

Queensland's future SA4 populations

Queensland Government projections, 2025 edition

Key points

Population growth, 2021 to 2046, medium series

Greater Brisbane..... ↑ 1.24 million persons

Rest of Queensland ↑ 819,510 persons

Population size, 2046, medium series

Greater Brisbane..... 3.81 million persons

Rest of Queensland 3.47 million persons

Introduction

This publication provides an overview of projected population change for Queensland's statistical areas level 4 (SA4s) over the 25 years from 2021 to 2046. A breakdown of both the components of change and the age structure of the future population is also included.

Analysis of the projection results at the small area level can be found in the related [information briefs](#)ⁱ for local government areas and statistical areas level 2 (SA2s). [Data tables](#)ⁱⁱ and [visualisations](#)ⁱⁱⁱ supporting the range of projection publications 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 final ERP for [30 June 2025](#)^v and [net overseas migration projections](#) published by the Centre for Population, Commonwealth Treasury at 26 March 2025^{vi}. Substate projections incorporate ERP to 30 June 2024 (the latest available at the time of modelling). All year references in this publication are "at 30 June".

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}.

Projected population

Greater Brisbane

Over the next 25 years, the population of Greater Brisbane is projected to grow by a further

1.24 million persons

to reach **3.81 million** persons by 2046 (medium series)

The Greater Brisbane^x Greater Capital City Statistical Area (GCCSA) includes the nine SA4s of Brisbane - East, Brisbane - North, Brisbane - South, Brisbane - West, Brisbane Inner City, Ipswich, Logan - Beaudesert, Moreton Bay - North and Moreton Bay - South.

Greater Brisbane is expected to gain an additional 1.24 million persons over 25 years to 2046 under the medium series, increasing the population to 3.81 million (Figure 1). Over the same period, the population of Greater Brisbane is projected to grow by 0.90 million persons under the low series and by up to 1.65 million under the high series. This equates to average annual growth rates of between 1.2% and 2.0% per annum under the three projection series (Table 1).

Greater Brisbane recorded an annual growth rate of 3.1% in 2022–23, the highest over the current reporting period from 1991. This was primarily driven by high net overseas migration. Growth then fell to 2.7% in 2023–24 and 2.1% in 2024–25 and is projected to moderate over time under each series. The estimated resident population of Greater Brisbane reached 2.83 million at 30 June 2025, an increase of around 266,000 persons from 2021, or 21.4% of the total growth anticipated under the medium series over the 25-year projection period.

Figure 1 Projected population Greater Brisbane GCCSA

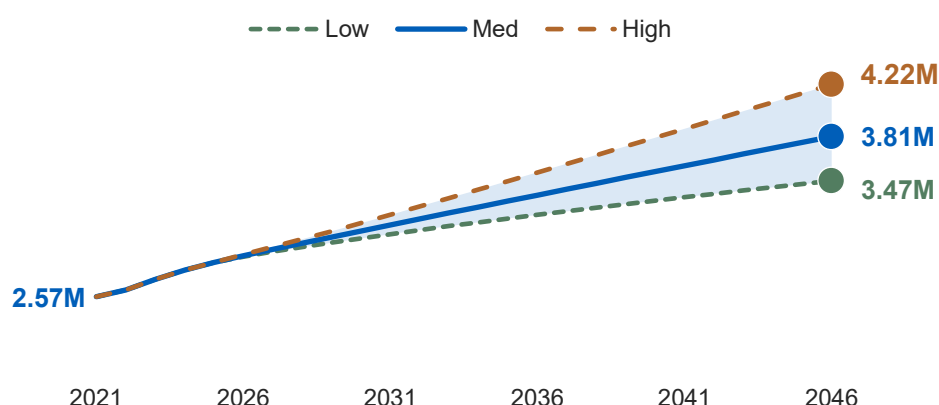


Table 1 Projected population and population change, by series, Greater Brisbane GCCSA

Projection series	Population		Population change	
	2021	2046	2021–2046	
	— persons —		— persons —	% per year
Low		3,468,674	900,960	1.2%
Medium	2,567,714	3,811,509	1,243,795	1.6%
High		4,217,259	1,649,545	2.0%

Four components of change at the SA4 level

- natural increase (births minus deaths)
- net interstate migration (interstate arrivals minus interstate departures)
- net intrastate migration (arrivals from other SA4s in Queensland minus departures to other Queensland SA4s)
- net overseas migration (overseas arrivals minus overseas departures).

Under each series, net overseas migration is expected to make the greatest contribution to the 25-year projected population growth, contributing between 459,800 and 809,400 persons (or 51.0% and 49.1% respectively) of the total population growth in Greater Brisbane (Table 2 and Figure 2).

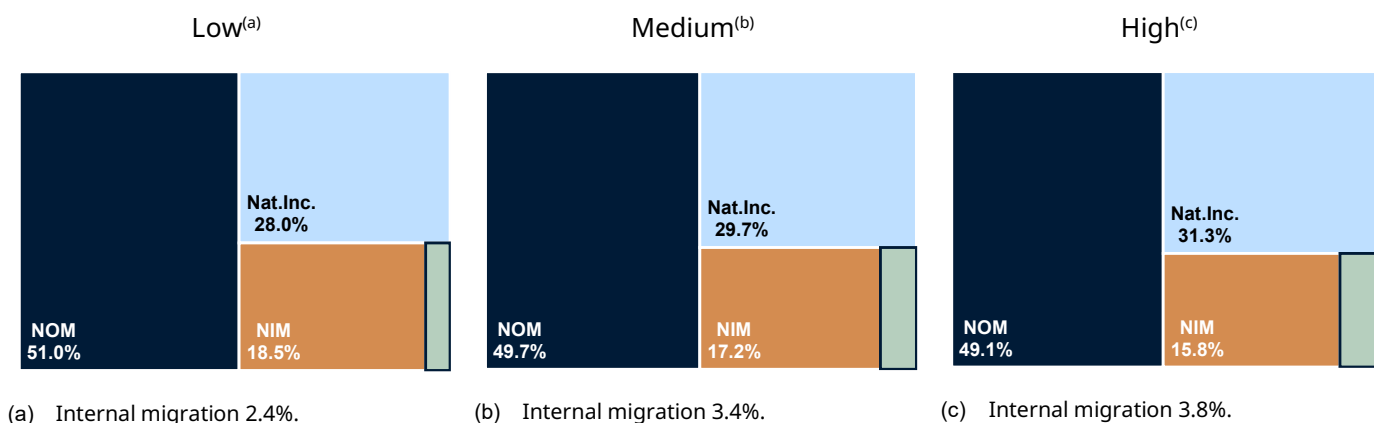
Natural increase is projected to make the second-largest contribution to population growth in Greater Brisbane by 2046, at 252,700 persons under the low series, and 516,850 persons under the high series.

Greater Brisbane is also anticipated to gain a relatively small number of people from other areas of the state — up to 62,930 under the high series, an average of around 2,500 per year, contributing 3.8% of Greater Brisbane's overall growth over the 25-year period.

Table 2 Components of projected population change, by series, Greater Brisbane GCCSA

Projection series, 2021 to 2046			
	Low	Medium	High
Component	— persons —		
<i>Births</i>	803,748	895,457	999,903
<i>Deaths</i>	551,048	526,233	483,055
Natural increase (Nat. Inc.)	252,700	369,224	516,848
Net intrastate migration (Int.)	21,818	42,375	62,932
Net interstate migration (NIM)	166,644	213,507	260,371
Net overseas migration (NOM)	459,799	618,688	809,395

Figure 2 Components of projected population change (%), by series, Greater Brisbane GCCSA



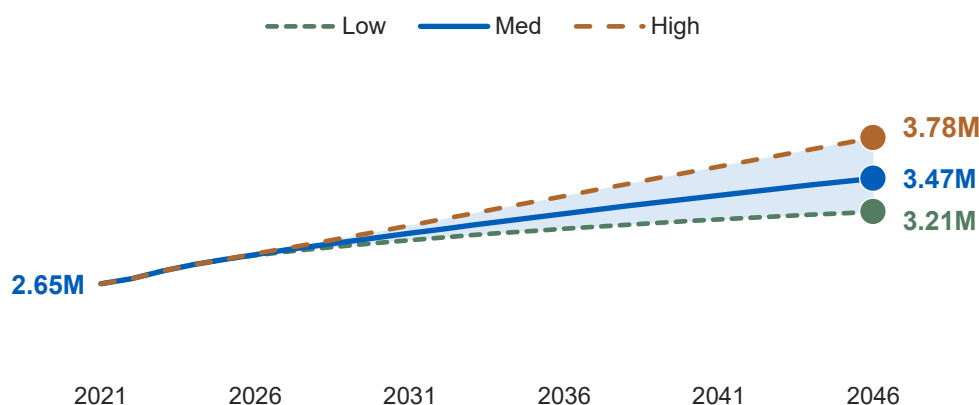
Rest of Queensland (Queensland excluding Greater Brisbane)

Over the next 25 years, the population of the **Rest of Queensland** is projected to grow by a further 819,510 persons to **reach 3.47 million** persons (medium series)

Rest of Queensland (RoQ) includes the regional SA4s of Cairns, Darling Downs - Maranoa, Central Queensland, Mackay - Isaac - Whitsunday, Queensland - Outback, Toowoomba, Townsville and Wide Bay, in addition to Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast.

Rest of Queensland is anticipated to grow by 819,510 persons under the medium series from 2.65 million in 2021 to 3.47 million by 2046 (Figure 3), and:

- under the low series, to reach 3.21 million persons in 2046, up by 558,870 persons
- under the high series, to reach 3.78 million persons in 2046, up by 1.13 million persons (Table 3).

Figure 3 Projected population, Rest of Queensland

The overall annual average growth rate under the low series, over the 25 years to 2046, is projected to be 0.8% p.a., increasing to 1.1% p.a. under the medium series and to 1.4% p.a. under the high series. A relatively high annual growth rate of 2.2% was observed in 2022–23; however, the rate fell quickly to 1.8% in 2023–24. Notably, Rest of Queensland experienced higher growth rates in selected years during the 1990s and early 2000s.

Table 3 Projected population and population change, by series, Rest of Queensland

Projection series	Population		Population change	
	2021	2046	2021–2046	
	— persons —		— persons —	% per year
Low		3,206,972	558,872	0.8%
Medium	2,648,100	3,467,610	819,510	1.1%
High		3,782,410	1,134,310	1.4%

Similar to Greater Brisbane, net overseas migration is projected to be the largest contributor to population growth in each series over the 25-year period, accounting for between 323,270 and 577,700 persons across the low to high series (Table 4).

Under each series, Rest of Queensland is projected to lose population to Greater Brisbane through intrastate migration. Natural increase will also show a net loss of 8,190 persons under the low series. Net interstate migration is projected to remain a relatively strong contributor to growth in the Rest of Queensland, ranging from 265,610 persons under the low series to 392,280 under the high series. This differs from Greater Brisbane, where natural increase is the second-largest contributor to growth in each series.

Table 4 Components of projected population change, by series, Rest of Queensland

Projection series, 2021 to 2046			
	Low	Medium	High
Component	— persons —		
<i>Births</i>	716,406	786,124	864,808
<i>Deaths</i>	724,599	692,097	637,554
Natural increase	-8,193	94,027	227,254
Net intrastate migration	-21,818	-42,375	-62,932
Net interstate migration	265,611	328,947	392,284
Net overseas migration	323,272	438,910	577,704

Greater Brisbane, medium series

Summary

Within Greater Brisbane, over the 25 years to 2046, the largest change is projected to be in Ipswich SA4...

with the population expected to increase by almost 288,000 from **374,000** to **661,000** persons (medium series)

Under the medium series, Ipswich and Moreton Bay - North are projected to be the fastest growing SA4s in Greater Brisbane, each growing by an average of 2.3% per year (Table 5). This is considerably faster than the Greater Brisbane average of 1.6% per year. Logan - Beaudesert is projected to be the third fastest growing SA4, at 2.1% per year, on average.

Ipswich is projected to grow by the most people, up by 287,730 to reach 661,360 persons in 2046, followed by Logan - Beaudesert, growing by 250,050 persons, and Moreton Bay - North, growing by 202,110 persons.

Together, Ipswich and Logan - Beaudesert are projected to account for 26.1% of Queensland's overall growth to 2046 under the medium series.

Table 5 Projected population and growth, medium series, Greater Brisbane SA4s

SA4/Region	Population		Change		Change 0–14 year olds		Change 65+ year olds		Median age
	2021	2046	2021–2046		2021–2046		2021–2046		2046
	— persons —			% p.a.		% p.a.		% p.a.	years
Greater Brisbane GCCSA	2,567,714	3,811,509	1,243,795	1.6%	138,791	1.0%	314,189	2.5%	39.6
Brisbane - East	243,445	298,658	55,213	0.8%	1,748	0.2%	26,856	1.9%	45.4
Brisbane - North	227,782	288,960	61,178	1.0%	3,736	0.3%	19,829	1.8%	41.0
Brisbane - South	377,159	487,618	110,459	1.0%	7,137	0.4%	27,109	1.8%	37.6
Brisbane - West	191,924	226,094	34,170	0.7%	–1,090	–0.1%	10,334	1.2%	38.8
Brisbane Inner City	297,656	464,669	167,013	1.8%	7,063	0.7%	36,380	3.2%	38.0
Ipswich	373,629	661,363	287,734	2.3%	44,620	1.7%	57,869	3.3%	38.2
Logan - Beaudesert	365,586	615,636	250,050	2.1%	37,787	1.5%	57,028	3.1%	38.8
Moreton Bay - North	268,977	471,086	202,109	2.3%	29,281	1.9%	56,802	2.8%	44.3
Moreton Bay - South	221,556	297,425	75,869	1.2%	8,509	0.6%	21,983	2.4%	38.7
Rest of Queensland	2,648,100	3,467,610	819,510	1.1%	53,418	0.4%	329,761	2.1%	44.4
Queensland	5,215,814	7,279,119	2,063,305	1.3%	192,209	0.7%	643,951	2.3%	41.7

Age

Median age

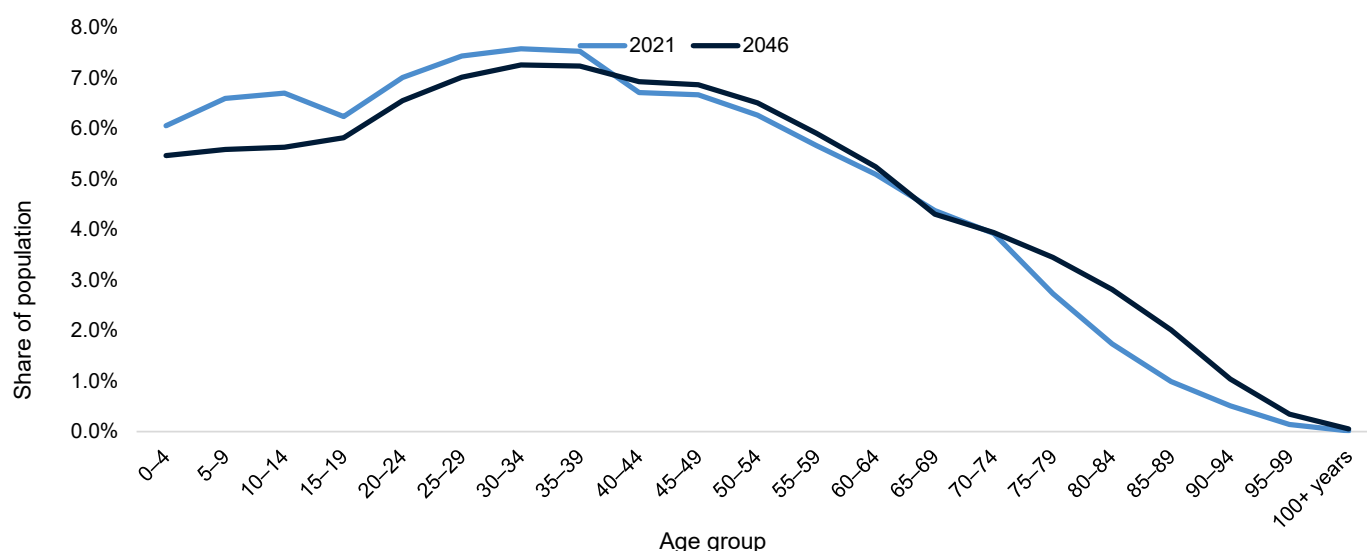
The populations of all Greater Brisbane SA4s are projected to age over the 25-year projection period to 2046

In 2021, Moreton Bay - North had the oldest population on average, with a median age of 42.3 years. Brisbane - East followed with a median age of 41.8 years. By 2046, Brisbane - East is projected to have a median age of 45.4 years, while Moreton Bay - North is projected to reach 44.3 years.

Logan - Beaudesert and Brisbane Inner City will age the most, with a projected increase in the median age of 4.0 years by 2046, although Brisbane Inner City is projected to still have one of the youngest populations on average (38.0 years). Brisbane - South is projected to have the youngest population, on average by 2046 (37.6 years), while Brisbane West is projected to age the least (0.9 years).

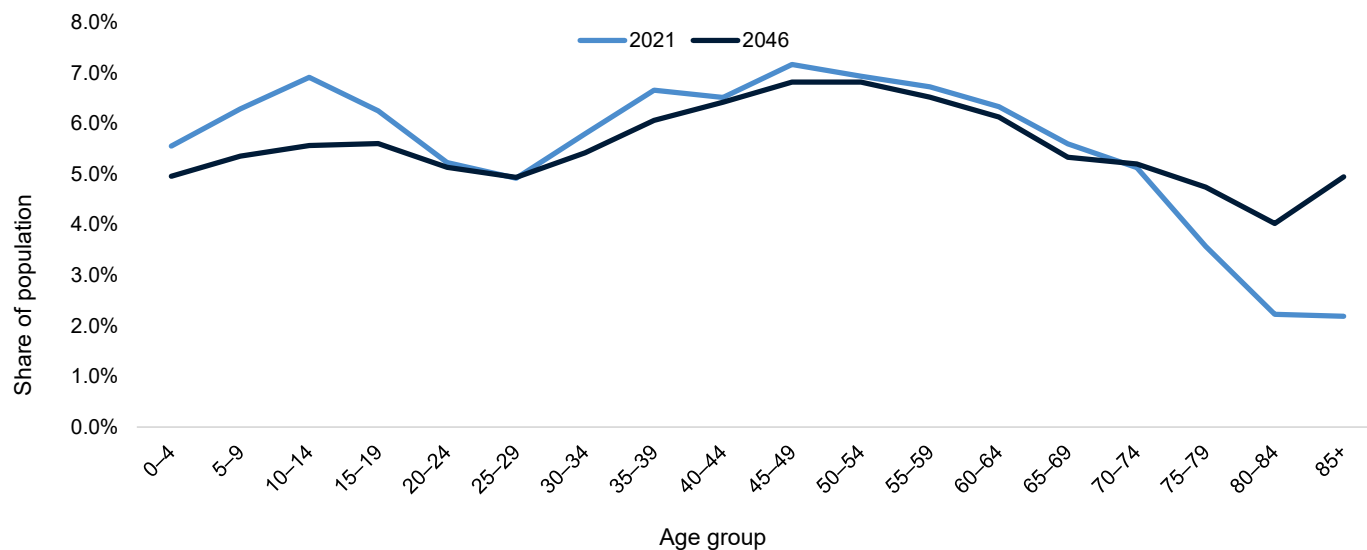
These changes in median age are reflected in the age profiles of the SA4 populations. Figure 4 shows the share of population by age for Greater Brisbane in both 2021 and 2046. By 2046, proportionally fewer people are projected in the population in all age groups under 40 years, and proportionally more in all age groups over 74 years.

Figure 4 Share of population by age, medium series, 2021 and 2046, Greater Brisbane GCCSA



Age profiles vary across SA4s because of differences in the starting population and the combined effects of assumed fertility, mortality and migration patterns over time. For example, higher fertility rates may result in a younger population. In contrast, high net internal migration losses among people in their 20s and early 30s may contribute to population ageing. This occurs both through direct population loss and through reduced future fertility, as fewer people are of childbearing age. Smaller populations too, will be subject to higher variability at single year of age level.

Brisbane - East SA4 shows a pronounced dip in the share of young people, from ages 15–19 years through to 25–29 years, typically associated with net migration losses (Figure 5). By 2046, the share of young children is expected to decrease, while the share of older persons is expected to increase.

Figure 5 Share of population by age, medium series, 2021 and 2046, Brisbane-East SA4

Older people

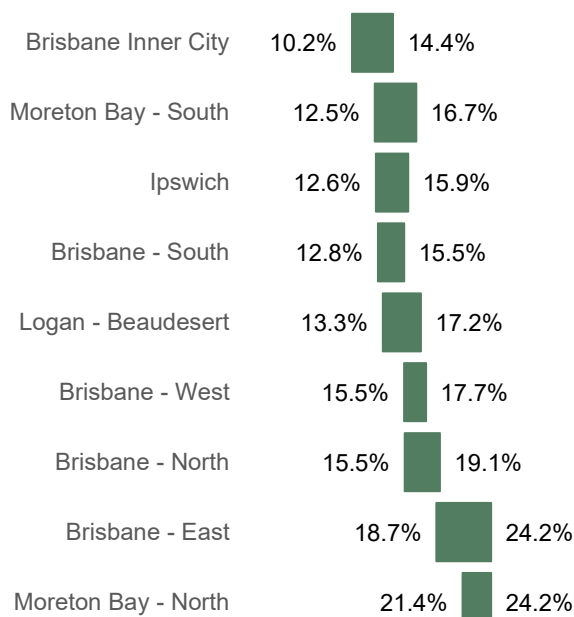
Consistent with the regions showing the highest median age in 2046, almost 1 in 4 residents in both Moreton Bay - North and Brisbane - East will be aged 65 years or older by 2046, with the share of older people in Brisbane - East projected to increase by more than five percentage points between 2021 and 2046 (Figure 6).

Brisbane Inner City is expected to have the smallest share of older people in 2046 at 14.4%, up from 10.2% in 2021.

Figure 6 Population aged 65 years and over (%), Greater Brisbane SA4s**Figure 7** Population aged 0-14 years (%), Greater Brisbane SA4s

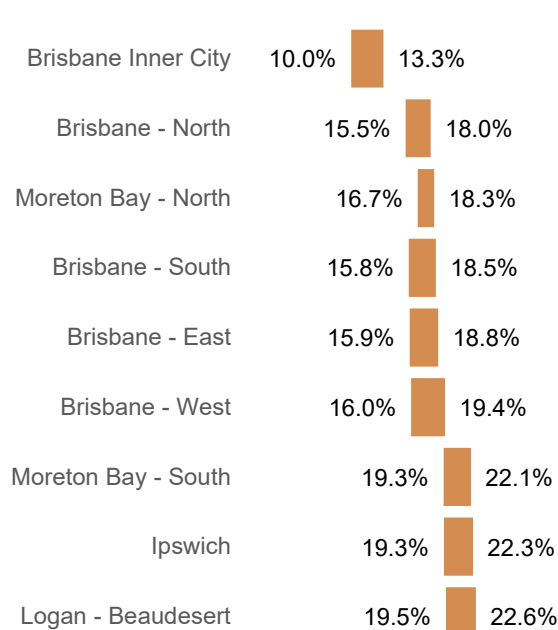
The proportion of older persons is projected to be higher in 2046

2021 → 2046



The proportion of children is projected to be lower in 2046

2046 ← 2021



Children

All Greater Brisbane SA4s expect to see a decrease in the proportion of children aged 0–14 years over the 25 years to 2046, with the largest proportional decrease projected to be in Brisbane - West — down by 3.4 percentage points to 16.0% (Figure 7).

