



## National, state and territory population, December 2023

Australia’s population was 26.97 million at 31 December 2023, which was 2.5 per cent higher than a year earlier. This growth rate was lower than the 70-year high of 2.6 per cent recorded in the September quarter.

Growth was driven by net overseas migration (NOM) of 547,000 over the year to December 2023, including 107,000 in the December quarter. Elevated NOM has been driven by arrivals of temporary migrants, particularly students, while departures remain low due to the relatively recent arrival of many temporary migrants. NOM over the year has declined for the first time since the borders reopened (Chart 2), mostly reflecting fewer arrivals in the December 2023 quarter compared to a year earlier.

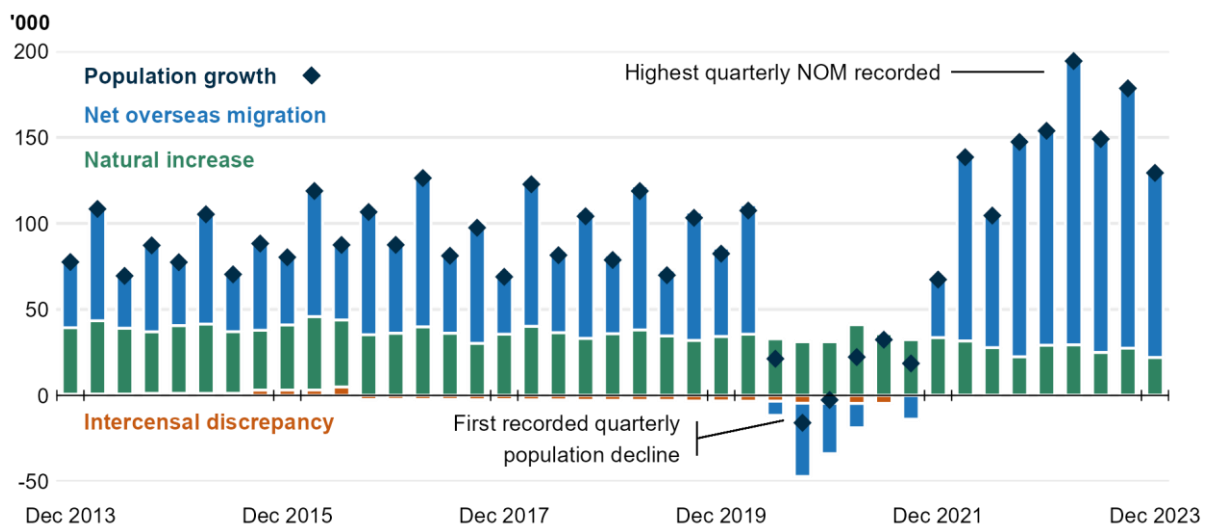
Natural increase (births minus deaths) remained low, falling to 104,000 over the year to December 2023. This was a decrease of 6.4 per cent from 2022. Fewer births drove this decline, partially offset by fewer deaths.

Western Australia grew faster than any other jurisdiction over the year to December 2023 (3.3 per cent), followed by Victoria (2.8 per cent) and Queensland (2.6 per cent). Tasmania (0.4 per cent) and the Northern Territory (0.9 per cent) were the slowest growing jurisdictions.

### National population growth

- Australia’s **population** grew by 651,000 people over the year to December 2023. The annual population growth rate of 2.5 per cent decreased slightly from the September quarter (2.6 per cent).
- The population grew by 129,000 people or 0.5 per cent in the December 2023 quarter. This was driven by NOM as departures remained low, while natural increase remained relatively low (Chart 1).

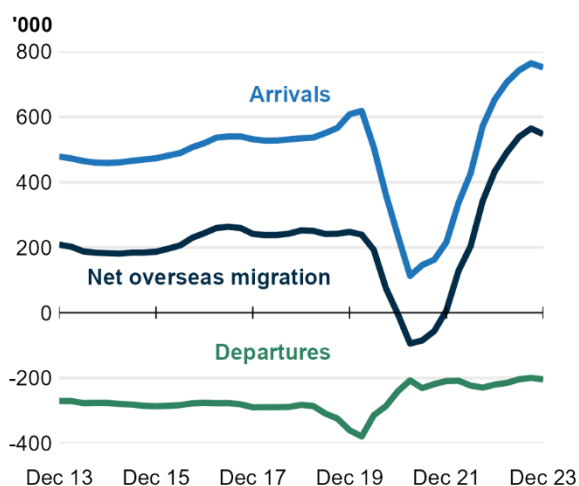
Chart 1. QUARTERLY NATIONAL POPULATION GROWTH AND COMPONENTS



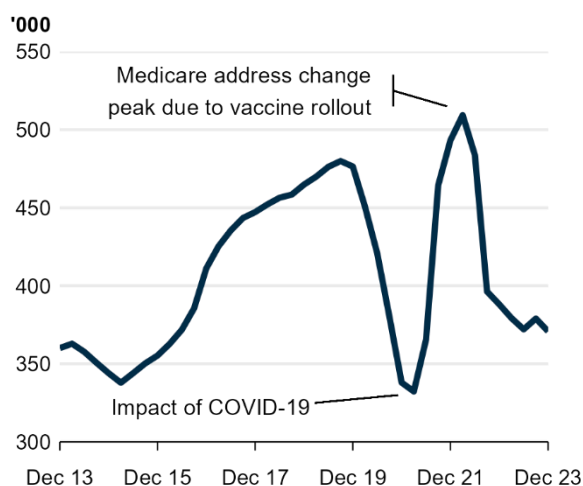
- **NOM** (Chart 2) was 547,000 over the year to December 2023. NOM in the December 2023 quarter was 107,000 – the lowest quarterly figure since June 2022. The Centre expects annual NOM to have peaked in the September 2023 quarter at 565,000 and that it will return towards pre-pandemic levels over the forward estimates.
  - NOM for the September 2023 quarter was revised up from 145,000 to 151,000. This was driven by a method change in which overseas movements on unclassified visas have been excluded from NOM calculations from the December 2022 quarter onwards, resulting in lower departures.

- NOM for 2022–23 was revised up from 528,000 to 538,000.
- The latest four quarters of NOM are preliminary and subject to future ABS revisions. NOM for the December 2023 quarter will be finalised in June 2025 and for the 2023–24 financial year in December 2025.
- **Interstate migration** is below pre-pandemic levels, with interstate moves over the year to December 2023 (371,000) 22.2 per cent below December 2019 (Chart 3).
  - There was a net flow of 29,000 residents moving from capital cities to regions over the year to December 2023, a decline from highs seen during the pandemic. This decline has been driven by increased arrivals to the capitals, which previously fell due to pandemic lockdowns.
- **Natural increase** over the year to December 2023 was 104,000, a fall of 7,000 (6.4 per cent) compared to December 2022. The fall was driven by lower births, with 287,000 births over the year to December 2023, a decrease of 5.3 per cent. This was partially offset by annual deaths (183,000) decreasing 4.6 per cent from the previous year.
  - Birth estimates for Victoria are affected by data issues, with longer than usual delays between birth and registration with the Victorian Registry.

**Chart 2. OVERSEAS MIGRATION, YEAR ENDING**



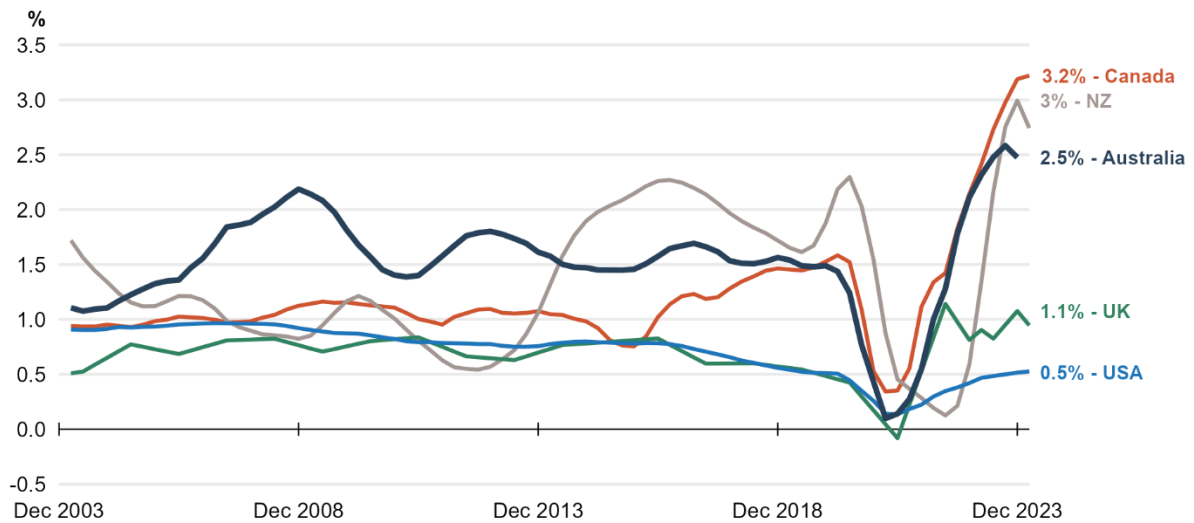
**Chart 3. INTERSTATE MIGRATION, YEAR ENDING**



### International population growth

- Comparable English-speaking countries have also experienced significant increases in population growth following an easing of COVID-19 restrictions (Chart 4). Canada and New Zealand, which have similar migration programs to Australia, experienced population growth above Australia's, at 3.2 per cent and 3.0 per cent respectively, over the year to December 2023. Elsewhere, population growth in the UK was nearly double pre-pandemic growth, while US population growth has recovered to near pre-pandemic levels.

**Chart 4. POPULATION GROWTH IN SIMILAR COUNTRIES, YEAR ENDING QUARTERLY**



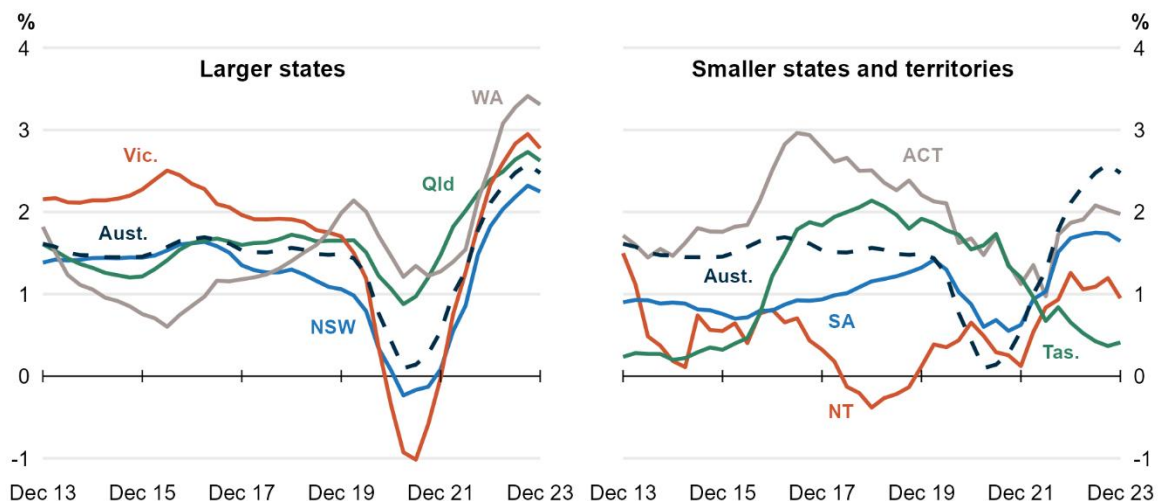
Note: Data callouts to the right of the plot reference 31 December 2023 for comparison to the latest Australian data. March 2024 data is included for international countries where available.

Source: International comparison series source from National Statistical Organisations (Stats NZ, Stats Canada, ONS UK & BEA USA)

**State and territory population growth**

- Western Australia was the fastest-growing state, having grown by 3.3 per cent over the year to December 2023. This was driven by both NOM (69,000) and net interstate migration (NIM) (11,000), with levels comparable to those seen during the mining investment boom around 2010.
- Victoria was the second fastest-growing state over the same time period (2.8 per cent). This comes after a large population decline recorded during the pandemic, with the recovery driven by Victoria’s disproportionately large share of overseas migration (29 per cent in the 2023 calendar year).
- Tasmania was the slowest-growing state in December 2023 (0.4 per cent). A net outflow of NIM (-3,000) and a small contribution from natural increase (500) drove the fall.

**Chart 5. STATE AND TERRITORY POPULATION GROWTH (PER CENT), YEAR ENDING QUARTERLY**



**Table 1. POPULATION AND POPULATION GROWTH**

State	ERP	ERP Increase	ERP Increase	Natural Increase	NIM	NOM
	31 Dec 2023	Since Dec 2022	Annual %	Annual	Annual	Annual
NSW	8,435,000	185,000	2.2	33,000	-32,000	185,000
VIC	6,906,000	186,000	2.8	27,000	-300	160,000
QLD	5,528,000	141,000	2.6	22,000	32,000	88,000
SA	1,866,000	30,000	1.6	3,000	-1,300	29,000
WA	2,928,000	94,000	3.3	15,000	11,000	69,000
TAS	575,000	2,400	0.4	500	-3,300	5,100
NT	254,000	2,400	0.9	2,100	-4,000	4,300
ACT	470,000	9,100	2.0	2,800	-1,800	8,100
<b>Australia*</b>	<b>26,967,000</b>	<b>651,000</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>104,000</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>547,000</b>

\* Includes other territories comprising Jervis Bay Territory, Christmas Island, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Norfolk Island.

**Table 2. UPCOMING POPULATION RELEASES**

Release	Release date
Regional population by age and sex, 2023	29/08/2024
National, state and territory population, March 2024	19/09/2024
Deaths, Australia	2/10/2024
Births, Australia	16/10/2024

### Notes

Further detail is available from the ABS in [National, state and territory population, December 2023](#).