Population growth highlights and trends, Queensland, 2026 edition

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *National, state and territory population*, released 18 December 2025

Some 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 2024–25

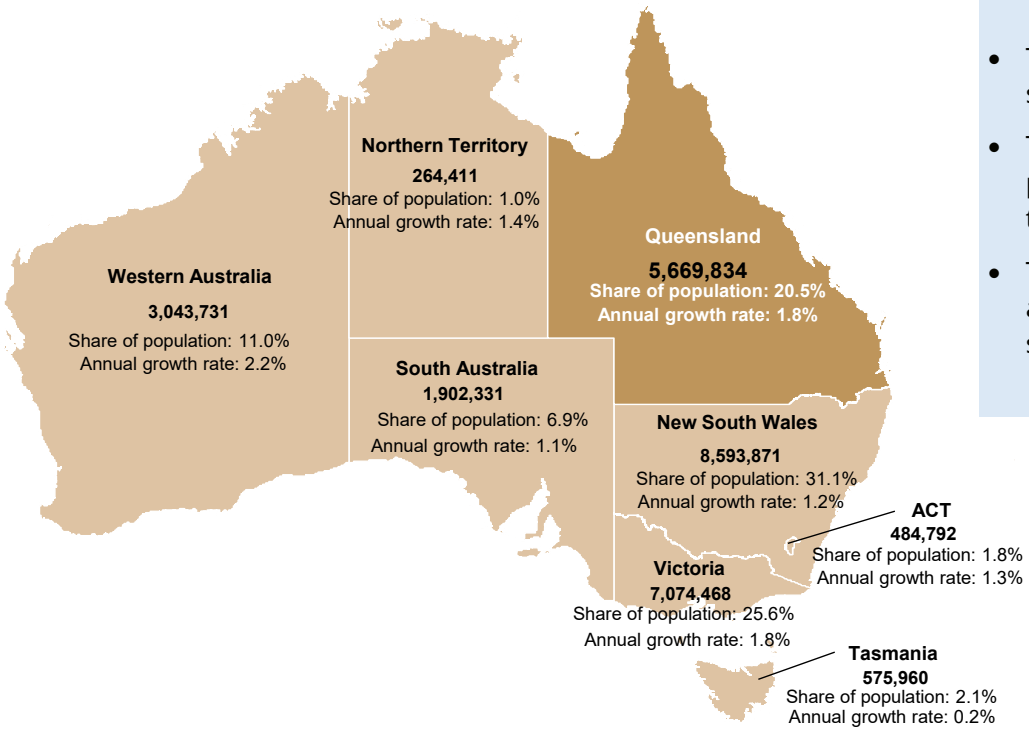
- Queensland had the third-largest population increase (97,944 persons) of the states and territories, behind Victoria (123,507) and New South Wales (101,821).
- Queensland's annual population growth rate (1.76%) was the third-fastest of the states and territories, lower than Western Australia (2.20%) and similar to Victoria (1.78%), however, higher than the 2024–25 national average (1.54%).
- High net overseas migration (NOM) of 55,743 persons was the largest driver of population growth for Queensland, followed by net interstate migration (NIM) of 21,595 persons.
- Natural increase (births minus deaths) remained subdued, adding 20,606 persons to the state population. The number of births in Queensland in 2024–25 was 5.9% lower than 10 years earlier (58,849 registered births in 2024–25, compared with 62,522 in 2014–15), and 6.2% lower than the recent peak in 2021–22 (62,762).
- Queensland was home to 20.5% of Australia's population at 30 June 2025, an increase in share from 20 years earlier (19.4%). Queensland's share of the national population has increased by 2.1 percentage points since the turn of the century (18.4% at 30 June 2000).

Estimated resident population (persons)

June 2024	June 2025	Change	% Change
5,571,890	5,669,834	↑ 97,944	1.76%

Components of change		Share of change
Births	58,849	
Deaths	38,243	
Natural increase	**20,606**	**21.0%**
Overseas arrivals	105,938	
Overseas departures	50,195	
Net overseas migration	**55,743**	**56.9%**
Interstate arrivals	100,141	
Interstate departures	78,546	
Net interstate migration	**21,595**	**22.1%**

