



Regional Internal Migration Estimates, provisional, March 2021

In the year to March 2021 there was a recovery in the number of interstate moves, with 371,000 people moving interstate compared with 354,000 moves in the year to December 2020. This recovery was driven by the highest number of interstate moves for a March quarter since 1996, with around 104,000 people moving.

Close to a quarter of the increase in interstate moves was driven by increased departures from Victoria, as Melbourne exited its second lockdown in November 2020. This was due to an outflow of 28,500 people from Melbourne to the eastern states, with the majority of people leaving Melbourne settling in regional Victoria.

Net internal migration for regions outside the capital cities continued to increase, with net migration of 44,700 people in the year to March 2021. The number of capital city residents moving to the regions is now higher than it was prior to the onset of the pandemic (244,000 departures compared with 230,000 in March 2020).

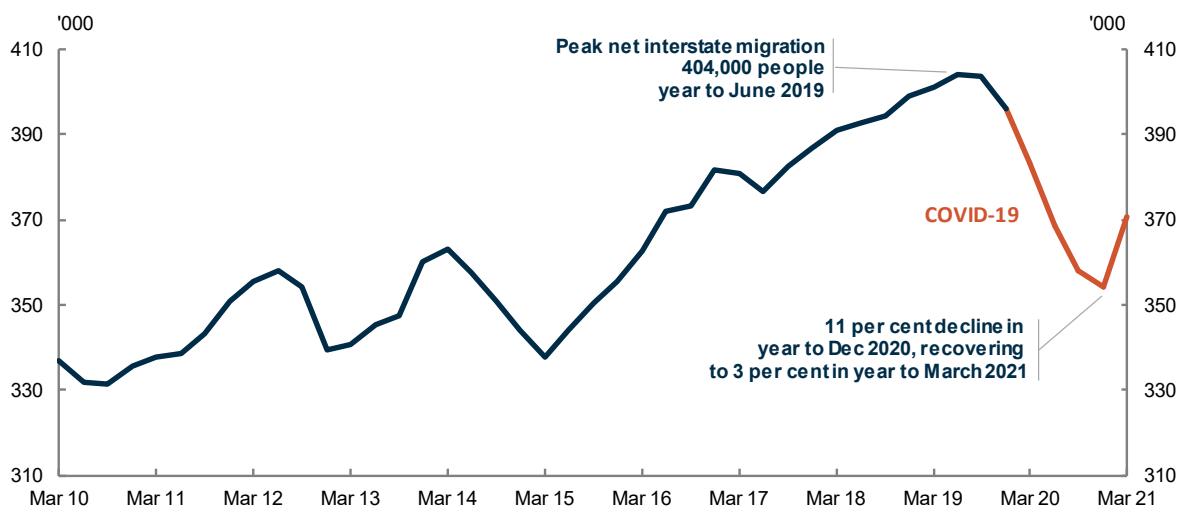
The recovery in the number of people moving interstate has affected states and territories differently, with smaller states seeing fewer departures, reversing recent historical trends.

Net interstate migration has slowed due to COVID, but started to recover in March 2021

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic net interstate migration has fallen from a high of 404,000 in June 2019, to a low of 354,000 people in December 2020. Interstate migration has started to recover with 371,000 people moving interstate over the year to March 2021. The number of people moving interstate in the March quarter 2021 was 104,000, the highest number of moves for a March quarter since 1996.

This recovery in interstate migration was driven by an increase in people leaving Victoria which accounted for 23 per cent of the increase in interstate moves in the March quarter.

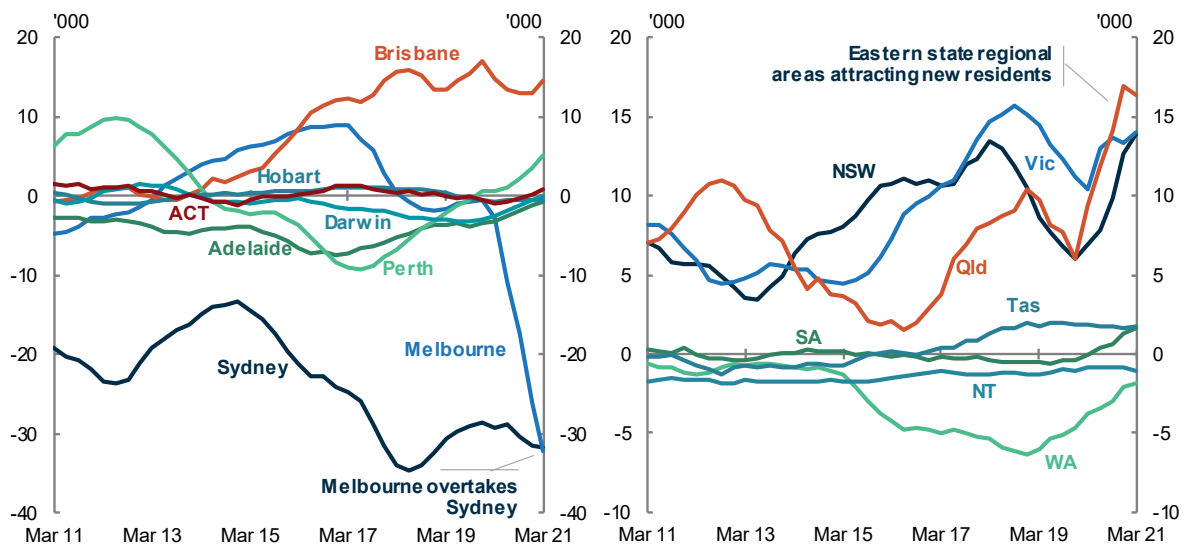
Chart 1. LEVEL OF INTERSTATE MIGRATION, YEAR ENDING, 2010 TO 2021



