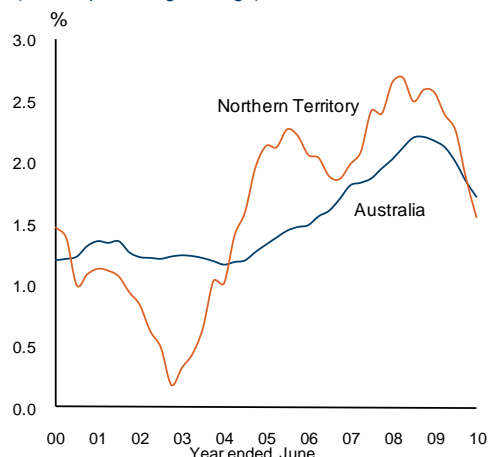
In the June quarter 2010, the number of net overseas migrants coming to the Territory was 481 persons, compared to 135 persons in the March quarter 2010. In 2009-10, net overseas migration to the Territory was 1 292 (see Chart 3).

Natural Increase

Natural increase (births less deaths) is a fairly stable contributor to the Territory's population growth rate. In the June quarter 2010, natural increase contributed 835 persons to growth, compared to 818 persons in the March quarter 2010. There were 1076 births and 241 deaths registered in the June quarter 2010.

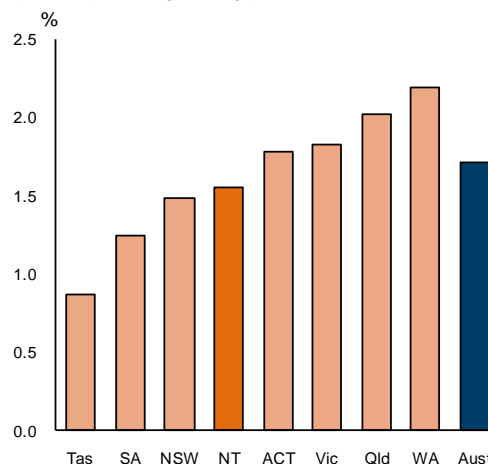
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Chart 1: Population Growth
(annual percentage change)



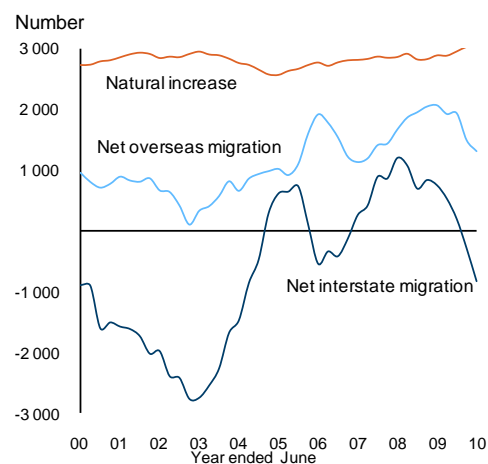
Source: ABS Cat. No. 3101.0

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

¹New methods are introduced into the calculation of net overseas migration from September quarter 2006

Estimated Resident Population and Components of Change

	June Quarter		change		
	quarter	year to date	quarterly ¹	annual ²	year on year ³
Northern Territory					
population growth	1 148	3 504			
natural increase	835	3 054			
<i>births</i>	1 076	4 004			
<i>deaths</i>	241	950			
net migration					
<i>overseas</i>	481	1 292			
<i>interstate</i>	- 168	- 842			
total population	229 675		0.5%	1.5%	2.0%
Australia					
population growth	70 534	377 111			
total population	22 342 398		0.3%	1.7%	1.9%

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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