Trends nationwide, 2024–25



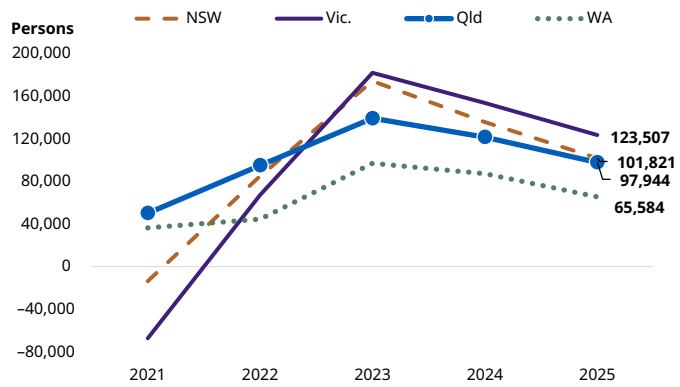
Queensland

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

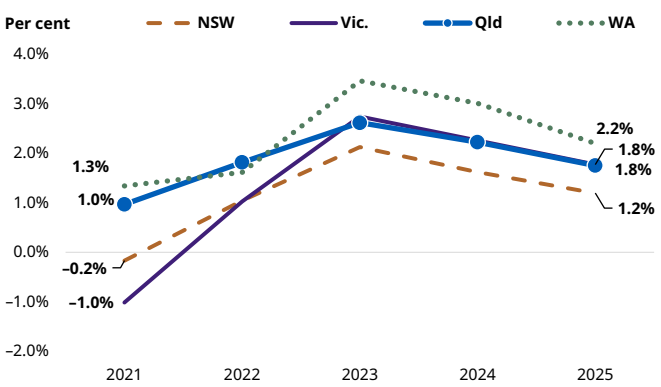
Five years to June 2025

- New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland together accounted for 73.6% of national population growth in the five years to June 2025.
- All states and territories saw a moderation in their annual population growth rates in the year to 30 June 2021. With the exception of Tasmania and Northern Territory, growth rates subsequently rebounded to peak in 2022–23, before easing slightly in 2023–24 and further in 2024–25.
- Queensland's annual growth rate increased to 2.6% in 2022–23 — more than twice that experienced in 2020–21 (1.0%), before falling to 2.2% in 2023–24. A further moderation to 1.76% in 2024–25, was still higher than the annual growth rates in the years leading up to the pandemic (2013–14 to 2019–20, ranging between 1.2% and 1.7%).
- Over the five years to June 2025, Queensland's population grew by 9.8% or 504,221 persons, which was the largest increase in population and second largest proportional increase among the states and territories over this period behind Western Australia (12.2%). This was primarily due to the disproportionate effect of the pandemic related impacts on the populations of both New South Wales and Victoria in the first two years of the reference period.

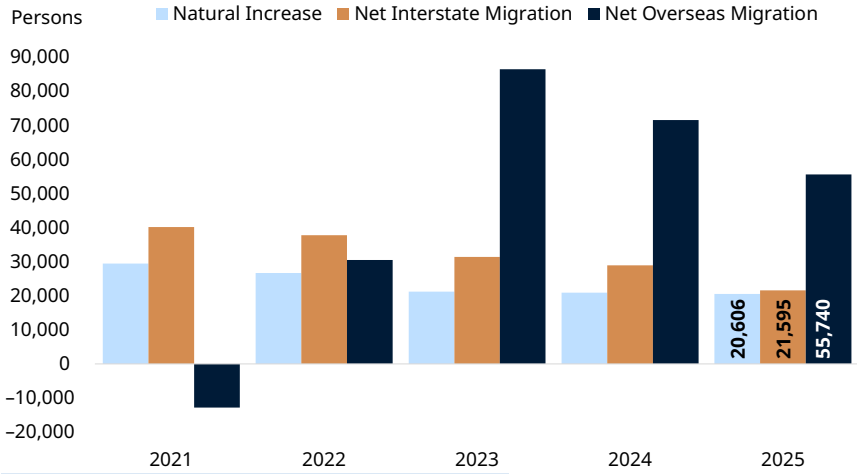
Annual absolute growth, year to 30 June



Annual percentage growth, year to 30 June



Components of population change, Queensland

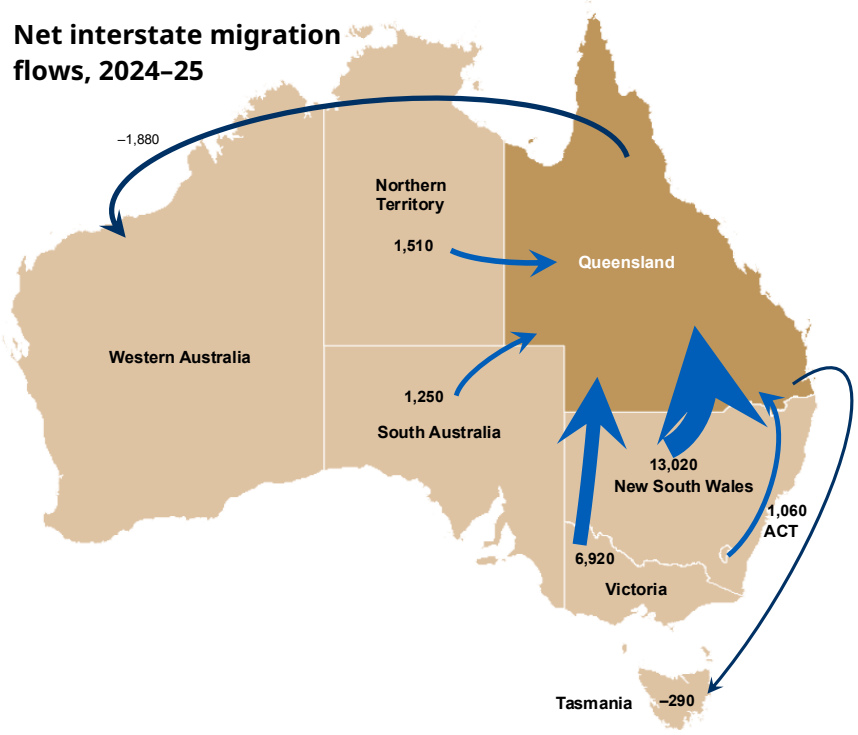


Queensland's gains from net overseas and interstate migration moderated after record levels in recent years.

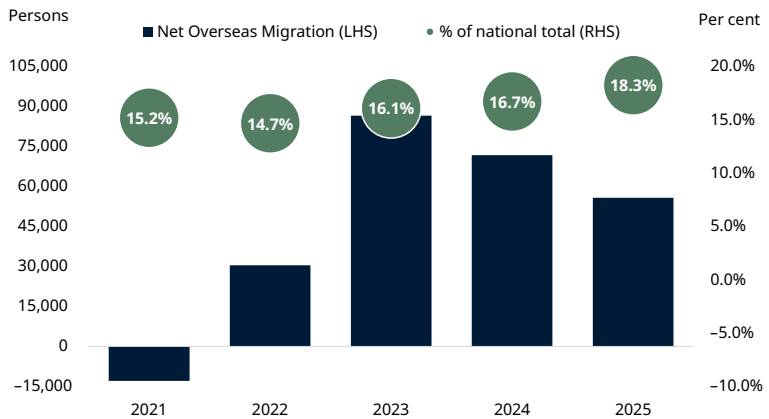
- NIM in 2024–25, contributed 21,595 persons to the population, 46.3% lower than the 40,223 persons in 2020–21.
- NIM accounted for 22.1% of growth in 2024–25, similar to the contribution in 2023–24 (23.8%).
- NOM for Queensland declined 35.6% from the record net gain in 2022–23, contributing 55,743 persons to the population.

- Queensland is the only jurisdiction to have gained population through NIM in every quarter since June 1981.
- New South Wales continues to be the largest source of interstate migrants to Queensland, accounting for 60.3% of the net gain in 2024–25.
- Since 2016–17 there have been net gains to Queensland from Victoria, with a gain of 6,917 persons in 2024–25. However, this was 57.3% lower than the recent peak in 2021–22, during the pandemic affected period.
- Queensland's population gain from NIM exceeded the gain from natural increase for the fifth consecutive year.

Net interstate migration flows, 2024–25



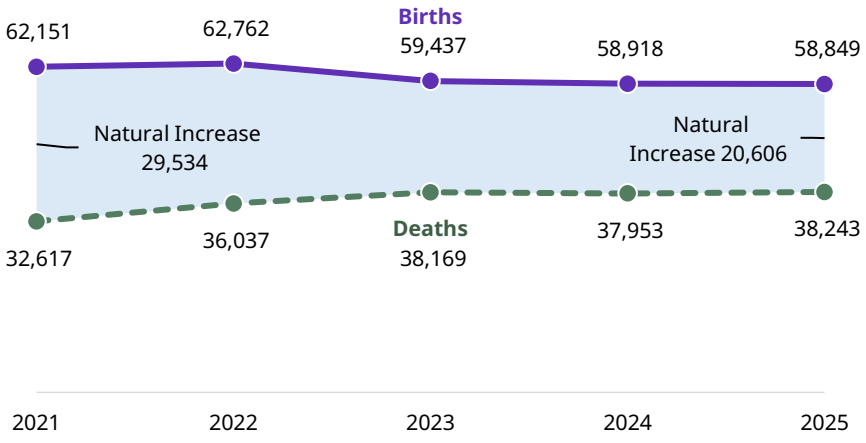
Net overseas migration, Queensland, five years to 30 June 2025



- Preliminary estimates show that the NOM contributed 55,743 persons to Queensland in 2024–25. The highest NOM gain for Queensland in recent decades was recorded two years prior in 2022–23 (86,625 persons).
- In absolute terms, Queensland's share of the national NOM was 18.2% in the year to June 2025, returning to a level not seen since 2012–13 (18.2%).
- Queensland's share of the national NOM ranged between 11.1% and 16.7% in the years 2013–14 to 2023–24. In 2020–21, the only year of NOM loss for the period, Queensland accounted for 15.1% of the national loss.

- Natural increase declined by 359 persons (1.7%) in the year to June 2025, mostly reflecting an increase in deaths.
- The number of births registered in Queensland in 2024–25 (58,849) was similar to 2023–24 (58,918), and 6.2% lower than the recent peak in 2021–22 (62,762).
- There were more than 37,000 deaths in Queensland for the third consecutive year.

Natural increase, Queensland, five years to 30 June 2025

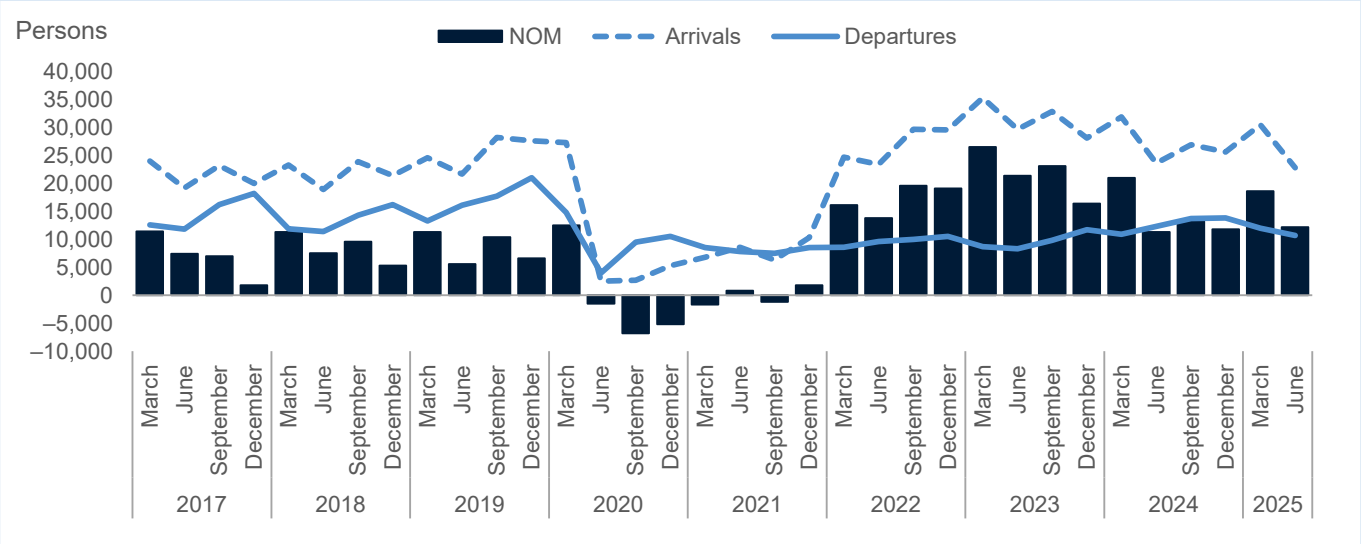


Quarterly NOM for Queensland showing some signs of decline

While moderating, NOM continued to record quarterly levels higher than those of the pre-pandemic period. Migrant arrivals to Queensland recorded the lowest quarterly level post-pandemic in June quarter 2025, although still higher than for arrivals in the June quarters in the decade leading into the pandemic.

Preliminary migrant data show that departure levels have not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels, having remained relatively stable following the low in June quarter 2020. There is less variability in the quarterly level of migrant departures compared with migrant arrivals.

March quarter 2025 (18,562 persons) was the highest quarter for NOM to Queensland in 2024–25, partially due to the increase in student arrivals to commence the academic year.

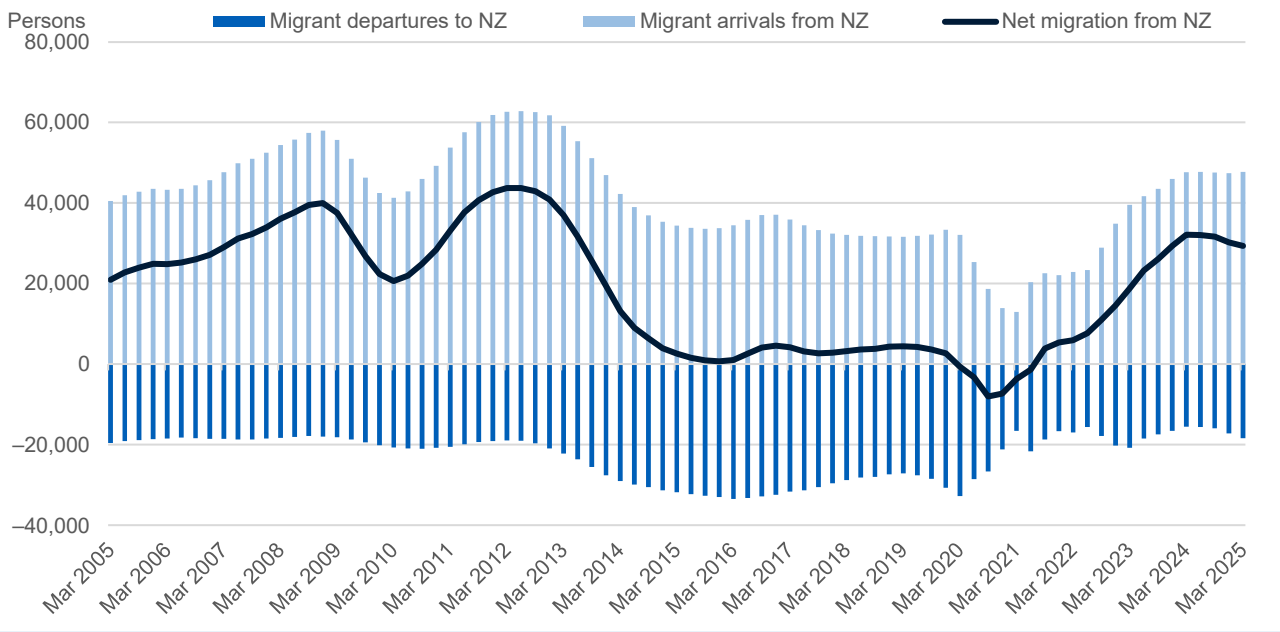


Migration from New Zealand to Australia returns to levels not seen since 2012

Traditionally there has been a net migration gain to Australia from New Zealand, with Queensland receiving the largest proportion of the net gain of the states and territories. Australia's gain averaged around 30,000 persons per year during 2004 to 2013, and 3,000 per year during 2014 to 2019[1]. In 2024–25:

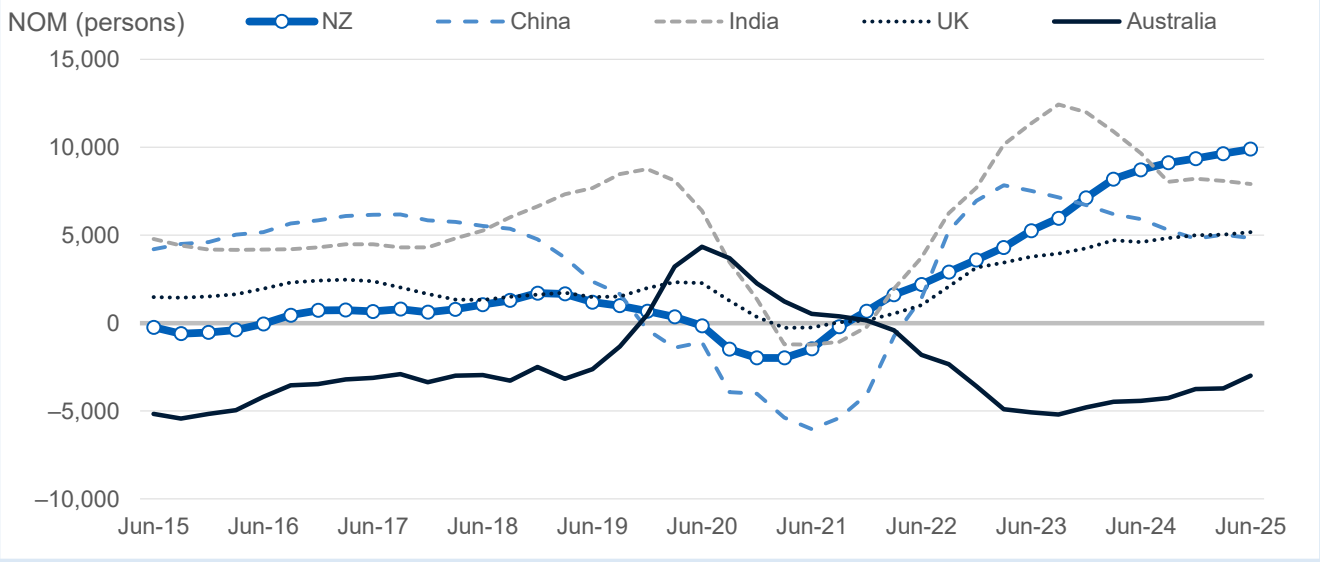
- Stats New Zealand reported a provisional net migration loss of 29,400 people to Australia in the year to March 2025 (58% of New Zealand-citizen migrant departures were to Australia).
- Of New Zealand citizens who migrated to Australia in the year to March 2025, 35% were born outside New Zealand.

Estimated migration between Australia and New Zealand, rolling year to March 2025



In the year to 30 June 2025, New Zealand was the country of birth contributing the largest net population gain for Queensland with 9,890 persons, which was the highest of the states and territories. By contrast, New Zealand as a country of citizenship contributed 14,206 persons to Queensland in 2024–25. Queensland accounted for 40.7% of the total gain of New Zealand born persons to Australia in 2024–25 (24,320 persons).

Net overseas migration for Queensland[(a)] – top 4 countries of birth[(b)] – year ending



(a) Estimates for 2024–25 are preliminary

(b) Top 4 countries of birth by the sum of migrant arrivals and migrant departures in year ending June.

[1] Retrieved December 18, 2025, from https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/international-migration-september-2025/#australia

Population trends by age and sex, Queensland

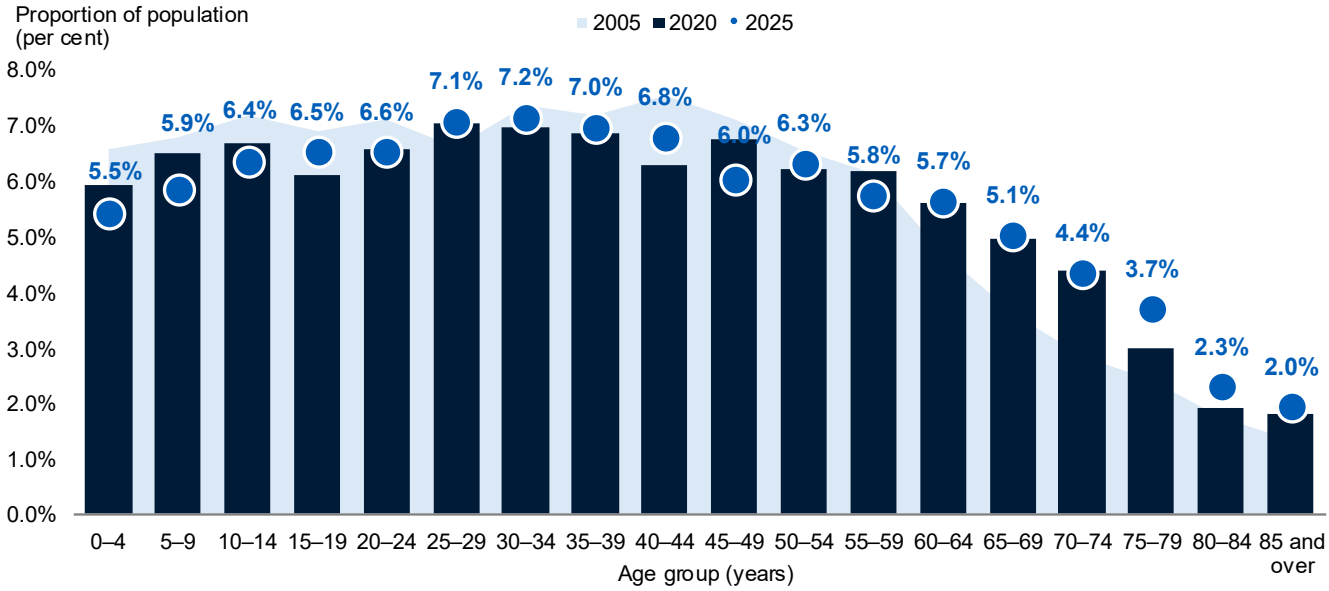
Living longer…

Queenslanders aged 65 years in 2024 could expect to live to:

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

- Queensland's population is ageing due to:
  - sustained low levels of fertility
  - increased life expectancy
  - movement of the large 'baby boomer' cohort (those born between 1946 to 1965) into the older age groups.
- At 30 June 2025, except for those aged 25–29 years, there were proportionally fewer persons in each five-year age group up to 55–59 years, and proportionally more in older age groups compared with 20 years earlier. The largest proportional shift was in the 70–74 years age group (+1.5 percentage points). The largest proportional increase over the five years since 2020 was in the 75–79 years age group, increasing to 3.7% of the Queensland population, up 0.7 percentage points from 2020.
- While the overall share of the population aged 15–64 years (the working-age population) decreased between 2005 and 2025, from 67.4% to 64.9%, the proportion of the population aged 65 years and older increased (from 12.0% to 17.4%) over the same period. In 2025, more than 1 in 6 Queenslanders were aged 65 years or older, up from just under 1 in 9 in 2005. The numbers of older (65 years and over) and very old (85 years and over) people in the population have both more than doubled since 2005. Since 2020, these cohorts have increased by 18.6% and 20.2% respectively.
- At 30 June 2025, persons aged 30–34 years were the largest group, accounting for 7.2% (405,899 persons) of the Queensland population, followed by those aged 25–29 years (7.1%, and 401,639 persons).

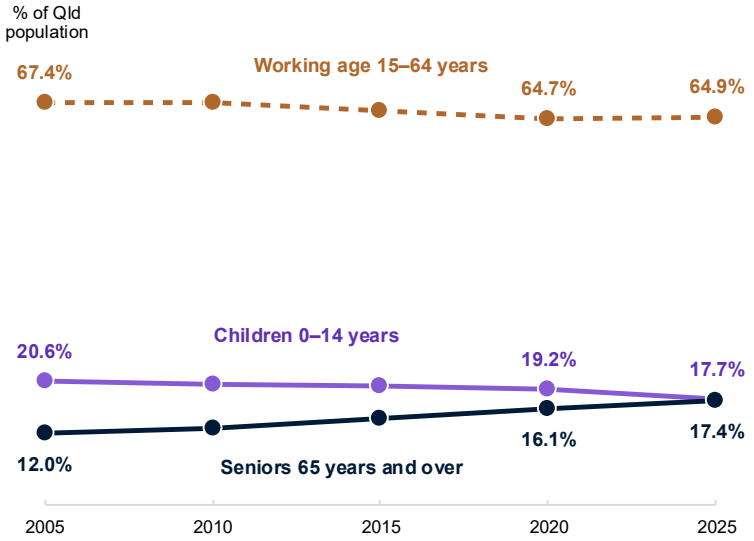
Proportion of population by age group, Queensland, as at 30 June 2025



- Children aged 0–14 years accounted for a smaller proportion of Queensland's population compared with five years earlier (17.7% compared with 19.2% in 2020). The 0–4, 5–9, and 10–14 years age groups each recorded proportional decreases since 2020, decreasing by 0.5, 0.7, and 0.3 percentage points respectively.
- There will be smaller cohorts moving into the labour force age groups in the future unless the impact of migration gains to the labour force cohorts (both NIM and NOM) can offset these differences.
- The dependency ratio (number of dependents per 100 working-age population[2]) decreased slightly from 54.6 in 2020 to 54.0 in 2025, driven primarily by a moderation to the increases in the old–age dependency ratio (65 years and over), from 24.9 to 26.8 per 100 working-age population, over the five years. The child dependency ratio (0–14 years) declined more substantially over the same period (from 29.7 in 2020 to 27.2 children per 100 working-age population in 2025), which offset the increase in the old–age dependency ratio.

[2] Working-age population is traditionally considered to be those aged 15–64 years.

Seniors nearly outnumber children in Queensland

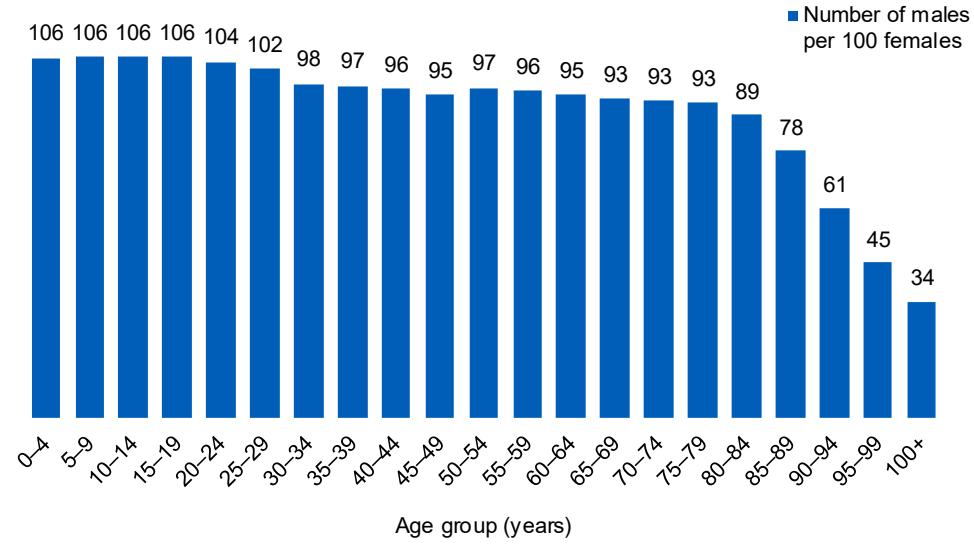


Seniors are the fastest growing group in the Queensland population:

- The population aged 65 years and over has more than doubled since 2005 to reach 987,239 persons in 2025.
- More than 1 in 6 Queenslanders were aged 65 years or older in 2025, up from just over 1 in 9 in 2005.
- The average annual growth rate since 2020 for seniors is 3.5%, compared with 1.6% 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 2025, and growth of 4.6% in the last year.

- Just under 2 in 3 (64.9%) Queenslanders are in the traditional working-age group of 15–64 years. This is a continuation of the slow decline in the proportion of the population that is of working-age seen over the past two decades — 67.4% at 30 June 2005.
- At 30 June 2025, Queensland's estimated resident population included 2,808,3940 males and 2,861,440 females. The median age (age where half the population is younger/older) for Queensland's males and females was 37.7 and 39.4 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[3] (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 of males to females declines with increasing age



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.

[3] Sex ratio is the number of males per 100 females in a population or age group within a population.

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 2025.

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 2024 are revised and from September 2024 to June 2025 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 2024 are revised (based on date of occurrence). Data for September 2024 to June 2025 are preliminary (based on date of registration).

Net overseas migration data for September quarter 1991 to June quarter 2024 are final. Data for September quarter 2024 to March quarter 2025 are revised (based on actual traveller behaviour). Data for June quarter 2025 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 — the ABS has undertaken a review and confirmed that Medicare is still the single best data source for estimating quarterly interstate migration, and identified improvements to the expansion factors and introduced an annual update process for these, with changes outlined here:

- Source Medicare data adjusted to reduce the impact of COVID-19 vaccination-induced address updates over 2021 and 2022
- enhanced 2021 Census-based Medicare adjustment factors introduced, to replace the previously used expansion factors
- a new annual adjustment to these factors incorporating PLIDA tax data introduced

These new factors were used to revise interstate arrival and departure estimates for the September 2021 to September 2024 quarters, and are in use for the December 2024 quarter onwards.

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 2024.

In most cases, figures included in the text throughout this report are rounded to the nearest 10, although all calculations and percentages are based on unrounded data.

A range of supporting data tables is available on the QGSO website (https://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.

Components of change

The components of population change are the key factors that cause a population to grow or shrink: natural increase (births minus deaths), net overseas migration, and, for state-level calculations, net internal migration (movement between states).

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.

Life expectancy

Life expectancy is the average number of additional years a person of a given age and sex could expect to live, assuming that current age- and sex-specific death rates remain constant throughout their lifetime

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.

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.

Sex ratio

Sex ratio is the ratio of males to females in a population, often referred to as the number of males per 100 females. It is a measure of a population's gender composition and can be calculated at various stages, such as at birth, for the total population, or at different age groups. The specific ratio can be influenced by factors like mortality rates, which differ between sexes.