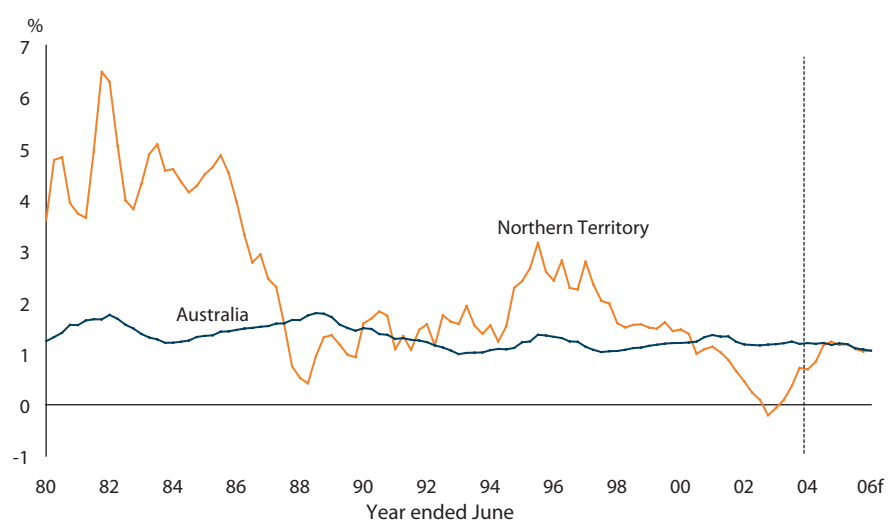


Population

- Population growth is a key driver of Territory economic growth. Population growth occurs through natural increase and interstate and overseas migration.
- The Territory has a history of strong population growth, with 4 to 5 per cent annual growth in the early 1980s, 1 to 2 per cent in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and 2 per cent during the late 1990s.
- Except for the period during the defence relocation to the north, the Territory has typically experienced negative net interstate migration.
- Completion of the main defence force build up in the Top End saw growth decline to 0.9 per cent in 2001 and to 0.1 per cent in 2002, before beginning to recover in 2003.
- There was weak population growth of 0.4 per cent in 2003, the major influence being a net interstate migration outflow of 2895 people.
- In recent years, interstate migration patterns indicate that annual outflows have remained relatively stable at 17 000 to 18 000, with inflows declining steadily from 1997 to 2002, from a peak of more than 18 000 to less than 16 000. Inflows continued to recover in 2004.
- Treasury estimates that Territory population growth will continue to strengthen, with growth of 1.2 per cent in 2004, and forecasts 1.1 per cent growth in 2005, easing to around 1.0 per cent in 2006.
- As the Territory's population ages into the future, the proportion which is of working age (15-64 years) is likely to increase. Looking forward, nationally, the proportion of the population of working age is expected to decline.

Chart 2: Annual Population Growth Rates



e: estimate; f: forecast

Source: NT Treasury, ABS Cat. No. 3101.0