

Population

September Quarter 2005

Summary

Population

Northern Territory	203 721	↑ 0.5%
Australia	20 387 886	↑ 0.3%

Analysis

Northern Territory resident population is estimated, by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), to have increased by 0.5% in the September quarter 2005, to 203 721, the seventh consecutive quarterly population increase. The Territory's annual population growth rate increased to 1.7%.

At the national level the population increased by 0.3% in the quarter and by 1.2% in annual terms. The Territory's population growth rate is trending upwards and is above the national rate for the third consecutive quarter.

In the Territory, estimated resident population increased by 928 persons in the September quarter 2005, compared to an increase of 536 in the September quarter 2004. Natural increase (births less deaths), net overseas migration and net interstate migration all made positive contributions to growth in the quarter:

- Natural increase 768
- Net overseas migration 104
- Net interstate migration 56

Net interstate migration was 56, substantially higher than the corresponding quarter in 2004 (net loss of 148). Net interstate migration has been positive for the past three quarters, the first instance of three consecutive increases in net interstate migration since the commencement of the series.

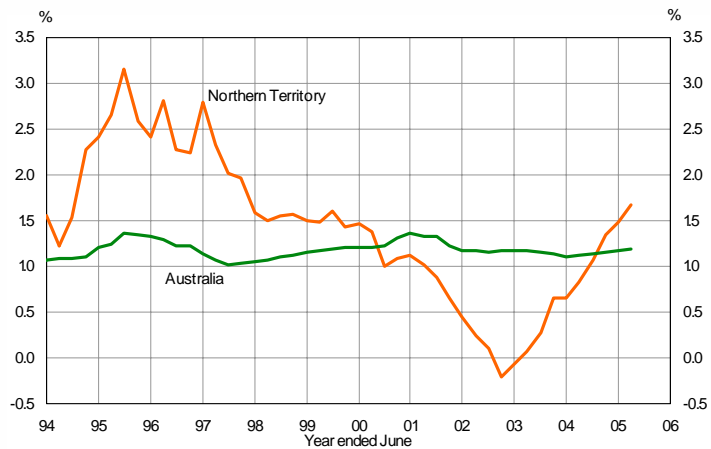
In the year to September 2005, net interstate migration in the Territory increased by 209, compared to a net loss of 1 496 in the year to September 2004. Improved interstate migration over the year reflects the strengthening prospects for the Territory economy, particularly in the construction and tourism sectors. These two labour intensive industries were adversely affected by the downturn in international visitors and residential construction in the early years of this decade.

Northern Territory Treasury has ongoing concerns over the ability of the interstate migration model, used by the ABS, to accurately estimate interstate flows to the Territory and therefore population growth (see 'Interstate Migration Model' discussion on following page). In recent years the reported population loss, caused by net interstate migration flows, has seemed at odds with a range of onshore economic indicators. However with these qualifiers in mind, the past three net interstate migration figures are more in line with the strength in the broader Territory economy.

The measurement of overseas migration continues to present problems for the ABS. For example, changes to a person's immigration category once in Australia can complicate measurement. ABS is currently developing improved methods for estimating net overseas migration.

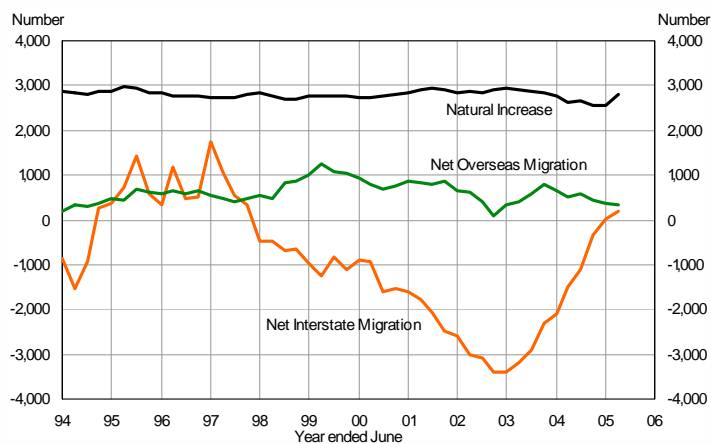
At 1.7%, the Territory recorded the third highest annual population growth of the jurisdictions. Queensland, with growth of 2.0%, recorded the highest annual growth rate.

Population Growth*



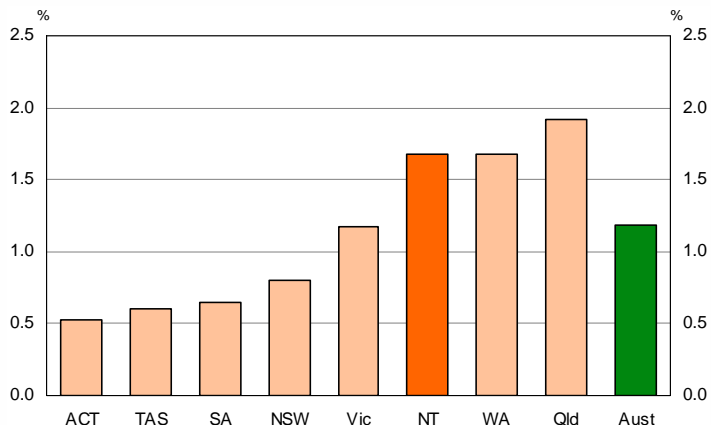
* latest quarter compared to corresponding quarter the previous year
Source: ABS Cat. No. 3101.0

Territory Resident Population Components*



* moving annual total
Source: ABS Cat. No. 3101.0

Population Growth*



* latest quarter compared to corresponding quarter the previous year
Source: ABS Cat. No. 3101.0

economic brief

Released: 21 March 2005
Next Release: 2 June 2006

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Estimated Resident Population and Components of Change

	Sep 04	Dec 04	Mar 05	Jun 05	Sep 05
Northern Territory					
Births ^(a)	756	937	871	950	1 001
Deaths ^(a)	212	256	225	254	233
Natural Increase	544	681	646	696	768
Overseas Migration	140	65	85	97	104
Interstate Migration	- 148	- 272	192	233	56
Total Migration	- 8	- 207	277	330	160
Total Population Growth	536	474	923	1 026	928
Population at End of Quarter	200 370	200 844	201 767	202 793	203 721
Annual Population Growth Rate ^(b)	0.8%	1.1%	1.3%	1.5%	1.7%
Australia					
Population at End of Quarter ('000)	20 149.1	20 210.0	20 281.4	20 328.6	20 387.9
Annual Population Growth Rate ^(b)	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%

Source: ABS Cat. No. 3101.0 (a) Births and deaths are shown in the quarter of registration while natural increase is the excess of births over deaths by quarter of occurrence. (b) Population at end of quarter compared with same period in the previous year.

Note: Interstate and overseas migration can be very volatile and quarterly movements should be interpreted with caution. Estimates of resident population are preliminary.

Interstate Migration Model

The ABS model for estimating interstate migration flows is based on Medicare 'change of address' forms 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 the 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 that their 'place of residence' record with Medicare is often incorrect. Hence, the Medicare model (using Medicare Australia data, formerly the Health Insurance Commission) usually under enumerates the residence of many short-term migrants into 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.

Although all due care has been exercised in the preparation of this material, no responsibility is accepted for any errors or omissions.

Released: 21 March 2005
Next Release: 2 June 2006



Northern Territory Government
Northern Territory Treasury