The second Melbourne lockdown continues to weigh on migration to Victoria

Victoria continued to have a historically low level of net interstate migration in the year to March 2021, with a net 18,200 people moving interstate due to the impact of Melbourne’s second lockdown. Since the end of the second Melbourne lockdown in late November 2020, quarterly net internal migration for Melbourne has continued to be negative, driven by an increase in the number of departures from the city (28,500 people). For the first time, this record net loss of internal migrants has seen Melbourne have a larger net loss of people compared with Sydney (32,200 compared with 31,600 people respectively).

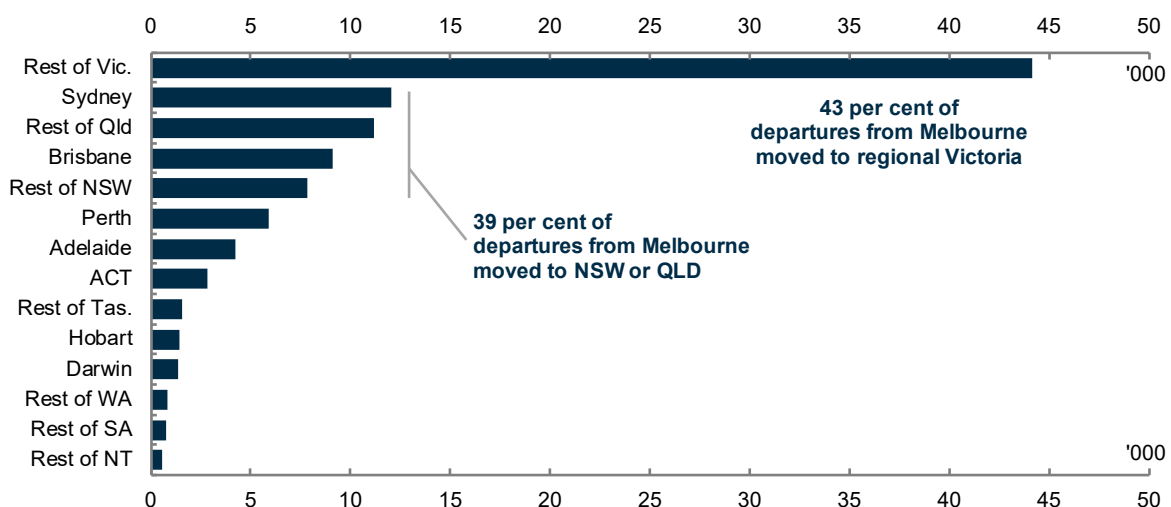
Chart 2. NET INTERNAL MIGRATION, CAPITAL CITIES AND REST OF STATE AREAS, YEAR ENDING, 2011-2021



Residents departing Melbourne are going to regional Victoria and the eastern states

Residents departing from Melbourne in the March quarter 2021 were most likely to settle in regional Victoria (44,100 people), but there are also large flows to New South Wales (19,900 people) and Queensland (20,300 people). The distribution of departures from Melbourne follows historical patterns, however the increase in the level of departures from Melbourne is the largest since the start of this series.

Chart 3. DESTINATIONS OF DEPARTURES FROM MELBOURNE, YEAR TO MARCH 2021

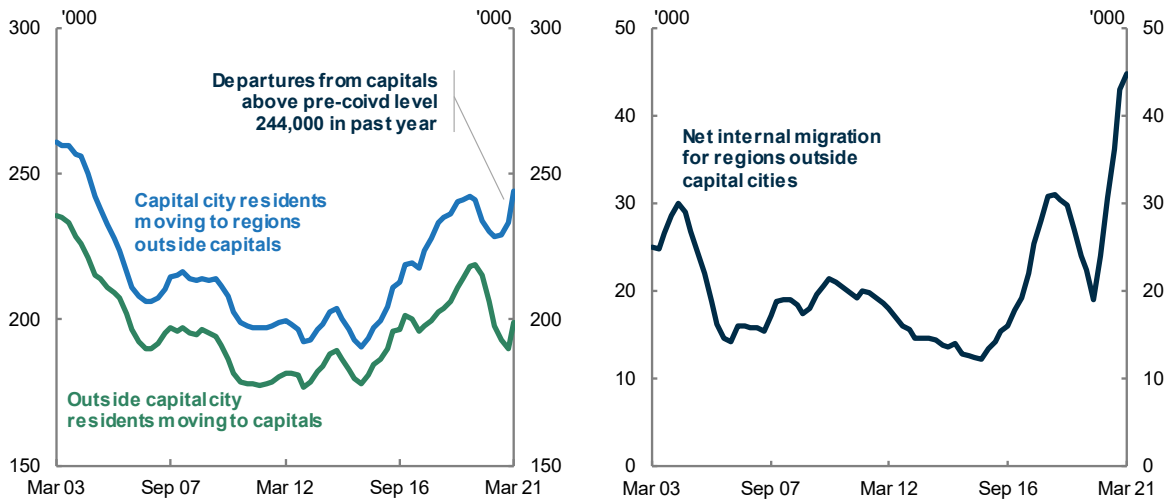


Regional Victoria is driving high net internal migration for all regional areas

Net internal migration for regions outside the capital cities continued to increase, with a net migration of 44,700 people in the year to March 2021. The number of capital city residents moving to the regions is now higher than it was prior to the onset of the pandemic (244,000 departures compared with 230,000 in the year to March 2020). Along with a continued low level of departures from regions to capital cities, this has

contributed to a record increase in net internal migration for regional areas. This was almost double the net internal migration for regional areas in March 2020.

Chart 4. INTERNAL MIGRATION FOR REGIONS OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL CITIES, YEAR ENDING, 2003 TO 2021



Across states and territories, people are moving more as economic conditions improve

- **Queensland** had the largest net interstate migration compared to other states and territories, with annual net interstate migration reaching 30,800 people in March 2021.
- **South Australia** had its highest quarterly net interstate migration on record (650 people), reversing recent historical trends of negative net interstate migration.
- **Western Australia** also reversed recent historical trends of negative net interstate migration with arrivals continuing to outstrip departures with annual net interstate migration of 3,200 people.
- **The Northern Territory** had a net loss of people in the year to March 2021, though this was less negative than in the year to March 2020 (-1,100 compared with -3,400 respectively). The increase in net interstate migration to the Northern Territory over this period has been driven by an increase in arrivals to Darwin.

Chart 5. ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES, STATES AND TERRITORIES, 2010 TO 2021

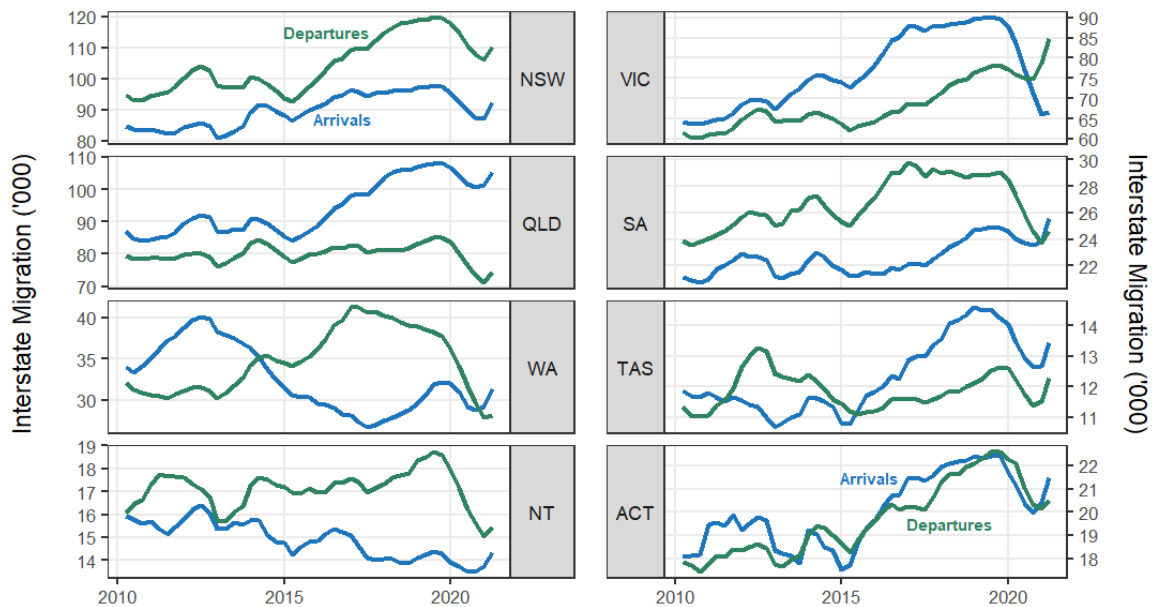


Table 1. UPCOMING MAJOR POPULATION RELEASES

| Release | Former catalogue | Release date |
|--|------------------|--------------|
| Regional population by age and sex, 2019-20 | 3235.0 | 27/08/2021 |
| National, state and territory population, March 2021 | 3101.0 | 16/09/2021 |
| Deaths, Australia, 2020 | 3302.0 | 29/09/2021 |

NOTES

There were a number of small lockdowns in the three months to March 2021, including the Northern beaches lockdown in Sydney which lasted until mid-January, and shorter lockdowns in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth in February and March. The short nature of these lockdowns does not appear to have had a major negative impact on net interstate migration levels or patterns, while longer lockdowns such as the second Melbourne lockdown have been shown to have a major impact on net interstate migration.

Further detail is available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics [here](#).