

Queensland's future population

Queensland Government projections, 2025 edition

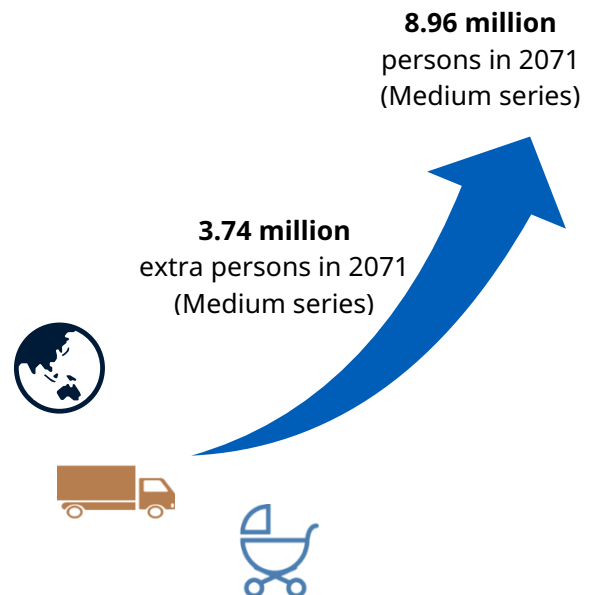
Key points

Projected population growth 2021—2071

Low series	↑ 2.17 million persons
Medium series	↑ 3.74 million persons
High series	↑ 5.72 million persons

Components of growth 50-years, medium series

Net overseas migration	2.00 million
Net interstate migration	1.04 million
Natural increase	0.70 million



Introduction

This publication provides an overview of Queensland's projected population change at the state level. It also examines the components of change and the age structure of the future population.

Regional analysis of the projection results is available in related [information briefs](#)ⁱ for local government areas and statistical areas level 4 (SA4s) and level 2 (SA2s). Supporting [data tables](#)ⁱⁱ and [visualisations](#)ⁱⁱⁱ are available from the Queensland Government Statistician's Office website.

The base population for these projections is the 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) [final rebased estimated resident population \(ERP\)](#)^{iv}. At the State level, the 2025 edition also incorporates the preliminary ERP for [30 June 2025](#)^v and [net overseas migration projections](#) published by the Centre for Population, Commonwealth Treasury on 26 March 2025^{vi}. All year references in this publication are "at 30 June".

Uncertainty

The projections described in this paper are based on trends and assumptions around fertility, mortality and migration. As the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated, future levels of fertility, mortality and migration can be unpredictable. This creates uncertainty in population projections.

To account for uncertainty in these components of population change, three projection series (low, medium and high) have been developed to illustrate a range of possible future outcomes. Table 1 summarises the actual observations for 2021 and the assumptions for each series in 2071. However, there is no certainty that any particular outcome will be realised.

The 2025 edition incorporates a paradigm shift to lower future growth rates than projected in the previous 2023 edition due to lower fertility rates and the demographic impacts associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The combined effect of lower fertility and pandemic impacts related to overseas migration are expected to have a compounding impact on Queensland's population levels out to 2071. The background paper to the 2025 edition incorporates detailed information around trends in population growth available up to early 2026.

For further information on the trends and methods used to compile the 2025 population projections, see the [Background research paper](#)^{vii}, [Methodology and assumptions paper](#)^{viii} and [Frequently asked questions](#)^{ix}.

Table 1 Projections assumptions

Year	Series	Total fertility rate	Life expectancy		Net overseas migration	Net interstate migration
		Babies per woman	Female Years	Male Years	Share of Australia	Number
2021	Actual ^(a)	1.74	84.9	80.8	14.7%	40,223
2071	Low	1.40	87.5	83.2	13.0%	14,300
	Medium	1.60	89.5	86.1	16.0%	20,000
	High	1.80	93.4	90.6	19.0%	25,700

(a) Minor adjustments may have been made to some observed values to accommodate the modelling approach.

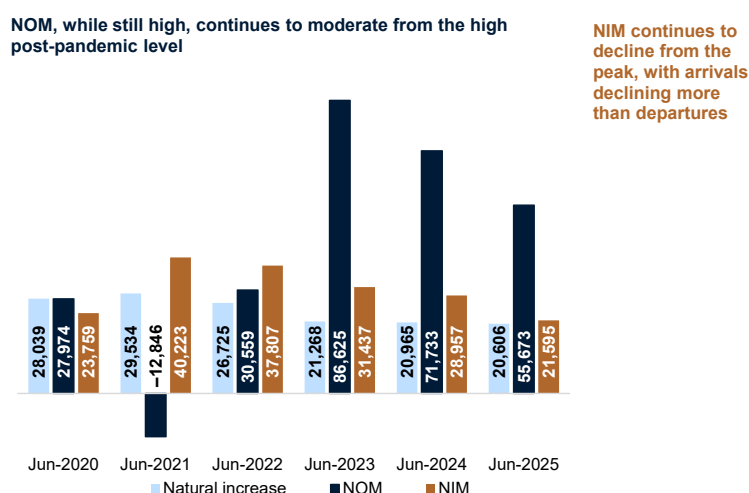
Recent population trends

Population data released by the ABS in March 2026 showed that Queensland's population reached an estimated 5.67 million at 30 June 2025, up 97,874 over 2024–25. Net overseas migration (NOM) was the largest contributor to Queensland's growth in 2024–25 (Figure 1). However, it continued to decline from the post-pandemic peak in 2022–23, reflecting fewer arrivals and more departures.

Queensland's net interstate migration (NIM) has also moderated since the relatively high levels recorded in 2020–21 and 2021–22, falling to 21,595 persons in 2024–25.

Natural increase in Queensland has decreased in recent years, with the total fertility rate (TFR) falling to 1.50 births per woman in 2024–25, its lowest recorded level.

Figure 1 Components of growth, year to June, Queensland



Queensland's projected population

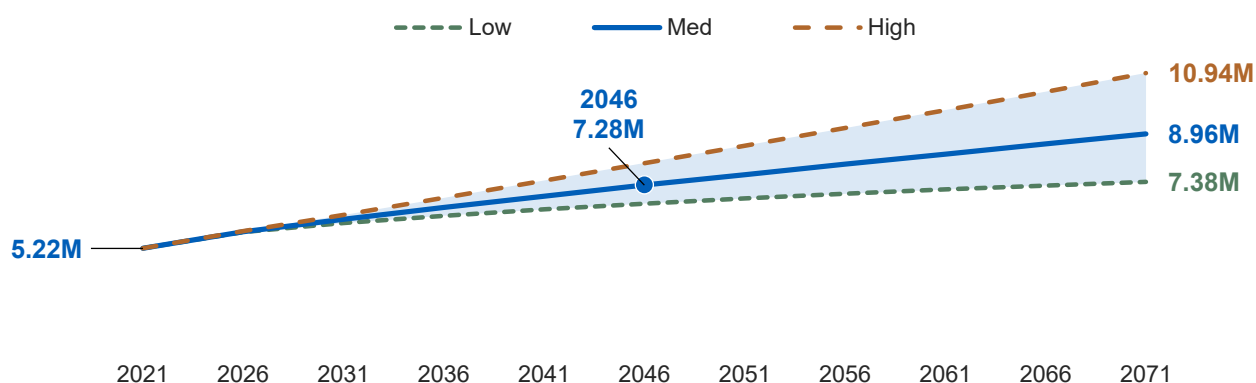
Total population

Over the next 50 years, Queensland is projected to grow by over **3.7 million** to reach **8.96 million** people (medium series)

Under each of the three series, Queensland's population is anticipated to continue to grow over time. Under the low to high series assumptions, Queensland's population is expected to grow from 5.22 million in 2021 to between 6.68 million and 8.00 million by 2046. With continued growth, Queensland's population is projected to reach between 7.38 million and 10.94 million by 2071 (Table 2 and Figure 2).

Table 2 Projected population and growth, by series, Queensland

Year	Population			Population growth (10-years)		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
2021	5,215,814					
2031	6,040,496	6,165,287	6,306,232	824,682	949,473	1,090,418
2041	6,489,010	6,921,656	7,431,168	448,514	756,369	1,124,936
2051	6,843,878	7,624,530	8,568,553	354,868	702,874	1,137,385
2061	7,137,222	8,295,001	9,726,047	293,344	670,471	1,157,494
2071	7,383,712	8,955,878	10,937,501	246,490	660,877	1,211,454
Change				2,167,898	3,740,064	5,721,687

Figure 2 Projected population (millions), by series, Queensland

Growth rates and levels vary over time, and between series. Under each series, 10-year annual average growth rates are expected to slow over time from the period 2021 to 2031, with rates under the medium series falling from 1.7% p.a. to 0.8% p.a. in 2061 to 2071 (Table 3).

Similarly, the magnitude of growth every decade is expected to decline under both the low and medium series, while under the high series, the number of new residents gained in the 10 years to 2071 (1.21 million) is projected to be higher than in earlier decades.

In each series, population growth over the five years from 2021 to 2026 is relatively high, largely due to the record NOM experienced post-pandemic (Figure 3) — NOM contributed 244,590 persons to Queensland over the four years to 30 June 2025.

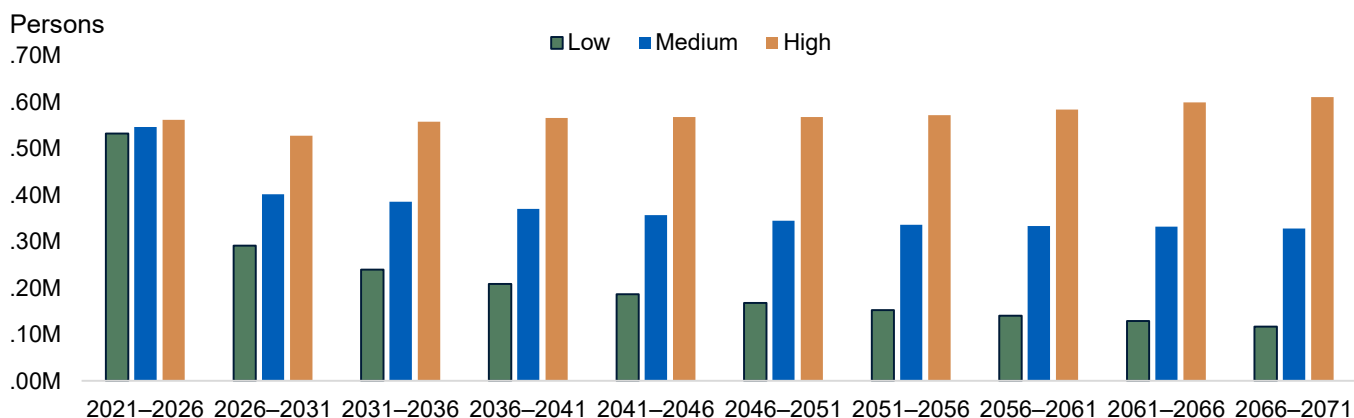
Figure 3 Projected population growth, by series, Queensland

Table 3 10-year average annual population growth rate (%), by series, Queensland

10-years to	Series		
	Low	Medium	High
2021 (actual)	1.5%		
2031	1.5%	1.7%	1.9%
2041	0.7%	1.2%	1.7%
2051	0.5%	1.0%	1.4%
2061	0.4%	0.8%	1.3%
2071	0.3%	0.8%	1.2%
50 years^(a)	0.7%	1.1%	1.5%

(a) Average annual growth rate.

Components of population change

Three components of change at the state level

- natural increase (births minus deaths)
- net interstate migration (interstate arrivals minus interstate departures) and
- net overseas migration (overseas arrivals minus overseas departures).

Over the 50 years to 2071,

53.4% of Queensland's growth is projected to be from net overseas migration
(medium series)

In all three projection series, net overseas migration is projected to make the largest contribution to Queensland's population growth, adding between 1.38 million and 2.74 million people over the 50 years to 2071. More than half of this growth will occur in the 25 years to 2046, largely due to the high net overseas migration experienced in 2022–23 (86,625 persons) and 2023–24 (71,733 persons).

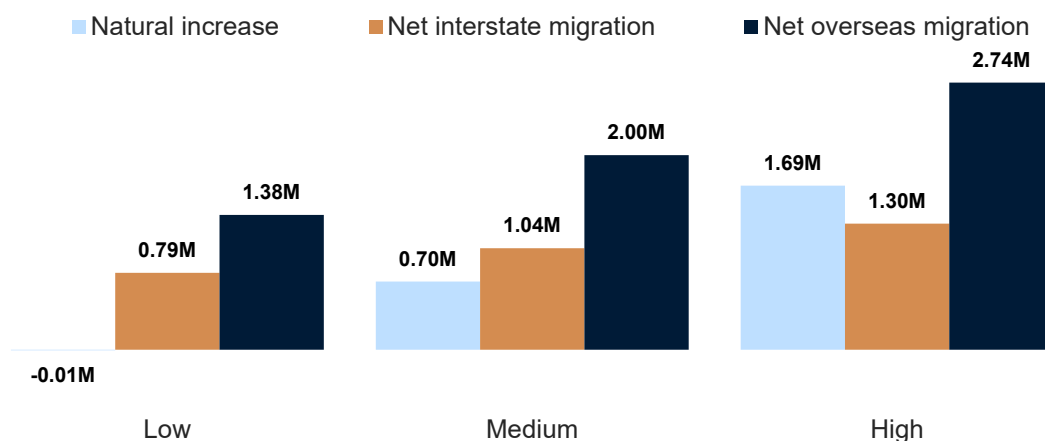
In the low and medium series, net interstate migration is expected to make the second largest contribution to growth, adding a further 789,750 to 1.30 million people by 2071. Under the high series, natural increase is expected to exceed net interstate migration, at 1.69 million persons and 1.30 million persons respectively. This reflects the high fertility and life expectancy assumed under the high series.

In contrast, under the low series, Queensland's deaths are expected to exceed births, leading to a natural decrease of 6,180 persons over the 50 years to 2071. Under the medium series, natural increase is projected to add 700,010 persons by 2071 (Figure 4).

Over the 50 years to 2071,

Queensland is projected to experience at least 3.07 million births and 2.75 million deaths

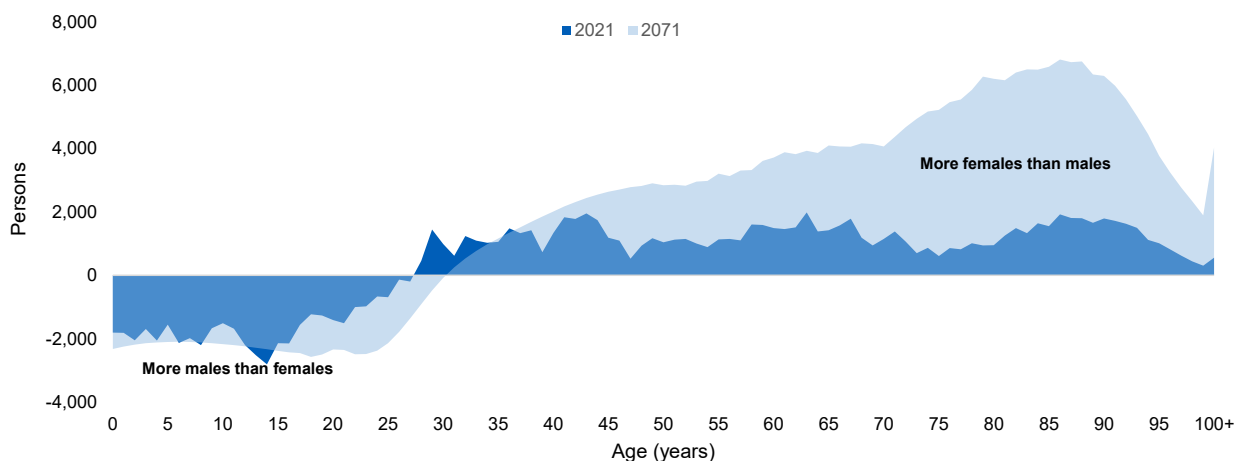
Almost half (47.6%) of the difference in overall growth between the low and high series is due to natural increase. Over the 50 years, the high series anticipates 1.37 million more births and 323,700 fewer deaths.

Figure 4 Components of population growth, by projection series, 2021 to 2071, Queensland

Sex ratio

The sex ratio is the number of males per 100 females. In 2001, the numbers of males and females in the population were almost the same, resulting in a ratio of 99.1 males per 100 females. Over the 20 years to 2021, the sex ratio fell slightly to around 98.3 males per 100 females. By 2046, under the medium series, the sex ratio is anticipated to fall to 96.2, with a further slight decrease to 95.5 by 2071.

The sex ratio is influenced by differences in births, life expectancy for males and females, and migration patterns. There are more males born in Queensland than females, resulting in more males than females among children and during the teenage years. In 2021, the gap between the sexes begins to narrow in the mid-20s, with the number of women exceeding the number of men by the early 30s (Figure 5). The surplus of women in older age groups is due to longer life expectancies and is projected to continue through to 2071.

Figure 5 Differential between males and females, medium series, 2021 and 2071, Queensland

Age structure

Queensland's population is expected to age over the projection period, significantly changing its age profile.

Although all age groups are expected to grow under the medium series, by 2071 there will be proportionally fewer children and more older Queenslanders. The largest proportional changes are expected to occur among those aged 85 years and older. In 2021, this cohort made up only 1.8% of Queensland's population, by 2071, they are projected to comprise at least 5.0% (low series) (Figure 6).

As a consequence of the growing number and proportion of older Queenslanders, the median age of the population is expected to increase over time by at least 5.2 years, from 38.4 years in 2021 (Table 4). By 2037, under all three series, at least half of all Queenslanders are projected to be aged 40 years or older. The median

age is projected to increase more slowly under the high series than under the low series because the high series assumes higher fertility and net overseas migration.

Figure 6 Population share by series, five year age groups, Queensland

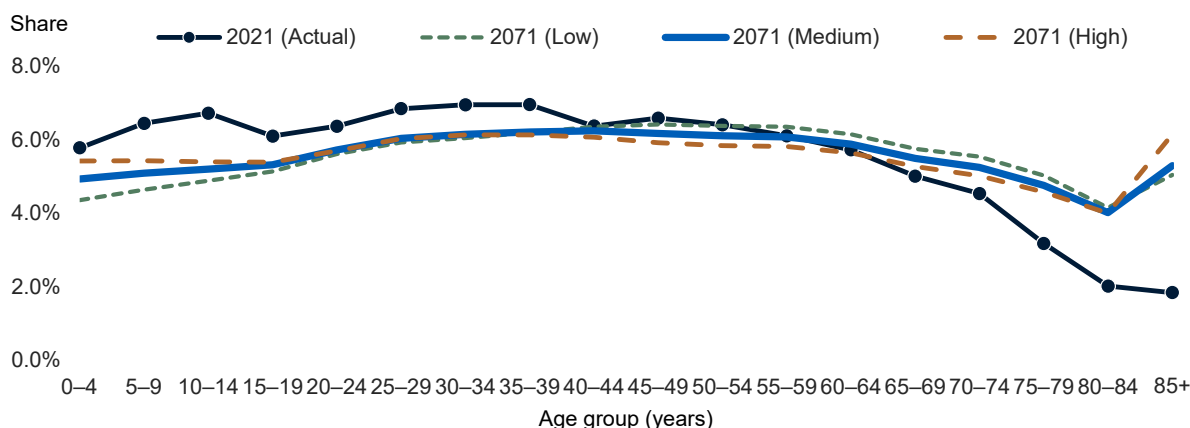


Table 4 Projected median age (years), by series, Queensland

Year	Series		
	Low	Medium	High
2021 (actual)	38.4 years		
2031	39.8	39.6	39.3
2041	41.9	41.2	40.5
2051	43.3	42.4	41.8
2061	44.7	43.5	42.9
2071	45.6	44.3	43.6
Total change (years)	7.2	5.8	5.2

Older Queenslanders

By 2071, **1 in 4** Queenslanders are projected to be aged 65 years or older

At 30 June 2025, the ABS estimated that Queensland had around 986,960 older residents (65 years or older), up from 864,520 in 2021 (16.6% of the population). By 30 June 2026, under each series, it is expected that there will be at least 1 million older Queenslanders. By 2046, this cohort is projected to reach between 1.41 million and 1.65 million persons (Figure 7).

Figure 7 Population aged 65 years and over (millions), Queensland

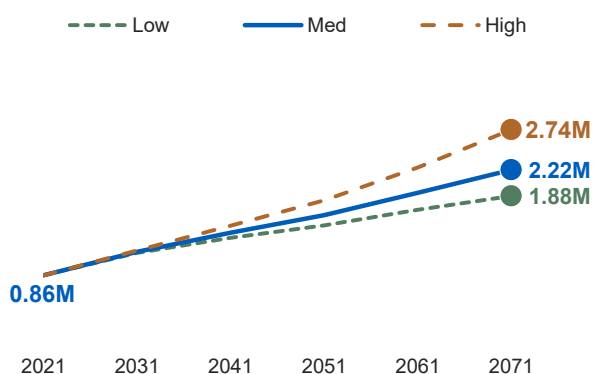
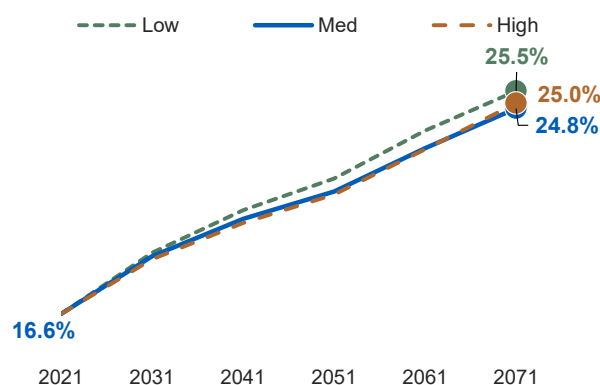


Figure 8 Population aged 65 years and over, by proportion, Queensland



Further growth over the years 2046 to 2071 is projected to lift the population of older Queenslanders to between 1.88 million and 2.74 million under the low to high series. By then, they are expected to account for around one in four Queenslanders (Figure 8). The projected increase in both the proportion and number of older Queenslanders reflects assumptions of lower fertility and higher life expectancy than seen in the past.

By 2071, the number of Queenslanders aged 85 years or older is projected to reach almost **0.5 million** people (medium series)

The number of Queenslanders aged 85 years or older increased from an estimated 95,840 in 2021 to 111,330 in 2025. By 2046, this cohort is expected to more than double to reach between 258,240 and 341,240 persons under the low to high series. By 2071, Queensland's population of persons aged 85 years and older is projected to grow to between 372,410 and 673,130 persons (Figure 9), and account for at least 5.0% of the population (Figure 10).

Figure 9 Population aged 85 years and over, Queensland

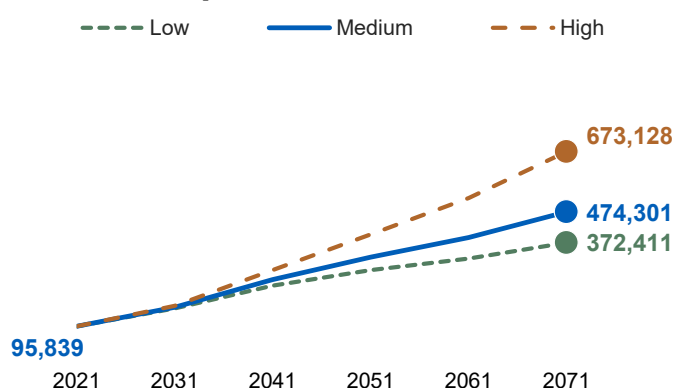
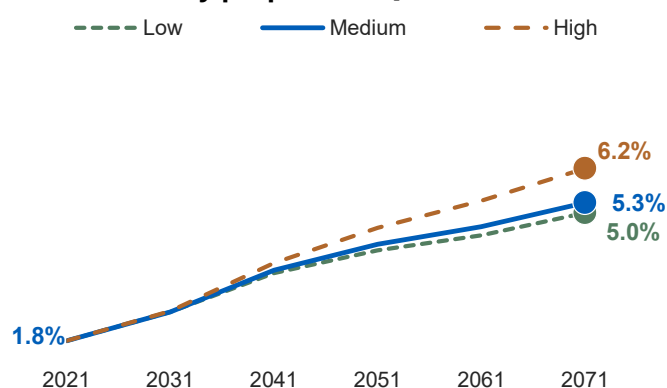


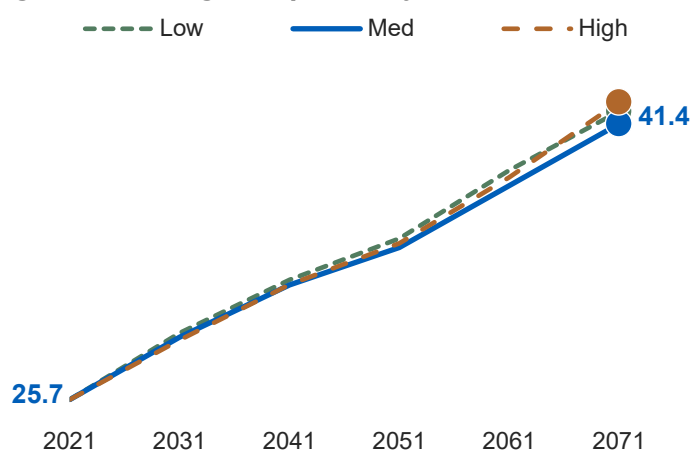
Figure 10 Population aged 85 years and over, by proportion, Queensland



By 2071, there are projected to be at least **40 older** Queenslanders for every **100 of working age** (15 to 64 years)

As the number of older Queenslanders grows relative to the working-age population (15 to 64 years), the aged dependency ratio is projected to rise from 25.7 in 2021 to 41.4 in 2071 under the medium series (Figure 11). This means there will be at least 40 people aged 65 years or older for every 100 working-age Queenslanders.

Figure 11 Aged dependency ratio, Queensland



Children

Queensland's population of children aged 0 to 17 years has increased significantly in recent decades, from around 900,000 at the turn of the century to 1.23 million in 2025. Annual growth peaked at 2.2% in 2006–07, the beginning of the 'baby boom', moderating to 1.4% at the tail end of the boom in 2012–13. During 2024–25, due to falling fertility and slowing migration, this cohort grew by only 0.3%.

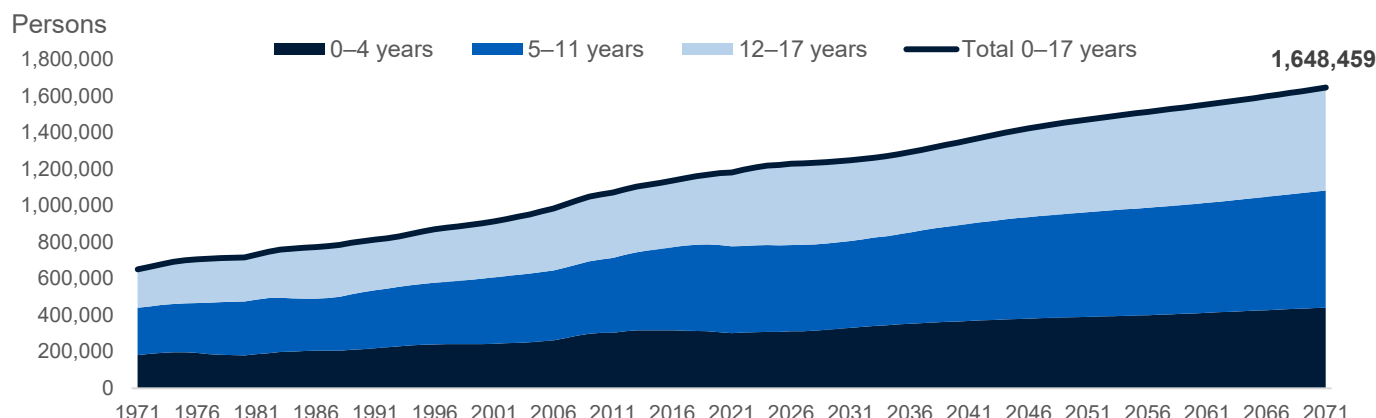
On average, over the 20 years to 2021, the number of children aged:

- 0 to 4 years increased by an average of 1.1% per year, from 243,800 to 301,680
- 5 to 11 years (primary-school aged) increased by an average of 1.4% per year, from 364,100 to 476,400
- 12 to 17 years (secondary-school aged) increased by an average of 1.4% per year, from 306,800 to 405,570 (Figure 12).

Queensland's child population is projected to continue growing, but at a much slower rate over the 50-year projection period. Under the low to high series assumptions, it is projected to reach between 1.25 million and 2.13 million by 2071.

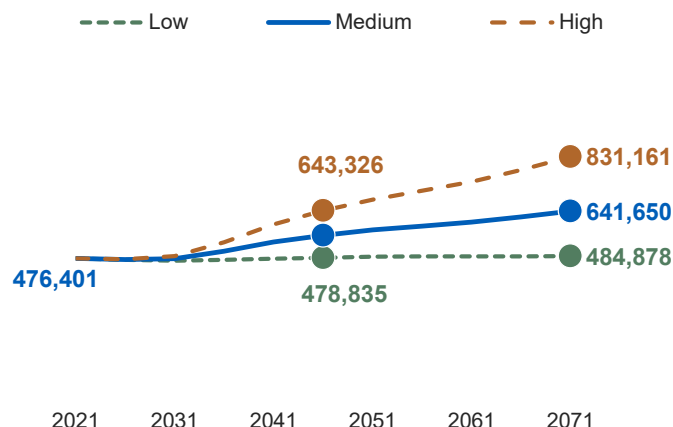
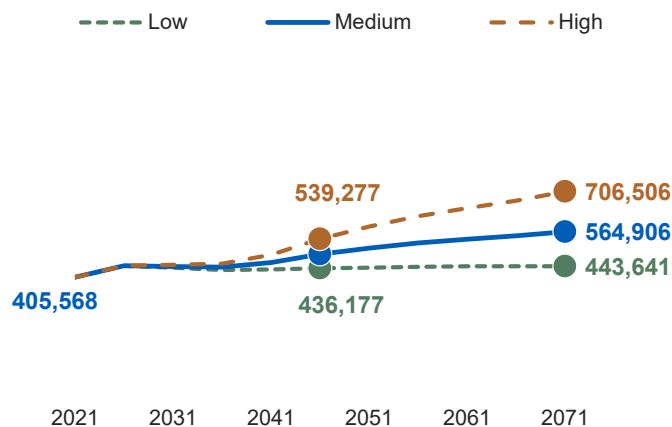
Under the medium series, annual growth in primary and secondary school-aged children is expected to moderate to 0.6% and 0.5% respectively. This moderation is due to assumed long-term fertility rates. Queensland's total fertility rate has been trending down since 2008, as noted earlier, falling to 1.50 in 2024–25, the lowest recorded rate in the time series. While the assumed fertility rate under the medium series trends upwards to 1.60 over the long-term, the annual average growth rate in births over the 25-year and 50-year projection horizon is relatively moderate at 0.8% and 0.7% respectively. Future school-aged populations are shaped mainly by births, with net migration playing a smaller role.

Figure 12 100 years of Queensland's children, estimated resident population and projected population, medium series



By 2071, there are projected to be **641,650** primary school-aged children
(5–11 years, medium series)

Queensland's 476,400 primary school-aged children in 2021 accounted for 9.1% of the population, falling to 474,310 and 8.4% by 2025. Despite this recent moderation in size, the cohort of primary school-aged children is projected to grow to between 478,840 and 643,330 under the low to high series by 2046, accounting for 7.2% to 8.0% of the population (Figure 13). By 2071, it is projected that primary school-aged children will make up 6.6% to 7.6% of Queensland's population, reaching between 484,880 to 831,160 persons under the low to high series.

Figure 13 Persons aged 5 to 11 years, Queensland**Figure 14** Persons aged 12 to 17 years, Queensland

By 2071, there are projected to be **564,906** secondary school-aged children (12–17 years, medium series)

In 2021, Queensland had an estimated 405,568 secondary school-aged children, representing 7.8% of the total population (Figure 14). This cohort grew to an estimated 441,407 persons by 2025 due largely to children born during the 2006 to 2012 'baby boom' ageing into the secondary school years. Further growth is anticipated into 2028 in each series due to ageing of the 'baby boom' cohort, after which growth is expected to moderate for several years. Under the medium series, by 2046, it is projected that Queensland's 486,220 secondary school-aged children will make up 6.7% of the population. By 2071, Queensland is projected to have between 443,640 and 706,510 secondary school-aged persons.

Sources

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2026, *National, state and territory population*, ABS, viewed 19 March 2026, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/sep-2025>

Centre for Population 2025, *National population projections in the 2025-26 Budget, 2024-25 to 2035-36*. <https://population.gov.au/sites/population.gov.au/files/2025-03/budget-2025-26-national-projections.xlsx>

Queensland Government Statistician's Office 2026, *Queensland Government population, household and dwelling projections, 2025 edition*

Notes

- i www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/population/population-projections/regions#current-release-qld-population-projections-region-reports
- ii www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/population/population-projections/regions#current-release-qld-population-projections-regions-tables
- iii <https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/population/population-projections/overview/qlds-population-future-data-visualisation>
- iv <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/information-papers/methodology-used-final-rebased-population-estimates-june-2021>
- v <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/jun-2025>
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- vii www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/population/population-projections/overview#current-release-qld-government-population-projections-background-research
- viii www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/population/population-projections/overview#current-release-qld-government-population-projections-methodology-assumptions
- ix www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/population/population-projections/overview/qld-government-population-projections-frequently-asked-questions

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