

# Population growth highlights and trends, Queensland, 2024 edition

Source: ABS *National, state and territory population* (released 14 December 2023)

Statistics in this release have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The various closures of the international and state borders from late March 2020 to February 2022 had an impact on both net overseas migration and net interstate migration.

## Highlights from 2022–23

- Queensland had the third–largest population increase (138,470 persons) of the states and territories, behind Victoria (181,850) and New South Wales (172,640).
- Queensland's annual population growth rate (2.6%) was the third–fastest of the states and territories, lower than both Western Australia (3.1%) and Victoria (2.7%), however higher than the 2022–23 national average (2.4%).
- Record net overseas migration (NOM) of 84,000 persons was the largest driver of population growth for Queensland, followed by net interstate migration of 32,260 persons. Natural increase (births minus deaths) was lower again in 2022–23, primarily due to a marked increase in deaths, contributing only 22,220 persons to Queensland's population.
- Queensland was home to 20.5% of Australia's population at 30 June 2023, an increase in share from twenty years earlier (19.0%). Queensland's share of the national population has been relatively stable for the past decade.

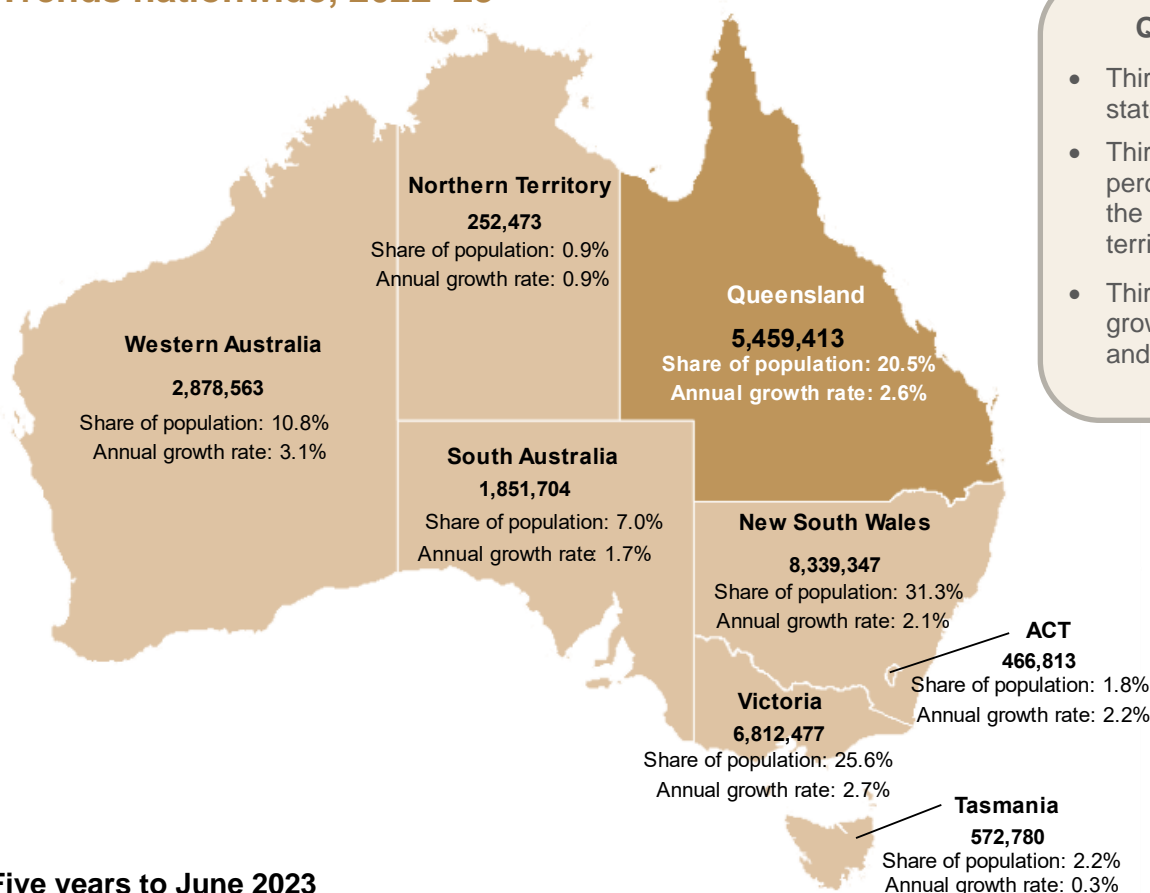
### Estimated resident population (persons)

June 2022	June 2023	Change	% Change
5,320,941	5,459,413	↑ 138,472	2.6%

### Components of change

Births	60,510	
Deaths	38,280	
<b>Natural increase</b>	<b>22,220</b>	<b>16.0%</b>
Overseas arrivals	124,640	
Overseas departures	40,640	
<b>Net overseas migration</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>60.7%</b>
Interstate arrivals	107,940	
Interstate departures	75,680	
<b>Net interstate migration</b>	<b>32,260</b>	<b>23.3%</b>

## Trends nationwide, 2022–23



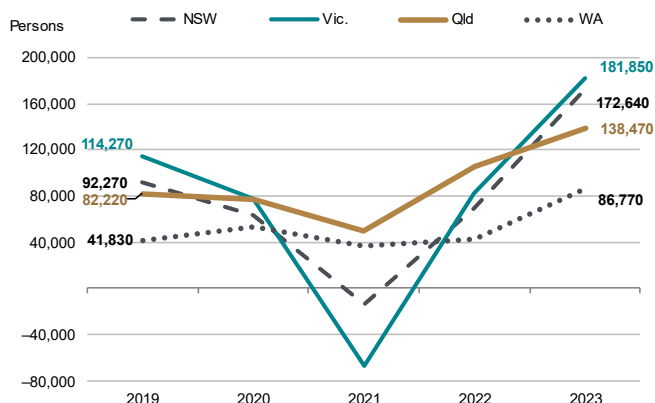
**Queensland**

- Third most populous state
- Third-fastest percentage growth of the states and territories
- Third-largest absolute growth of the states and territories

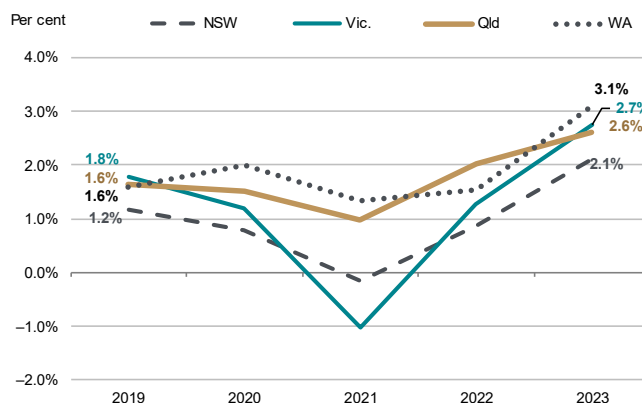
### Five years to June 2023

- New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland together accounted for 86.3% of national population growth in the five years to June 2023.
- All states and territories saw a moderation in their annual population growth rates in the year to 30 June 2021, with growth rates subsequently rebounding in 2021–22 and further in 2022–23. Queensland's annual growth rate increased to 2.6% in 2022–23, more than twice that experienced in 2020–21 (1.0%) when the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions were being realised.
- Between June 2018 and June 2023, Queensland's population grew by 8.9% or 452,790 persons.

