

Population growth in the Territory remains above the national population growth level. In March 2009, the Territory's annual resident population growth was estimated to be 2.2% (see Chart 1).

Population

	NT	Aust
Annual population growth (%)	2.2	2.1
Estimated Resident Population (000)	223.1	21 779

In March 2009, the Territory recorded the third highest annual growth of the jurisdictions behind Western Australia (3.1%) and Queensland (2.6%), and above national growth of 2.1% (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 March quarter 2009 net interstate migration was 111, compared to 5 recorded in the December quarter 2008.

Annual net interstate migration in the Territory was 832 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 to the Territory was 641 persons in the March quarter 2009, compared to -47 in the December quarter 2008.

Annual net overseas migration increased to 1211 in the March quarter 2009 (Chart 3).

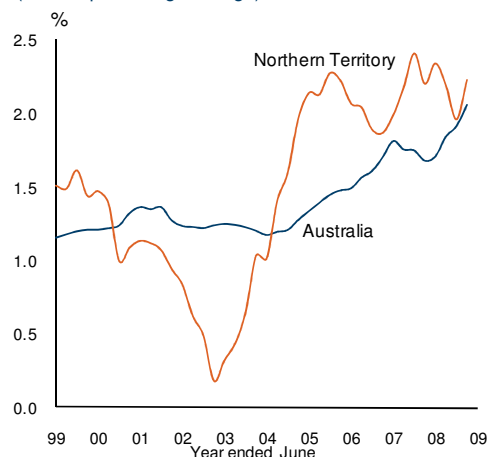
Favourable economic conditions in the Territory have seen continued demand for 457 (employer-sponsored) visa workers. Skilled migrant intake under the 457 scheme increased by 34% in the year to March 2009.

Natural Increase

Natural increase (births less deaths) is a fairly stable contributor to the Territory's population growth rate. In the March quarter 2009 natural increase contributed 645 persons, compared to the 669 persons reported in the December quarter 2008. There were 883 births and 238 deaths registered in March the quarter. The Territory's fertility rate of 2.28 babies per woman is above the national rate of 1.94.

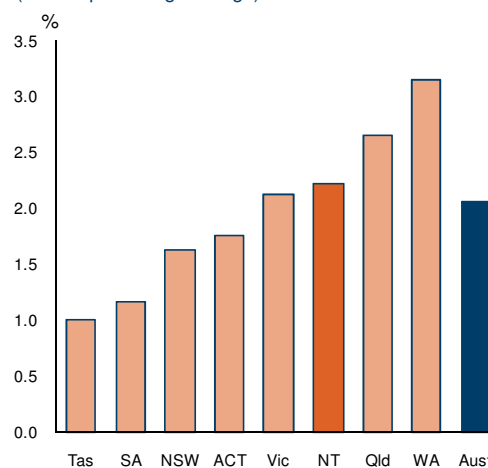
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Chart 1: Population Growth
(annual percentage change)



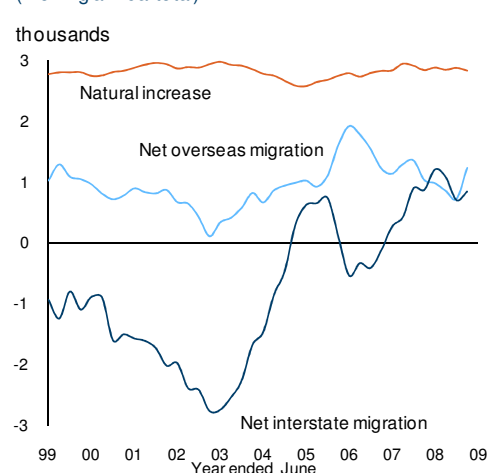
Source: ABS Cat. No. 3101.0

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

	March Quarter		change		
	quarter	year to date	quarterly ¹	annual ²	year on year ³
Northern Territory					
population growth	1 397	4 848			
natural increase	645	2 805			
<i>births</i>	883	3 845			
<i>deaths</i>	238	1 040			
net migration					
<i>overseas</i>	641	1 211			
<i>interstate</i>	111	832			
total population	223 079		0.6%	2.2%	2.2%
Australia					
population growth	135 130	439 061			
total population	21 779 117		0.6%	2.1%	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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