



## Overseas Migration, 2021–22

This release expands on the data presented in the latest *National, state and territory population*, released on 15 December 2022, by providing net overseas migration (NOM) by visa and by country of birth.

National NOM rose from -84,900 in 2020–21 to 170,900 in 2021–22, reflecting the easing of international travel restrictions in late 2021. This result was particularly strong considering that international travel restrictions applied for more than one-third of the financial year. The increase was driven by a growth in annual migrant arrivals of 249,000 and a 6,900 fall in departures.

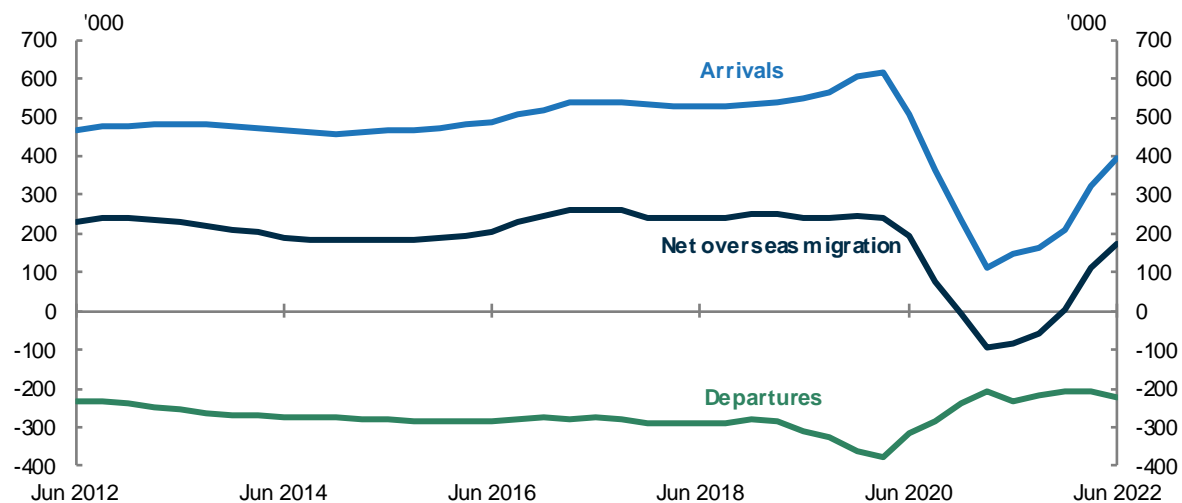
The return of temporary migration has driven a recovery in NOM, especially those arriving on Student visas, many of whom were previously studying online from outside Australia. There were 1.70 million temporary visa holders in Australia at the end of the June 2022 quarter (excluding Visitor, Crew and Transit, Bridging Visa E and Criminal Justice visa holders), having increased from a low of 1.59 million in the December 2021 quarter. As a result, Victoria has seen the largest increase in annual NOM, followed by New South Wales.

**Net overseas migration (NOM)** was 170,900 for the 2021–22 financial year, a substantial increase from -84,900 observed in the 2020–21 financial year. This increase reflects the resumption of international travel as restrictions to slow the spread of COVID-19 were eased in late 2021.

Overseas **arrivals** drove significant increases in NOM, more than doubling from 146,000 in 2020–21 to 395,000 in 2021–22. Overseas **departures** remained relatively stable, decreasing by only 3 per cent from 230,900 in 2020–21 to 224,000 in 2021–22 (Chart 1).

**Temporary migrants** contributed to more than three quarters of total NOM in 2021–22. In the 3 financial years prior to the pandemic, temporary migrants contributed to just under three-quarters of total NOM.

**Chart 1. NET OVERSEAS MIGRATION, YEAR ENDING QUARTERLY**



Source: ABS National state and territory population, June 2022

Declines in migration over 2020–21 were mainly concentrated in **temporary migrant** categories. As international travel restrictions were eased in 2021–22, there were large net inflows of temporary migrants in student, temporary skilled and working holiday maker visa categories (see Table 1). However, there were outflows in the 'Other temporary' category, which includes Bridging visas.

**International students** now make up the largest share of migrant arrivals, as was the case prior to the pandemic, having risen to 138,000 in 2021–22 from a low of 1,500 in 2020–21. The availability of online study options allowed student visa holders to continue studying offshore while travel restrictions were in place. The

number of student visa holders in Australia has grown since the easing of these restrictions as students have returned onshore. International student departures have declined by 34,100 over 2021–22. As a result, NOM for student visa holders has risen from -60,700 in 2020–21 to 108,900 in 2021–22 (Chart 2), which is above pre-pandemic levels (Table 1).

**Chart 2. NATIONAL NET OVERSEAS MIGRATION BY VISA GROUP**



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

There were 12,600 **working holiday maker** arrivals in the March and June 2022 quarters, a significant increase from 800 in the September and December 2021 quarters, largely reflecting eased travel restrictions in late 2021 and the seasonal migration patterns of individuals on this visa. Offshore grants of working holiday visas have been increasing, and in September 2022 surpassed 2019 levels signalling that arrivals are likely to continue increasing. There was a net inflow of 8,400 working holiday makers over 2021–22 and the stock of working holiday makers in Australia increased to 40,900 as at 30 June 2022. Since then, the stock of working holiday makers has increased further, to 86,900 as at 31 October 2022, although still below the pre-pandemic level of 141,100 in December 2019.

**Table 1. NET OVERSEAS MIGRATION BY VISA GROUP, FINANCIAL YEAR**

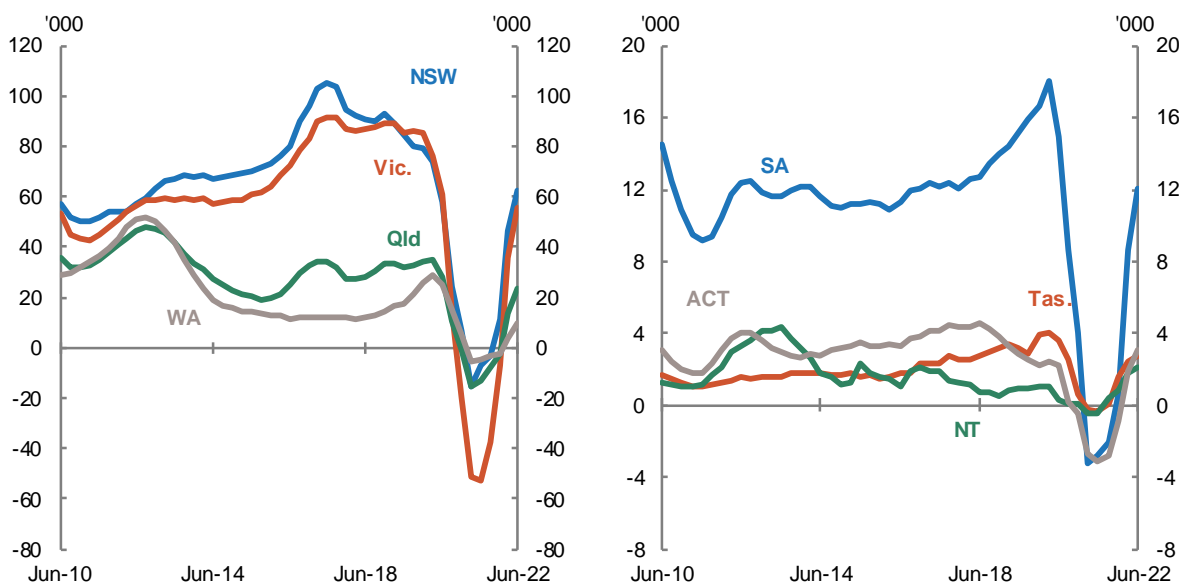
	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
<b>Family</b>	18,510	13,920	11,470	18,030
<b>Permanent skilled</b>	30,740	18,780	8,060	19,790
<b>Humanitarian</b>	15,170	12,880	510	7,220
<b>Total permanent (includes Other)</b>	63,850	46,480	19,020	43,910
<b>Temporary skilled</b>	16,940	9,190	-2,370	13,440
<b>Student</b>	96,900	9,520	-60,670	108,870
<b>Visitor</b>	63,910	100,860	-7,320	22,860
<b>Working holiday maker</b>	24,010	18,430	-6,800	8,450
<b>Total temporary (includes Other and Not Applicable)</b>	182,140	116,830	-116,950	137,090
<b>Australian citizen</b>	-6,990	36,020	17,360	-12,930
<b>New Zealand citizen</b>	8,130	1,370	-2,100	7,440
<b>Total NOM</b>	241,340	192,690	-84,930	170,920

Note: Totals are lower than the sum of sub-components as Other permanent, Other temporary and Unclassified recorded outflows in some years.