In 2021, Logan - Beaudesert, Ipswich and Moreton Bay - South had the highest proportions of 0–14 year olds. While the proportions are projected to decrease by 2046 in each of these three SA4s, they will still be the highest ranking proportionally.

Rest of Queensland, medium series

Summary

Within Rest of Queensland, over the 25 years to 2046, Gold Coast SA4 is expected to have both the fastest growth (**1.6%** per year on average), and largest population gain (**325,520** persons)

Gold Coast was the most populous SA4 in RoQ in 2021, with 649,490 persons. It is also projected to:

- be the fastest growing SA4 at an average of 1.6% per year over the 25-years to 2046
- grow by the largest number of persons (325,520), to reach 975,013 persons by 2046.

Sunshine Coast SA4 is the next most populous SA4, both in 2021 (403,510 persons) and 2046, projected to grow by 178,480 persons, to reach 581,990 persons. Sunshine Coast SA4 is projected to grow by an average of 1.5% per year over the 25-year period.

Marginal population growth is projected in Darling Downs - Maranoa and Queensland - Outback over the projection horizon.

Table 6 Projected population and growth, medium series, Rest of Queensland SA4s

SA4/Region	Population		Population change		Population change 0–14 year olds		Population change 65+ year olds		Median age
	2021	2046	2021–2046		2021–2046		2021–2046		2046
	— persons —			% p.a.		% p.a.		% p.a.	years
Rest of Queensland	2,648,100	3,467,610	819,510	1.1%	53,418	0.4%	329,761	2.1%	44.4
Cairns	257,065	317,525	60,460	0.8%	3,000	0.2%	28,914	2.0%	44.6
Darling Downs - Maranoa	130,036	140,236	10,200	0.3%	–2,117	–0.3%	11,761	1.5%	47.3
Central Queensland	231,029	283,009	51,980	0.8%	1,092	0.1%	26,277	2.3%	41.8
Gold Coast	649,491	975,013	325,522	1.6%	35,540	1.1%	86,101	2.3%	42.2
Mackay - Isaac - Whitsunday	183,209	231,563	48,354	0.9%	2,710	0.3%	23,678	2.6%	42.6
Queensland - Outback	81,605	84,238	2,633	0.1%	–1,483	–0.3%	3,912	1.4%	37.6
Sunshine Coast	403,508	581,992	178,484	1.5%	14,363	0.8%	68,393	2.3%	47.7
Toowoomba	164,082	208,342	44,260	1.0%	1,155	0.1%	20,099	2.1%	43.2
Townsville	237,383	281,140	43,757	0.7%	1,777	0.2%	20,332	1.8%	39.8
Wide Bay	310,692	364,553	53,861	0.6%	–2,618	–0.2%	40,293	1.6%	53.6
Greater Brisbane GCCSA	2,567,714	3,811,509	1,243,795	1.6%	138,791	1.0%	314,189	2.5%	39.6
Queensland	5,215,814	7,279,119	2,063,305	1.3%	192,209	0.7%	643,951	2.3%	41.8

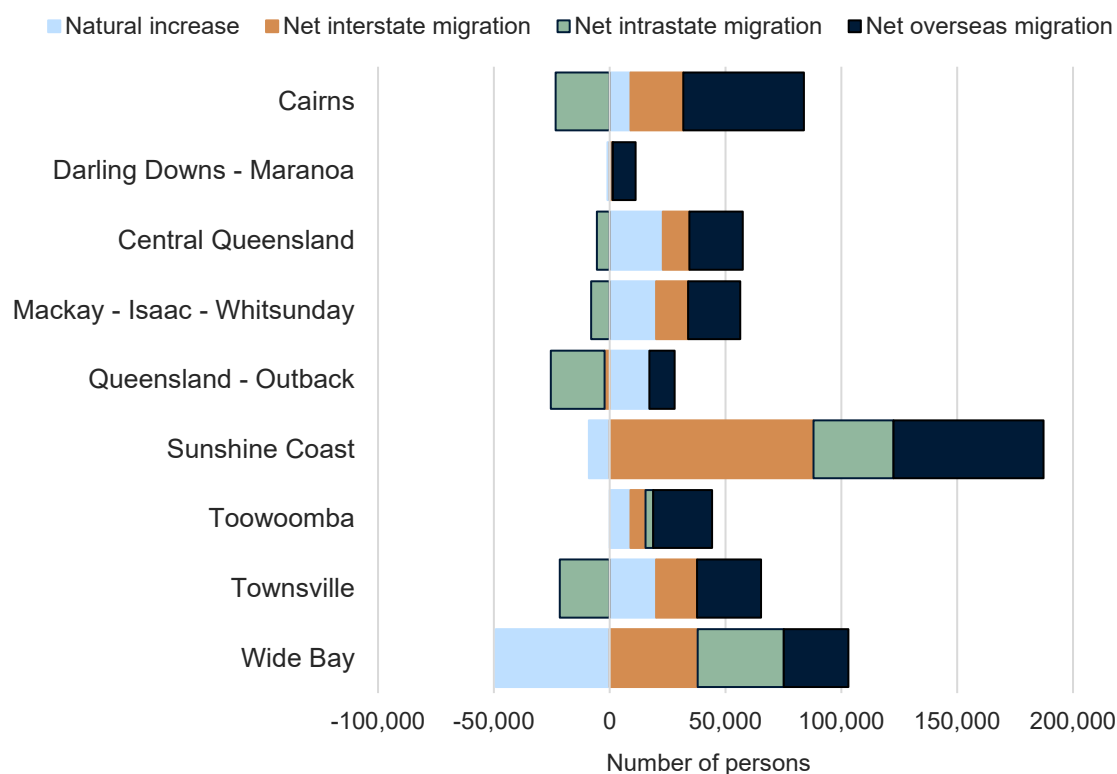
While overall growth in Toowoomba is expected to be slower than that of Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast SA4s (1.0% p.a. on average), it is the only SA4 in RoQ projected to have a net gain from each of the four growth components over the projection period, with 57.6% coming from net overseas migration, 20.4% from natural increase, 14.7% from net interstate migration, and a further 7.3% from net intrastate migration. In addition to Toowoomba, Darling Downs - Maranoa, Sunshine Coast, and Wide Bay are the only other RoQ SA4s projected to have a net gain from intrastate migration. The remainder are projected to experience a net loss, with the greatest in size from Gold Coast (-35,760), followed by Queensland - Outback (-23,220).

