

Population

Northern Territory 207 735 ↑ 1.6% annual
 Australia 20 674 445 ↑ 1.3% annual

In annual terms, the Northern Territory resident population is estimated to have increased by 1.6% to 207 735. (see Chart 1).

The Territory recorded the third highest annual growth of the jurisdictions, behind Western Australia (2.0%) and Queensland (1.9%) and above national growth of 1.3% (see Chart 2).

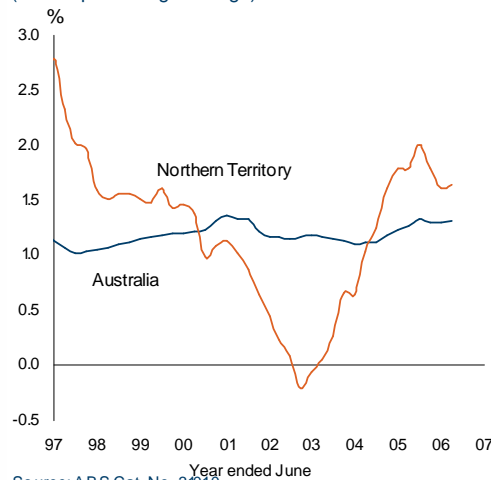
In the September quarter 2006, estimated resident population increased by 1047 persons in the Territory, compared to an increase of 967 in the September quarter 2005.

- Natural increase (births less deaths) contributed 646 persons, a decrease on the reported 767 persons in September quarter 2005.
- Net overseas migration contributed 166 persons, compared to 144 in the September quarter 2005.
- Net interstate migration made a positive contribution (net gain of 235), an increase on the positive 56 reported in September quarter 2005. This positive result follows two quarters of negative net interstate migration in 2006.
- In the year to September 2006, net interstate migration in the Territory was negative 207 compared to a net gain of 209 in the year to September 2005.

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 (see 'Interstate Migration Model' discussion on following page). In recent years, with the exception of 2005, the reported population loss caused by net interstate migration outflows has seemed at odds with a range of onshore economic indicators. The September quarter result is the first positive net interstate migration figure in three quarters.

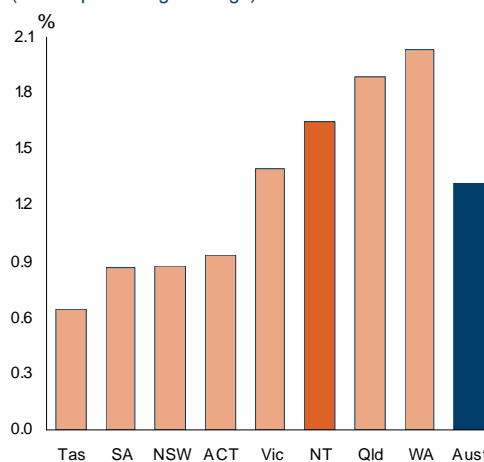
The measurement of overseas migration continues to present problems for the ABS. For example, changes to a person's immigration category once in Australia can complicate measurement. ABS is currently developing improved methods for estimating net overseas migration.

Chart 1: Population Growth
(annual percentage change)



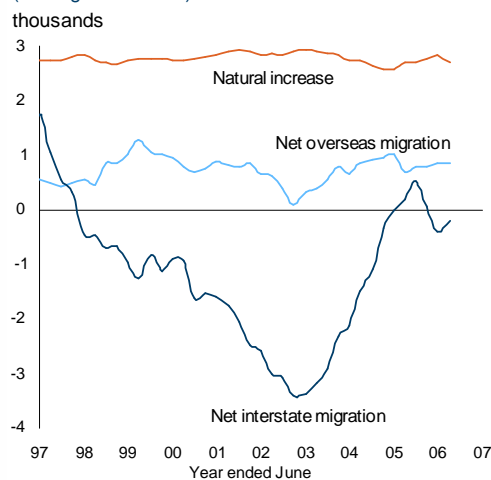
Source: ABS Cat. No. 31010

Chart 2: Population Growth
(annual percentage change)



Source: ABS Cat. No. 31010

Chart 3: Territory Population Components
(moving annual total)



Source: ABS Cat. No. 31010

Estimated Resident Population and Components of Change

	September Quarter		change		
	quarter	year to date	quarterly ¹	annual ²	year on year ³
Northern Territory					
population growth	1 047	3 364			
natural increase	646	2 706			
<i>births</i>	871	3 670			
<i>deaths</i>	225	966			
net migration					
<i>overseas</i>	166	865			
<i>interstate</i>	235	- 207			
total population	207 735		0.5%	1.6%	1.8%
Australia					
population growth	68 957	269 564			
total population	20 674 445		0.3%	1.3%	1.3%

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

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) probably 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 omission.