**Permanent migrants** made up 43,900 of total NOM in 2021–22, still below pre-pandemic levels despite an increase from 19,000 in 2020–21.

More **Australian citizens** emigrated from Australia than migrated to Australia over 2021–22, driving Australian citizen NOM to the pre-pandemic pattern of net emigration (a net outflow of 12,900). This outflow was caused by a growth in departures from 44,000 in 2020–21 to 74,100 in 2021–22, an increase of 68 per cent. Australian citizen arrivals were steady over this period (a decline of 0.3 per cent).

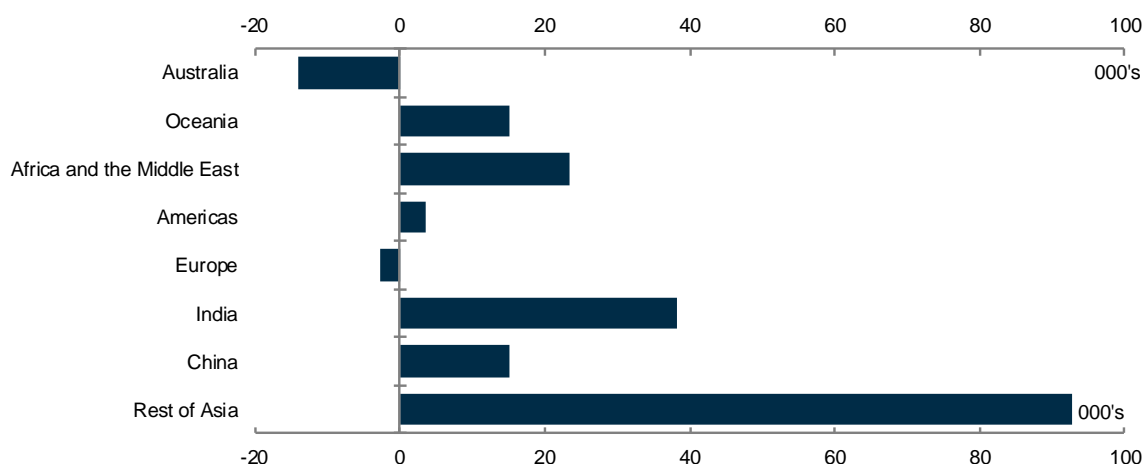
**Chart 3. NET OVERSEAS MIGRATION BY STATE, YEAR ENDING QUARTERLY**



Source: ABS National state and territory population, June 2022

In 2021–22, all states and territories experienced a net inflow of migrants after experiencing net outflows in 2020–21. New South Wales and Victoria historically have accounted for the largest share of NOM and correspondingly had the largest increases in 2021–22 (Chart 3), primarily due to high student and visitor arrivals. New South Wales and Victoria received 36 per cent and 33 per cent of national NOM in 2021–22, respectively. All other jurisdictions received inflows of migrants consistent with their pre-pandemic shares.

**Chart 4. COUNTRY OF BIRTH COMPOSITION OF NET OVERSEAS MIGRATION, 2021–22**



Note: China excludes the special autonomous regions of Hong Kong and Macau

The largest contribution to NOM in 2021–22 came from **Asian-born migrants** (Chart 4). The recovery in NOM from migrants born in China and India was particularly strong, with increases of 65,400 and 48,800, respectively, compared to 2020–21. This has returned migration to pre-pandemic trends where migrants from Asia – especially temporary migrants from China and India – made up the majority of NOM. Migration by

Australian-born persons also returned to pre-pandemic trends of net emigration as international travel restrictions were eased.

---

**Table 2. UPCOMING MAJOR POPULATION RELEASES**

<b>Release</b>	<b>Former catalogue</b>	<b>Release date</b>
<b>National, state and territory population, September 2022</b>	3101.0	16/03/2023
<b>Regional Population, 2021–22</b>	3218.0	20/04/2023
<b>National, state and territory population, December 2022</b>	3101.0	15/06/2023

**NOTES**

Further detail is available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics in [Overseas Migration, 2021–22](#)

---