In almost all SA4s, net overseas migration is expected to be the largest contributor to growth. Exceptions to this were Queensland - Outback, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay SA4s:

- Natural increase (17,180) was the largest contributor to population gain in Queensland - Outback, followed by net overseas migration (10,820). Together, these offset the net loss to net intrastate migration (-23,220) and net interstate migration (-2,150).
- Net interstate migration (87,940) was the largest contributor to population gain in Sunshine Coast, followed by net overseas migration (64,870).
- Net interstate migration (38,010) was also the largest contributor to population gain in Wide Bay, followed by net overseas migration (27,900).

Notably, three SA4s, Darling Downs - Maranoa, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay, are projected to have a net population loss due to natural increase, i.e., deaths are projected to exceed births over the 25-year projection horizon. Wide Bay is expected to have the largest net loss (-49,250) among these three, and as a result, will have the oldest population on average in 2046, with a median age of 53.6 years.

Figure 8 Components of projected population change, medium series, 2021 to 2046, Rest of Queensland SA4s^(a)



(a) Gold Coast SA4 components not shown due to scale.

Age

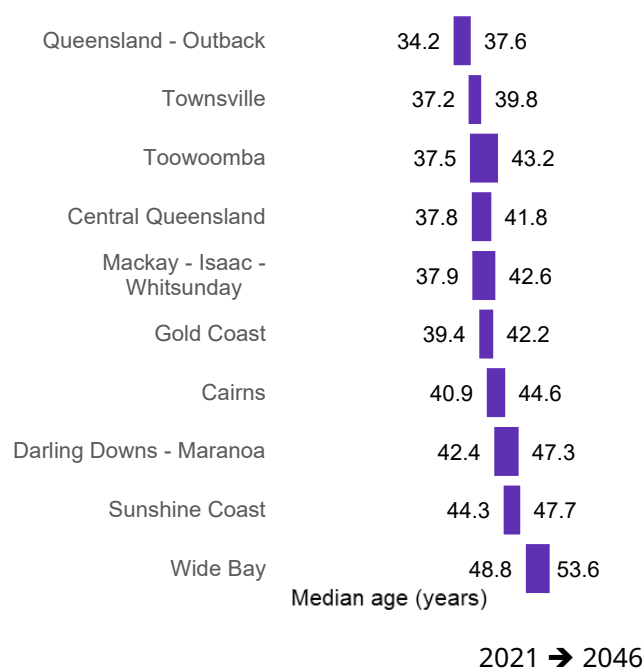
Median age

The populations of all RoQ SA4s are projected to age over the 25-year projection period

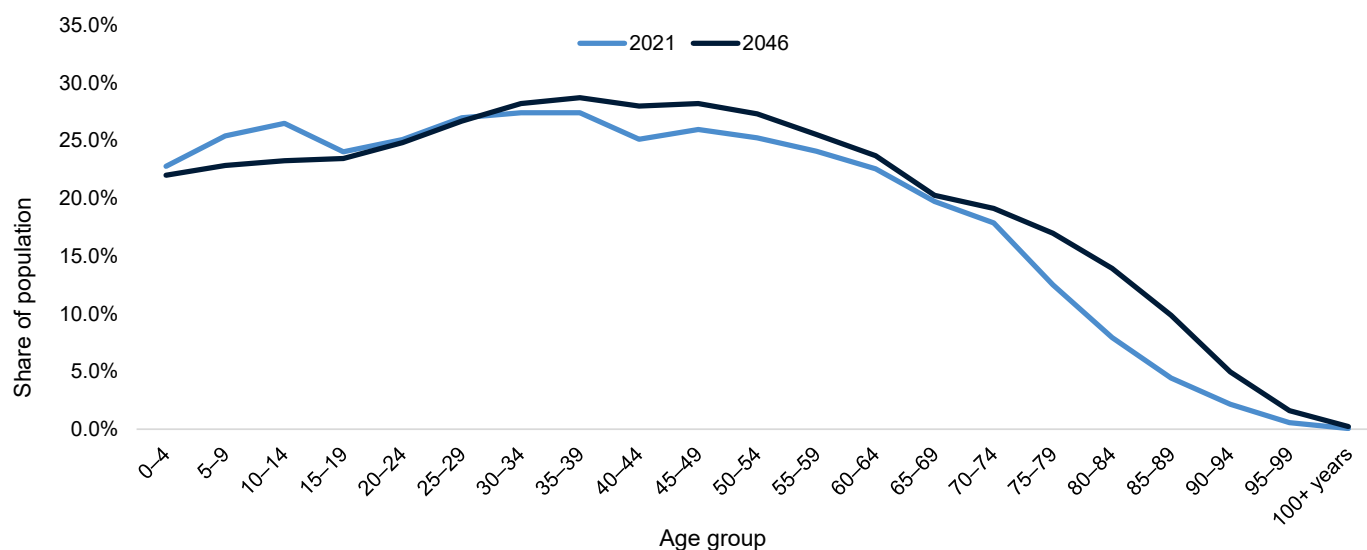
In 2021, half of Wide Bay's population was older than 48.8 years, the highest median age among RoQ SA4s. While Wide Bay will also have the highest median age in 2046 at 53.6 years, median age in Toowoomba followed by Darling Downs - Maranoa, will increase by the most over the 25-year period:

- The median age in Darling Downs - Maranoa is projected to increase by 4.9 years to 47.3 years.
- The median age in Toowoomba is projected to increase by 5.7 years to 43.2 years.