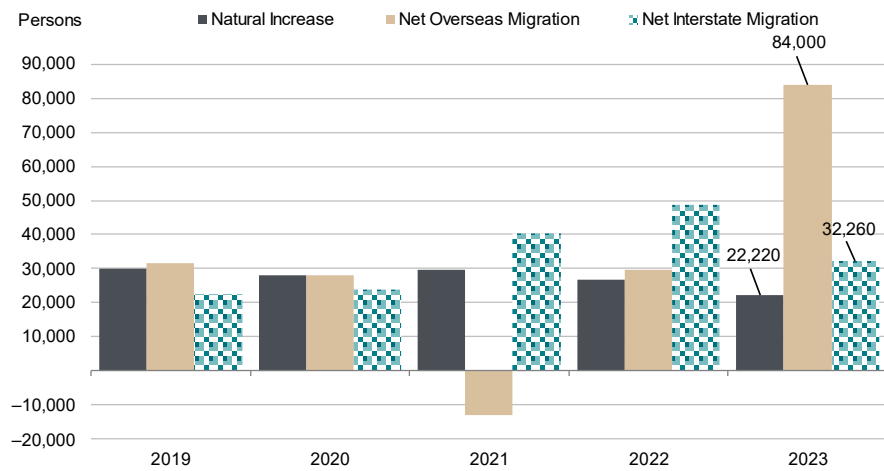
Annual absolute growth, year to 30 June



Annual percentage growth, year to 30 June



## Components of population change, Queensland

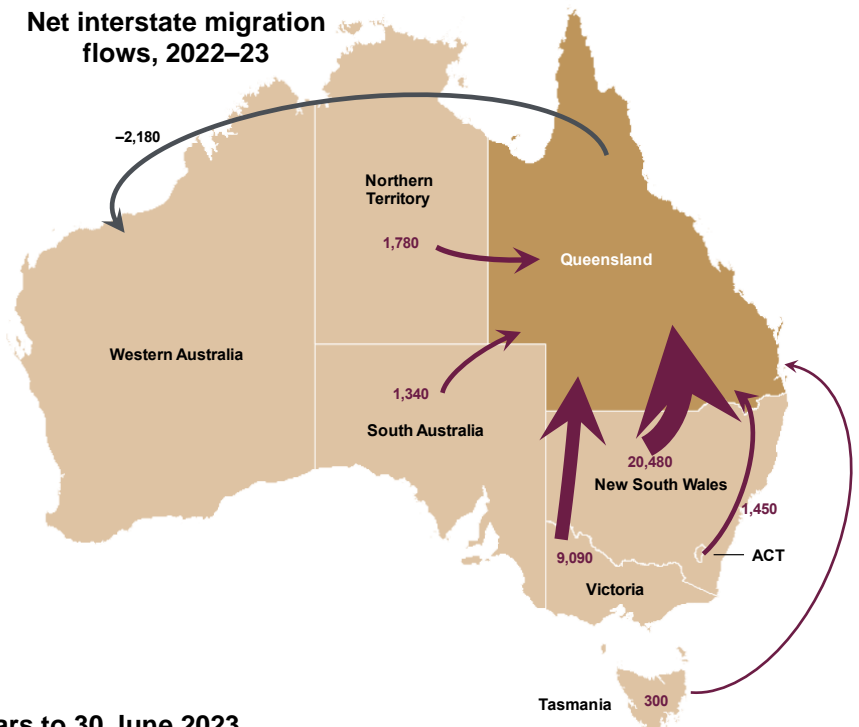


**Queensland's gains from net overseas and interstate migration showed record levels in recent years.**

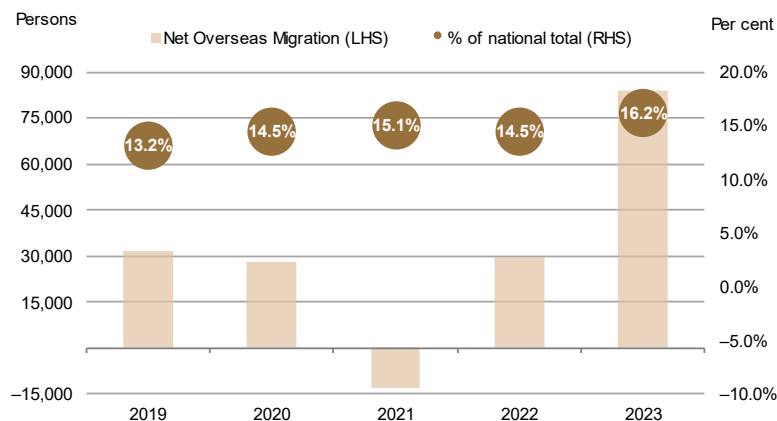
- Net interstate migration declined by 34% after the high recorded in 2021–22, contributing 32,260 persons to the population. NIM accounted for 23.3% of growth in the year to June 2023, down from 46.4% in 2021–22.
- Net overseas migration for Queensland had a record net gain of 84,000 persons in 2022–23, nearly three times higher than the level experienced in 2021–22. NOM accounted for 60.7% of the growth.

- Queensland is the only jurisdiction to have gained population through net interstate migration in every quarter since June 1981.
- New South Wales continues to be the largest source of interstate migrants.
- Since 2016–17 there have been net gains to Queensland from Victoria, with a gain in 2022–23 of 9,090 persons. These recent net gains follow four years of losses from Queensland to Victoria. The 2022–23 gain from Victoria was 44% lower than in 2021–22.
- Queensland's population gain from net interstate migration exceeded the gain from natural increase for the third consecutive year.

### Net interstate migration flows, 2022–23



### Net overseas migration, Queensland, five years to 30 June 2023

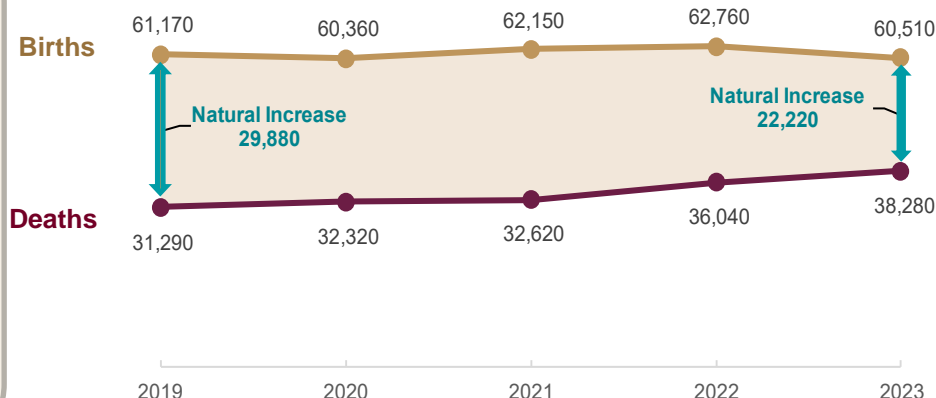


Preliminary estimates show that Queensland's net overseas migration gain was 84,000 persons in 2022–23. Previously the highest NOM for Queensland in recent decades was recorded in 2008–09 (59,320 persons).

In absolute terms, Queensland's share of the national NOM gain was 16.2% in the year to June 2023.

Queensland's share of the national NOM gains has previously ranged between 11.1% and 14.5% in the years since 2013–14. In 2020–21, the only year of NOM loss for the period, Queensland accounted for 15.1% of the national loss.

### Natural increase, Queensland, five years to 30 June 2023



- Natural increase declined by 4,500 persons (16.9%) in the year to June 2023, driven primarily by an increase in deaths (6.2%).
- COVID-19 deaths were the largest contributor to this increase.
- The number of births registered in Queensland in 2022–23 (60,510) was 3.6% lower than in 2021–22 (62,760).

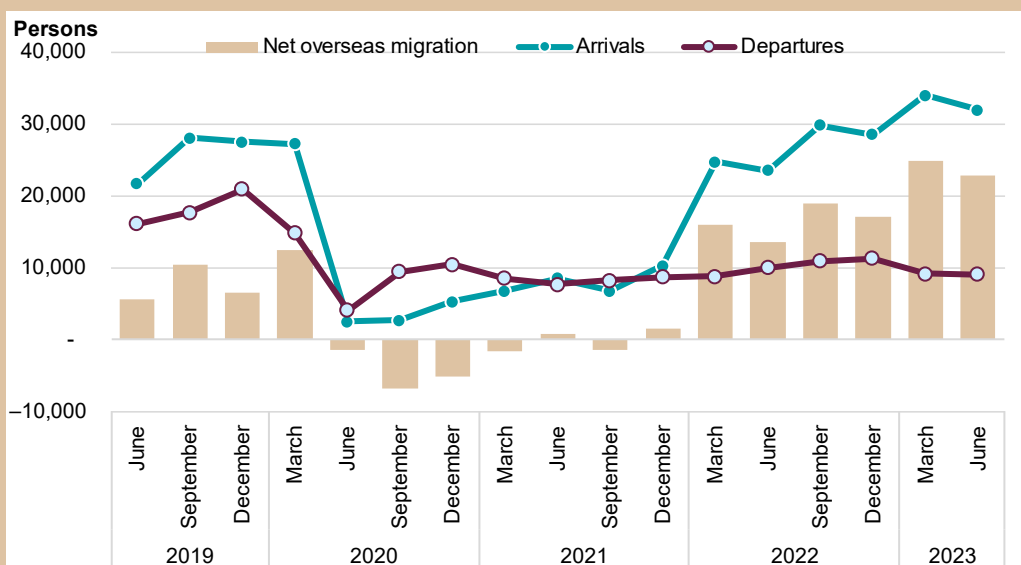
### Ongoing impact of international travel restrictions on NOM

In late March 2020, the Australian Government implemented restrictions on international travel to curb the spread of COVID-19. As a large portion of Queensland's population growth in recent years has come from NOM, these restrictions had a direct impact on both Queensland's NOM, and associated population growth for the affected period during 2019–20 and 2020–21. However, easing of these restrictions from late 2021 has seen a resumption in overseas arrivals and departures, resulting in a return to population gains through NOM. Preliminary migrant arrivals in June quarter 2023 were more than 11 times higher than the low point in June quarter 2020 (32,070 compared with 2,525), and 47.7% higher than the levels recorded in June quarter 2019 (pre-COVID) of 21,710 migrant arrivals.

Preliminary migrant data show that departure levels have not recovered to pre-pandemic levels, having remained relatively stable following the low in June quarter 2020. While in June quarter 2023, migrant departures were slightly lower than that of the same quarter in 2022 (9,090 migrant departures compared with 9,990), they were around half the level (43.6% lower) recorded in June quarter 2019 (pre-COVID).

The final NOM figures for Queensland show net losses in the four consecutive quarters from June 2020 to March 2021, and again in September quarter 2021. Prior to this period, the previous quarterly NOM loss was in December quarter 1994 (–160 persons).

While migrant departures were below pre-COVID levels, migrant arrivals were higher for the most recent two quarters, resulting in the preliminary NOM gains for March and June quarters 2023 being more than double the gains recorded in the comparable pre-COVID period.



## Population trends by age and sex, Queensland

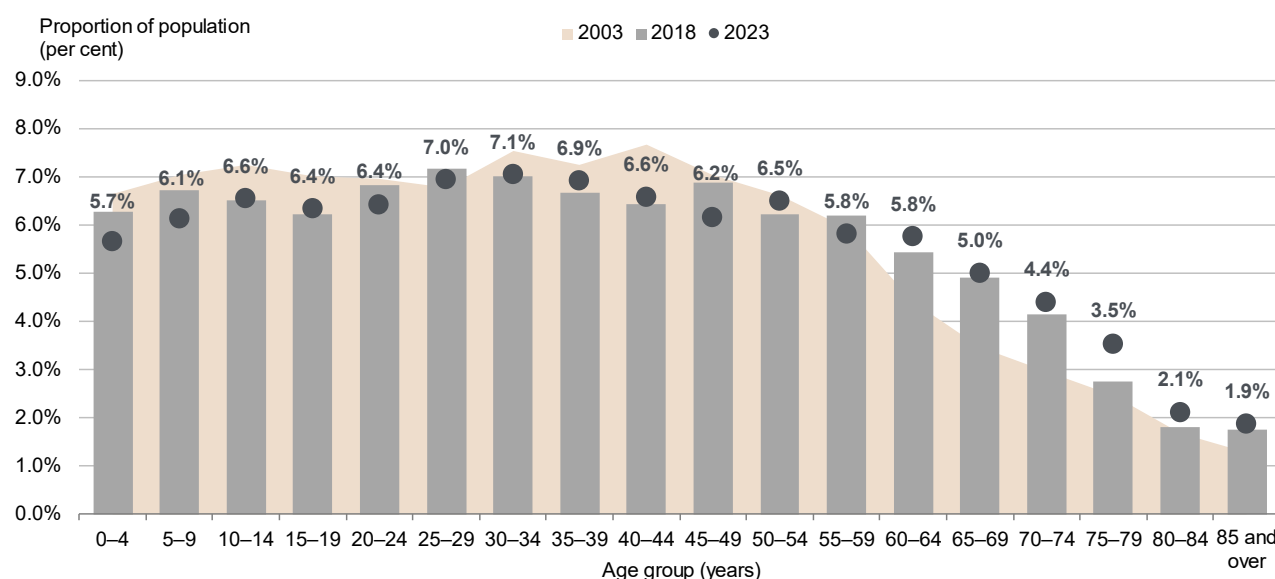
- Queensland's population is ageing due to:
  - sustained low levels of fertility
  - increased life expectancy
  - movement of the large 'baby boomer' cohort (those born in 1946 to 1965) into the older age groups.
- At 30 June 2023, with the exception of those aged 25–29 years, there were proportionally fewer persons in each five-year age group up to 50–54 years, and proportionally more in older age groups compared with 20 years earlier. The largest proportional shift was in the 65–69 years and 70–74 years age groups (+1.5 percentage points). The largest proportional increase in the five years since 2018 was in the 75–79 years age group, increasing to 3.5% of the state's population, up from 2.8% five years earlier.
- While the overall share of the population aged 15–64 years (the working-age population) decreased between 2003 and 2023 (from 67.2% to 64.6%), the proportion of the population aged 65 years and older increased (from 11.8% to 17.0%) over the same period. In 2023, around 1 in 6 Queenslanders were aged 65 years or older, up from 1 in 9 in 2003. The numbers of old (65+ years) and very old (85+ years) people in the population have both more than doubled since 2003, and have increased by 20.4% and 16.4% respectively over the five years since 2018.
- At 30 June 2023, persons aged 30–34 years were the largest group proportionally, accounting for 7.1% (385,960 persons) of the Queensland population, followed by those aged 25–29 years (7.0%).

### Living longer...

Queenslanders aged 65 years in 2022 could expect to live to:

- 85 years of age if male.
- 88 years of age if female.

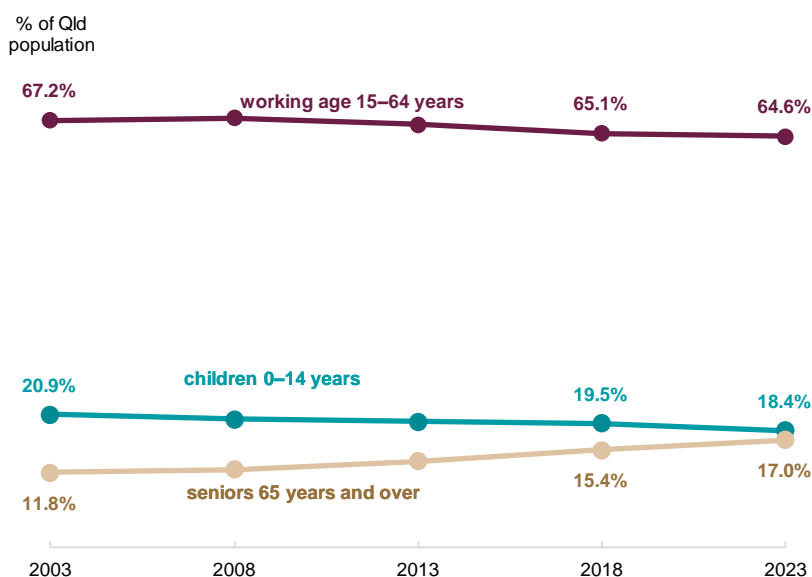
### Proportion of population by age group, Queensland, as at 30 June 2023



- At 30 June 2023, children aged 0–14 years accounted for a smaller proportion of Queensland's population compared with five years earlier (18.4% compared with 19.5% in 2018). Both the 0–4 years and 5–9 years age groups have recorded proportional decreases since 2018, each decreasing by 0.6 percentage points in the five years to June 2023. Due, in part, to the ageing of this 5–9 year cohort, there were 32,540 extra children in the 10–14 years age group in 2023, up 0.1 percentage point compared with the year to June 2018.
- The dependency ratio (number of dependents per 100 working-age population<sup>1</sup>) has increased from 53.6 in 2018 to 54.7 in 2023, driven primarily by increases in the old-age dependency ratio (65 years and over), from 23.6 to 26.3 per 100 working-age population, over the five years. The child dependency ratio (0–14 years) declined slightly over the same period (from 30.0 in 2018 to 28.4 children per 100 working-age population in 2023).

<sup>1</sup> Working-age population is traditionally considered to be those aged 15–64 years.

### Working-age population seeing a decline in share



Just under two-thirds (64.6%) of the Queensland population are in the traditional working-age group of 15–64 years, slightly lower than the 65.1% recorded in 2018. This is a continuation of the slow decline in the proportion of the population that is of working-age that has occurred over the past two decades.

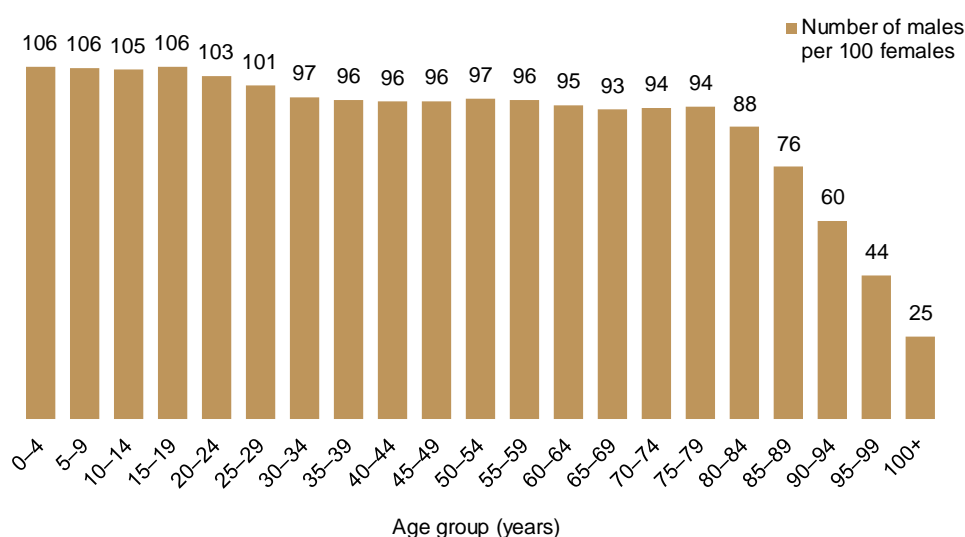
#### Seniors are the fastest growing group in the Queensland population:

- The population aged 65 years and over has more than doubled since 2003 to reach 926,700 persons in 2023.
- The average annual growth rate since 2018 for seniors is 3.8%, compared with 1.4% for the rest of the population.
- The population aged 85 years and over had an average annual growth rate of 3.1% for the decade to June 2023, and growth of 3.3% in the last year.

At 30 June 2023, Queensland's estimated resident population included 2,703,960 males and 2,755,460 females. The median age (age where half the population is younger/older) for Queensland's males and females was 37.6 and 39.3 years respectively.

The impact of relatively higher mortality rates for males across the various life stages is reflected in longer life expectancy for females, and results in the sex ratio (number of males per 100 females) decreasing with increasing age. The largest differences are experienced in the age groups beyond 85 years, with increasingly fewer men per 100 women in each consecutive five-year age group.

### Sex ratio by selected age groups, year to 30 June 2023



#### There were:

- More males than females in age groups under 30 years.
- More females than males in all older age groups, including more than twice as many females aged 95 years or older.





## Technical notes

Population data used in this publication were the most recent available at the time of preparation and have been sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) publication *National, state and territory population, December 2023*.

The status of estimated resident population (ERP) data changes over time, from preliminary to revised to final, as new component data become available. Users should exercise caution when analysing and interpreting the most recent annual and quarterly estimates for all components of ERP, particularly when making time series comparisons. Complete accuracy of ERP figures is not claimed by the ABS and should not be assumed.

All ERP and component data up to and including June 2021 are final. ERPs from September 2021 to June 2022 are revised and from September 2022 to June 2023 are preliminary. The ABS has rebased ERP up to June quarter 2021 — see *Methodology used in rebased population estimates, June 2021* for further information on calculation of the ERP and the rebasing cycle.

Natural increase data for September quarter 1991 to June quarter 2021 are final. Data for September quarter 2021 to June quarter 2022 are revised (based on date of occurrence). Data for September 2022 to June 2023 are preliminary (based on date of registration).

Net overseas migration data for September quarter 1991 to June quarter 2022 are final. Data for September quarter 2022 to March quarter 2023 are revised (based on actual traveller behaviour). Data for June quarter 2023 are preliminary (based on modelled traveller behaviour). Estimates for the September quarter 2006 onwards use an improved methodology based on the '12/16 month rule' and are not directly comparable with estimates from earlier periods.

The estimates for September 2017 onwards are based on a new methodology for NOM. The change in method is due to the removal of outgoing passenger cards by the Department of Home Affairs from July 2017. For further information, see the feature article on '*Improvements to estimates of net overseas migration*' in ABS, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, September 2017. Due to the disruption in travel patterns during the COVID-19 pandemic, from March 2022, preliminary estimates were modelled on traveller behaviour from the corresponding quarter of 2018. Estimates prior to March 2022 and from June 2023 are modelled based on the behaviour of similar travellers from one year earlier. The characteristics defining similar travellers are: age, country of citizenship, direction of first and last movement in the reference quarter, initial ERP status, time spent out of Australia, and visa group.

Net interstate migration — for June, September and December quarters 2021, Medicare change of address data showed an implausibly high number of moves for these quarters due to widespread updating of Medicare records as people got vaccinated for COVID-19. Not all the address changes recorded in this quarter happened within this quarter. To treat for this, undercount adjustments in the affected quarters have been revised. Net interstate migration data for September quarter 1991 to June quarter 2021 are final. Data for September quarter 2021 to June quarter 2023 are preliminary (based on modelled expansion factors from 2021 Census).

For years prior to 2020–21, the sum of the components of population change does not equal the change in ERP over the year due to intercensal difference. For further details on ERP and component data, refer to the *Methodology section*, ABS, *National, state and territory population*, June 2023.

A range of supporting data tables is available on the QGSO website ([www.qgso.qld.gov.au](http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au)).

## Glossary

### Average annual rate of population change

Also known as the average annual population growth rate. It is calculated as a percentage using the formula below, where  $P_0$  is the population at the start of the period,  $P_n$  is the population at the end of the period and  $n$  is the length of the period between  $P_n$  and  $P_0$  in years.

$$\left[ \left( \frac{P_n}{P_0} \right)^{\frac{1}{n}} - 1 \right] \times 100$$

For example, to calculate the average annual rate of population change from 2011 to 2021,  $n$  is 10,  $P_0$  is the population in 2011 and  $P_n$  is the population in 2021.

### Estimated resident population (ERP)

The official measure of the population of Australia is based on the concept of residence. It refers to all people, regardless of nationality, citizenship or legal status, who usually live in Australia, with the exception of foreign diplomatic personnel and their families. It includes usual residents who are overseas for less than 12 out of the preceding 16 months. It excludes overseas visitors who are in Australia for less than 12 out of the preceding 16 months.

### Intercensal difference

The difference between two estimates at 30 June of a census year population, the first based on the latest census and the second arrived at by updating the 30 June estimate of the previous census year with intercensal components of population change which take account of information available from the latest census. Intercensal difference is determined once rebasing is complete, and is the difference between final ERP and the final updated components of ERP.

### Natural increase

The excess of births over deaths in a given area. Although usually positive, natural increase can be negative if the population has an older age structure such that more deaths than births are experienced over a period of time.

### Net interstate migration (NIM)

The net result of population movement into the region from interstate minus population movement out of the region to other states. During intercensal years, the ABS prepares state and territory-level quarterly estimates of net interstate migration using indicators of population change.

### Net migration

Net migration refers to the net result of population movement into and out of a given area. It is the resulting change in population from the combination of overseas migration, interstate migration and internal (intrastate) migration.

### Net overseas migration (NOM)

The difference between the number of people settling in a given area from overseas and the number of people departing that area to live overseas. Estimates of overseas migration data are derived from Department of Home Affairs actual arrival and departure information for individual passengers, and revised for each period to include only those people—regardless of nationality, citizenship or legal status—who have been in (or out of) Australia for 12 of the previous 16 months (the '12/16 month rule'). By this definition, some temporary residents in Australia are included in the net overseas migration figure.