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Overseas Migration, 2020-21

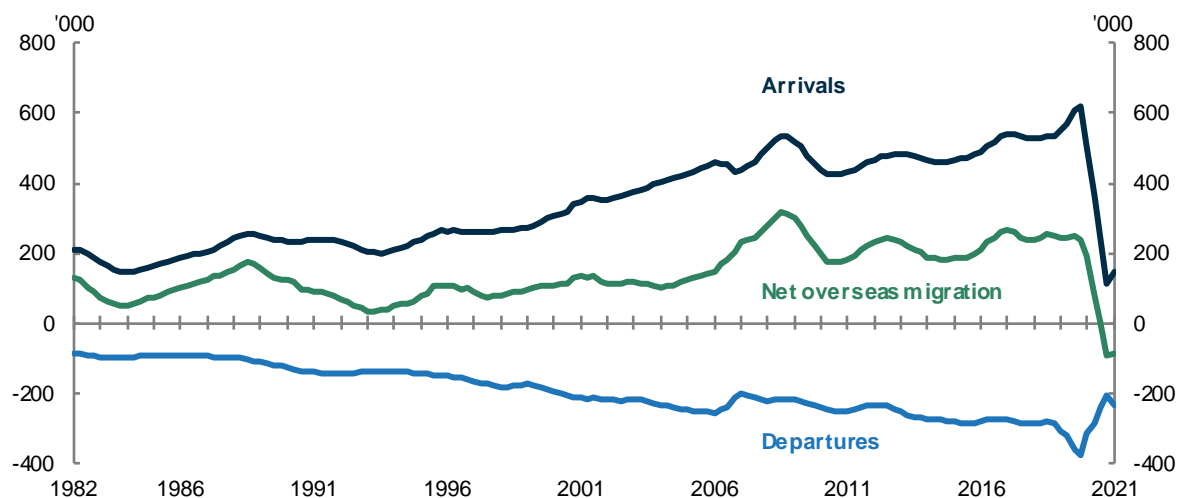
This release presents detailed data on net overseas migration (NOM) for the 2020-21 financial year. It expands on the data presented in the latest National, state and territory population released yesterday, particularly around visa breakdowns and migrants by countries of origin.

National NOM fell from 193,000 in 2019-20 to -88,800 in 2020-21, reflecting a full year of the COVID-19 pandemic, although this was slightly higher than NOM of -94,800 in the year ending March 2021.

The fall in NOM in 2020-21 was driven by a 362,000 fall in arrivals, somewhat offset by a 79,600 fall in departures. By visa group, the fall in NOM arrivals was driven by temporary visa holders, especially those arriving on visitor, student and working holiday maker visas. By state, the largest contributor to the fall in NOM was Victoria, which fell from 60,600 in 2019-20 to -56,100 in 2020-21.

Net overseas migration (NOM) was a net outflow -88,800 for the 2020-21 financial year, a slight improvement from NOM of -94,800 for the year ending 31 March 2021. This was the largest net outflow for a financial year since the first world war. NOM was around 281,000 fewer in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20, reflecting the impact of a full year of international travel restrictions. Overseas arrivals fell by 71 per cent, from 507,000 in 2019-20 to just 146,000 in 2020-21, only partly offset by overseas departures which fell by 25 per cent, from 314,000 in 2019-20 to 235,000 in 2020-21 (Chart 1).

CHART 1 NET OVERSEAS MIGRATION, YEAR ENDING QUARTERLY



Source: ABS National state and territory population, June 2021

The fall in NOM compared to the previous financial year was driven by a continued decline in arrivals of temporary visa holders since the introduction of travel restrictions in the last quarter of 2019-20. In 2020-21, every temporary visa group experienced a net outflow of migrants.

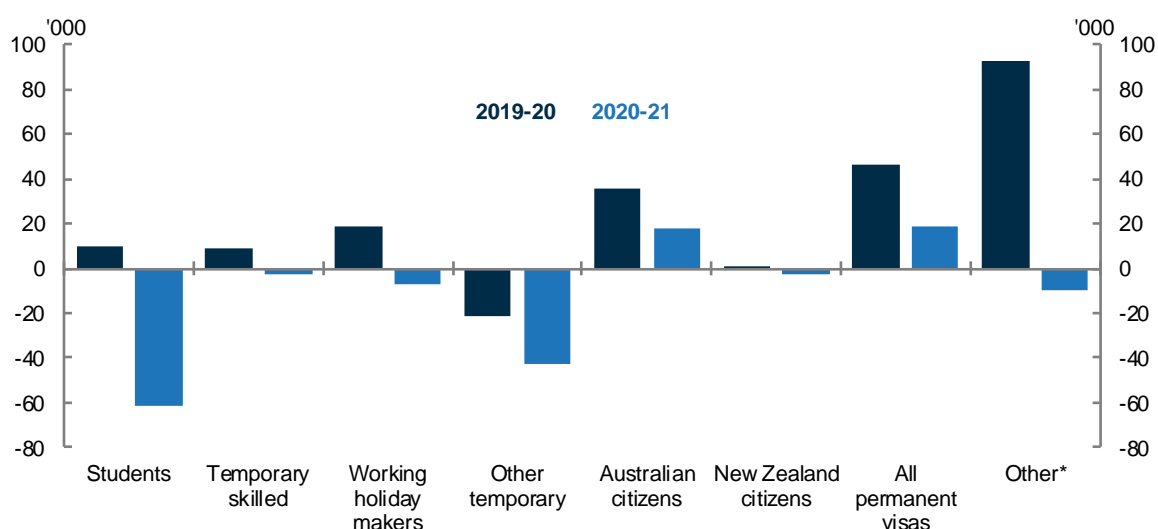
Student arrivals, which in the years prior to the pandemic accounted for the largest share of NOM arrivals, fell by 109,000 to just 1,600 in 2020-21, a 99 per cent fall, making it the visa group with the most negative NOM. At the same time, departures for student visa holders peaked in the March 2020 quarter before gradually falling below 2019-20 levels by the end of 2020-21. As a result, NOM for student visa holders fell from 9,500 in 2019-20 to -61,600 in 2020-21 (Chart 2), in contrast to the 96,900 student NOM in 2018-19.

Working holiday makers experienced the next largest decrease in NOM, falling from 18,400 in 2019-20 to -6,700 in 2020-21 (Chart 2), driven by arrivals dropping from 44,000 in 2019-20 to just 1,100 in 2020-21. Departures for working holiday makers also peaked in the March 2020 quarter, before falling to 7,900 in 2020-21, around 31 per cent of 2019-20 levels.

Though comparatively smaller, NOM for temporary skilled and other temporary migrants also fell significantly in 2020-21 driven by falls in arrivals of 13,800 and 10,200 respectively. Unlike students and working holiday makers, departures for other temporary visa holders increased from 39,800 in 2019-20 to 51,100 in 2020-21 while departures of temporary skilled migrants experienced a comparatively small decline.

In 2020-21 Australian citizens remained net immigrants to Australia with NOM of 18,100, as more Australians returned to the country than departed (Chart 2). Over the last two financial years, 54,100 Australian citizens have migrated to Australia in net terms, compared to an annual average of -13,900 over the preceding 15 years. Despite arrivals falling from a financial year peak of 96,400 in 2019-20 to 62,400 in 2020-21, returning Australians were nonetheless the largest group of total arrivals to Australia in 2020-21. NOM for permanent residents also remained positive in 2020-21 despite arrivals of permanent residents almost halving compared to 2019-20.

CHART 2 NATIONAL NOM BY VISA GROUP

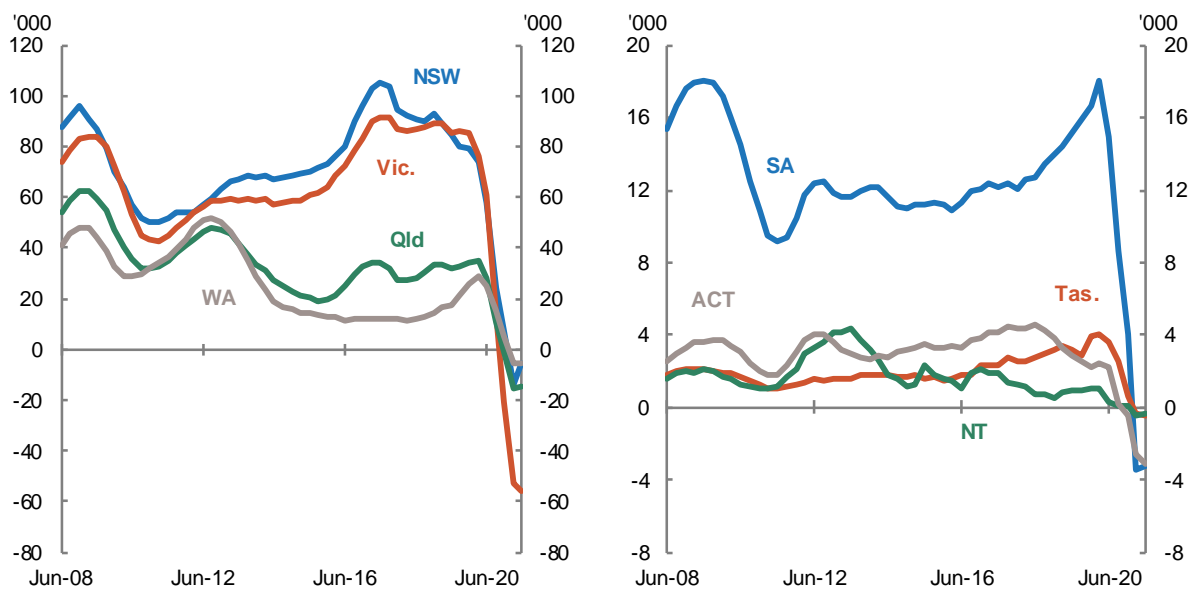


*Other includes all unclassified visa holders as well as migrants that crossed the border on visitor visas and likely transitioned to other visa types.

In 2020-21, all states and territories experienced a net outflow of migrants. New South Wales and Victoria historically have accounted for the largest share of NOM and correspondingly had the largest falls in 2020-21 (Chart 3), primarily due to fewer student and visitor arrivals. However, the states experienced very different outcomes, with NOM to NSW of -5,500 in 2020-21, while NOM to Victoria was -56,100 in 2020-21.

Victoria remains the state with the largest fall and lowest level of NOM since the beginning of the pandemic. Victoria was also the state to experience the largest net outflow of Australian citizens in 2020-21 due to a decrease in arrivals compared to the previous financial year. Australian citizen NOM to Victoria was -2,500 in 2020-21, while Australian citizen NOM to NSW was 17,000.

CHART 3 NOM BY STATE, YEAR ENDING QUARTERLY



Source: ABS National state and territory population, June 2021 release

By country, the largest contributor to NOM in 2020-21 came from returning Australians. In the years prior to the pandemic migrants from Asia, particularly temporary migrants from China and India made up the majority of NOM. However, in 2020-21, the Rest of Asia and India experienced a net outflow of migrants of 23,600 and 11,600 for the first time in this series while NOM from China fell by 32,000 from 2019-20 to -50,500 (Chart 3).

CHART 3 COUNTRY OF BIRTH COMPOSITION OF NOM , 2019-20

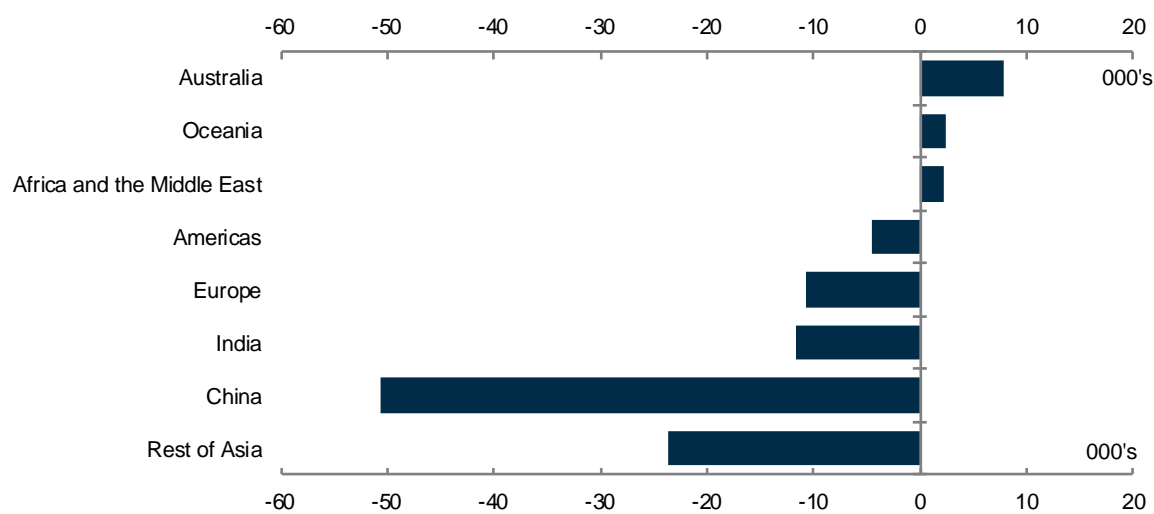


TABLE 2 UPCOMING MAJOR POPULATION RELEASES

Release	Former catalogue	Release date
National, state and territory population, September 2021	3101.0	17 March 2022
Regional Population	3218.0	29 March 2022
National, state and territory population, December 2021	3101.0	June 2022