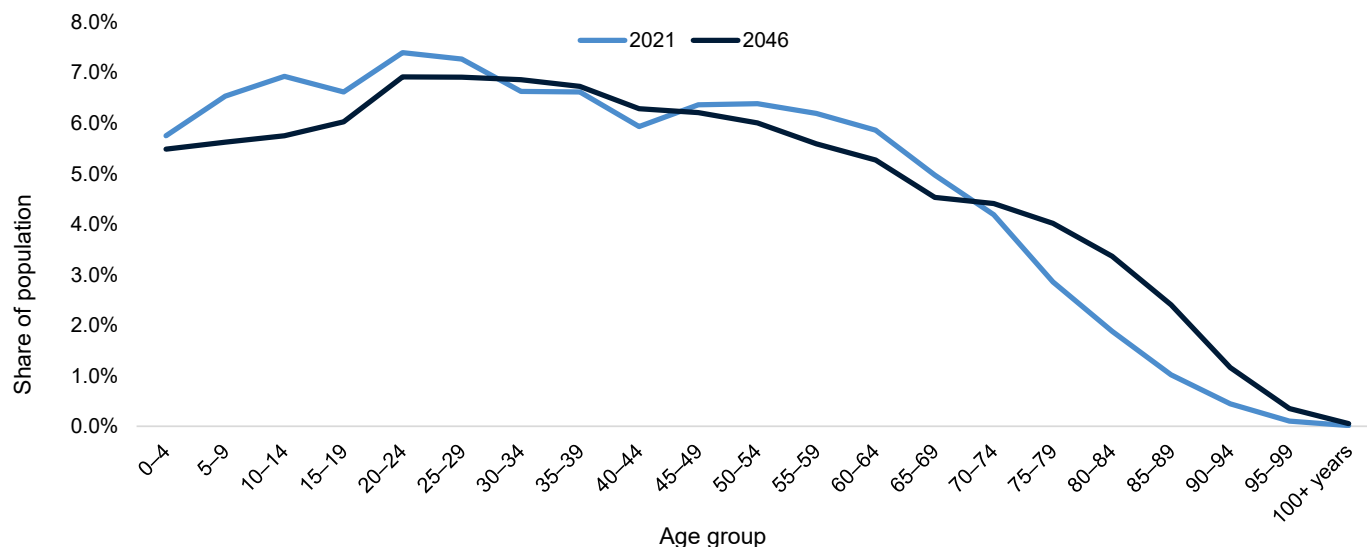
Queensland - Outback, followed by Townsville are projected to remain the youngest populations, on average, reaching median ages of 37.6 years and 39.8 years respectively in 2046. Townsville is also projected to have the smallest increase in median age over time (2.6 years), followed by Gold Coast (2.8 years).

Figure 9 Median age, medium series, 2021 and 2046, Rest of Queensland SA4s

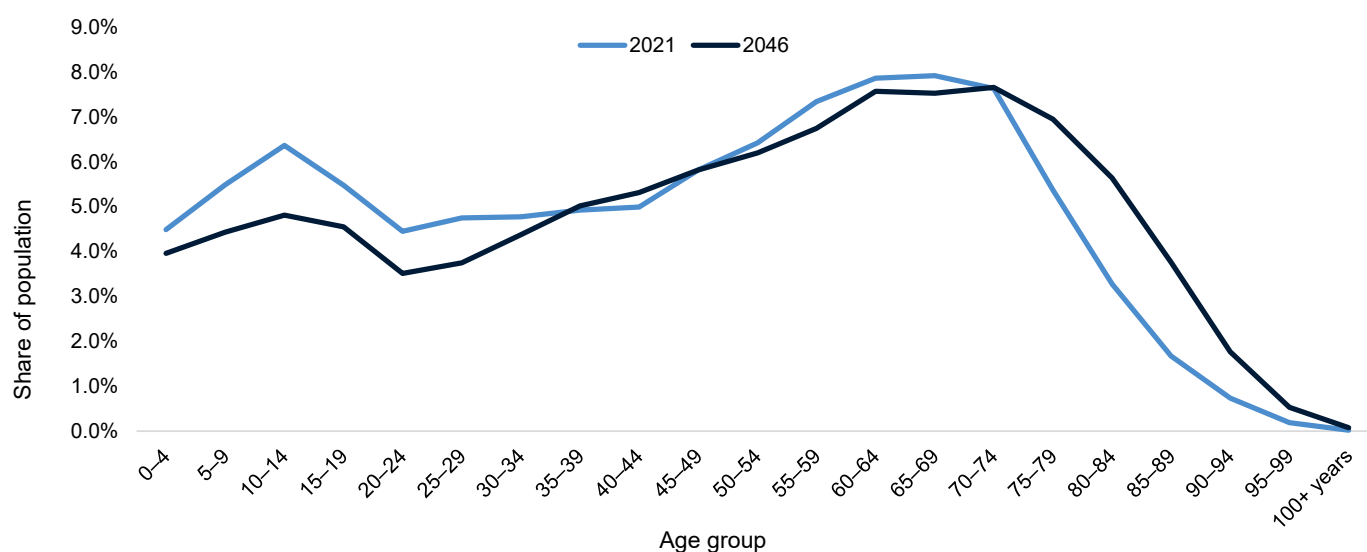
These changes in median age are reflected in the age profiles of the SA4 populations. Figure 10 shows the share of population by age for all RoQ in both 2021 and 2046. By 2046, proportionally fewer people are projected in the population in all age groups under 30 years, and proportionally more in all age groups over 74 years.

Figure 10 Share of population by age, medium series, 2021 and 2046, Rest of Queensland

The age profile of Townsville is somewhat different to most other SA4s, as it is home to a relatively young Defence Force population, in addition to having a campus of James Cook University. The pronounced dip in population typically present in the late teens is more moderated in the age profile, followed by an increase through the early 20s (Figure 11). Nevertheless, assumed moderation in fertility over time means that the projected population will age slightly over time.

Figure 11 Share of population by age, medium series, 2021 and 2046, Townsville SA4

Compared with Townsville, the age profile of Wide Bay shows an older population with relatively small cohorts of people in their 20s and 30s, and high proportions in their 60s and early 70s (Figure 12). This pattern is projected to continue with a shift towards older persons due to increased life expectancy and lower fertility assumed in the future. The profile of Darling Downs - Maranoa SA4 is similar to that of Wide Bay SA4.

Figure 12 Share of population by age, medium series, 2021 and 2046, Wide Bay SA4

Older people

All RoQ SA4s are projected to see an increase in both the proportion and number of older persons (65 years and older) over the 25-year projection period. By 2046, older persons will comprise over 20% of all residents in each of the RoQ SA4s, except Queensland - Outback (15.6%).

Consistent with Wide Bay having the oldest median age, more than 1 in 4 residents in the SA4 were aged 65 years or older in 2021. This proportion is projected to increase to around 1 in 3 by 2046 when there is expected to be around 123,650 older persons.

Mackay - Isaac - Whitsunday is projected to experience the greatest proportional increase (7.3 percentage points) in older persons, from 14.2% in 2021 to 21.4% in 2046, followed by Wide Bay (up 7.1 percentage points) and Darling Downs - Maranoa (up 6.9 percentage points).

Children

Although the proportion of children aged 0–14 years is projected to decline in all RoQ SA4s, the number of children is not projected to fall in every SA4.

Wide Bay is projected to have fewer children aged 0–14 years by 2046, both in number and as a share of the population:

- The number of children is projected to be 2,620 persons lower in 2046 than in 2021.
- Children are projected to comprise 13.2% of the population in 2046, down from 16.3% in 2021.

Increases in the number of children aged 0–14 years are projected in seven of the 10 RoQ SA4s, however, in all but the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, annual average growth rates are projected to be relatively slow at less than 0.5% per year, on average. The number of children in Gold Coast is projected to grow by an average of 1.1% per year, to reach 151,180 by 2046, up by 35,540 persons.

The share of children in the population over the 25-years to 2046 is projected to decrease most in Toowoomba (–3.7 percentage points), followed by Central Queensland (–3.5 percentage points) and Wide Bay (–3.1 percentage points).

Figure 13 Population aged 65 years and over (%), Rest of Queensland SA4s

The proportion of older persons is projected to be higher in 2046

2021 → 2046

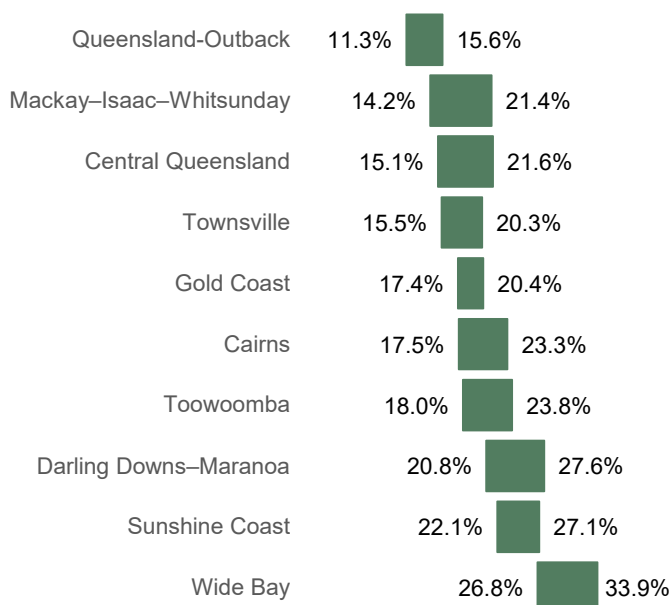
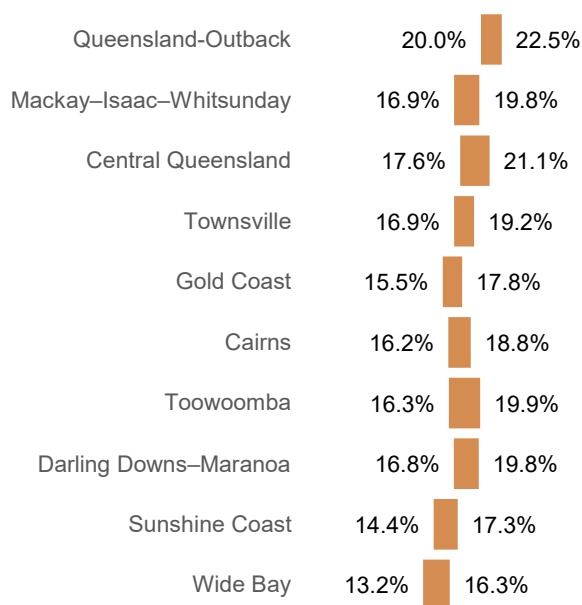


Figure 14 Population aged 0–14 years (%), Rest of Queensland SA4s

The proportion of children is projected to be lower in 2046

2046 ← 2021



Sources

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2025, *Regional population by age and sex*, viewed 10 April 2026, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/regional-population-age-and-sex/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>
- vi <https://population.gov.au/data-and-forecasts/projections>
- 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
- x Excludes the SA4s of Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast.