

Population and Immigration: Fact Sheet 1

Population growth

November 2020

Australia experienced rapid population growth in the years 2007-2009. The rate of growth declined after reaching its peak in 2008, and has experienced periods of increased growth and decline since that time. In the year to 31 December 2019, the population growth of 1.4% was below the average for the previous ten years.

The Australian population at 31 December 2019 was 25.5 million people, an increase of 349,800 people over the previous twelve months.

The 2019 annual growth rate of 1.4% compares with growth of 2.2% in 2008, 1.8% in 2009, 1.4% in 2010, 1.7% in 2011, 1.7% in 2012, 1.5% in 2013, 1.4% in 2014, 1.4% in 2015, 1.6% in 2016, 1.6% in 2017 and 1.6% in 2018.

Population growth is the product of natural increase and immigration.

Between 1975 and 2005, natural increase accounted for 58% of population growth. From 2006 until this year, net overseas migration had been the major component of growth, peaking at 67% in 2008. It was 60% in the year to 31 December 2019.

Net overseas migration was an estimated 210,700 people in the year to 31 December 2019. This was a decrease of 37,700 (15.2%) from 248,400 in the year

to 31 December 2018. The drop was due to an increase in overseas migration departures with relatively stable arrivals.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic reduce net overseas migration to a negative level in 2020-21 and 2021-22 (for the first time since World War II) due to closure of Australia's borders. Further, the pandemic will likely reduce fertility rate due to weaker economic conditions and outlook. These factors have slowed Australia's population growth to 1.2% in 2019-20, with a forecast drop to 0.2% in 2020-21 and 0.4% in 2021-22 – the two lowest annual rates of growth since 1916-17. It is expected that, in subsequent years, population growth will regain momentum.

For the year to 31 December 2019, Victoria's population grew by 1.9%, Queensland 1.6%, Western Australia 1.3%, New South Wales 1.1%, Tasmania 1.0%, ACT 1.0%, and South Australia 0.9%. The Northern Territory's population decreased by 0.4%.

Australia's 2019 population growth rate of 1.4% compares with 2019 World Bank estimated growth of 1.6% in New Zealand, 1.4% in the Philippines, 1.4% in Canada, 1.3% in Malaysia, 1.1% in Indonesia, 1.0% in India, 0.6% in the United Kingdom, 0.6% Spain, 0.5% in the United States of America, 0.4% in China, 0.3% in Germany, 0.2% in the Republic of Korea, 0.1% in France, -0.2% in Italy, -0.2% in Greece, and -0.2% Japan.

Annual population growth rate 1999-2019



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), [Australian Demographic Statistics](#), December Quarter 2019, catalogue number 3101.0, 18 June 2020. Copyright Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics.