

# Estimated resident population

For the first time since 1981, Australia's regional population grew more than the capital cities, due to changing migration patterns during the pandemic.<sup>1</sup>



Australia's population as at June 2021 was **25.7** million people, with a growth rate of **0.2%** from June 2020, due to a natural increase of **134,750** people (**0.5%**) and net overseas migration decline of **-89,880** people (**-0.3%**).



Capital cities' population was **17.4 million**, with a decline of **-0.1%** from June 2020.

Regional Australia's population was **8.4 million**, with a growth rate of **0.9%** from June 2020.



**Brisbane** had the strongest growth among capital cities at **0.9%** over 12 months, while **Melbourne** had the largest decline at **-1.2%**.

**Regional Victoria** and **Regional New South Wales** had the strongest growth at **1.0%**, while **Regional Northern Territory** experienced **no change**.

Estimated Resident Population (ERP) is the official measure of Australia's population produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). These preliminary population estimates were released on 29 March 2022. The ABS will update and **release new regional population** estimates from 2017 to 2021 on **26 July 2022**. BCARR will release further analysis based on these population estimates in October 2022.

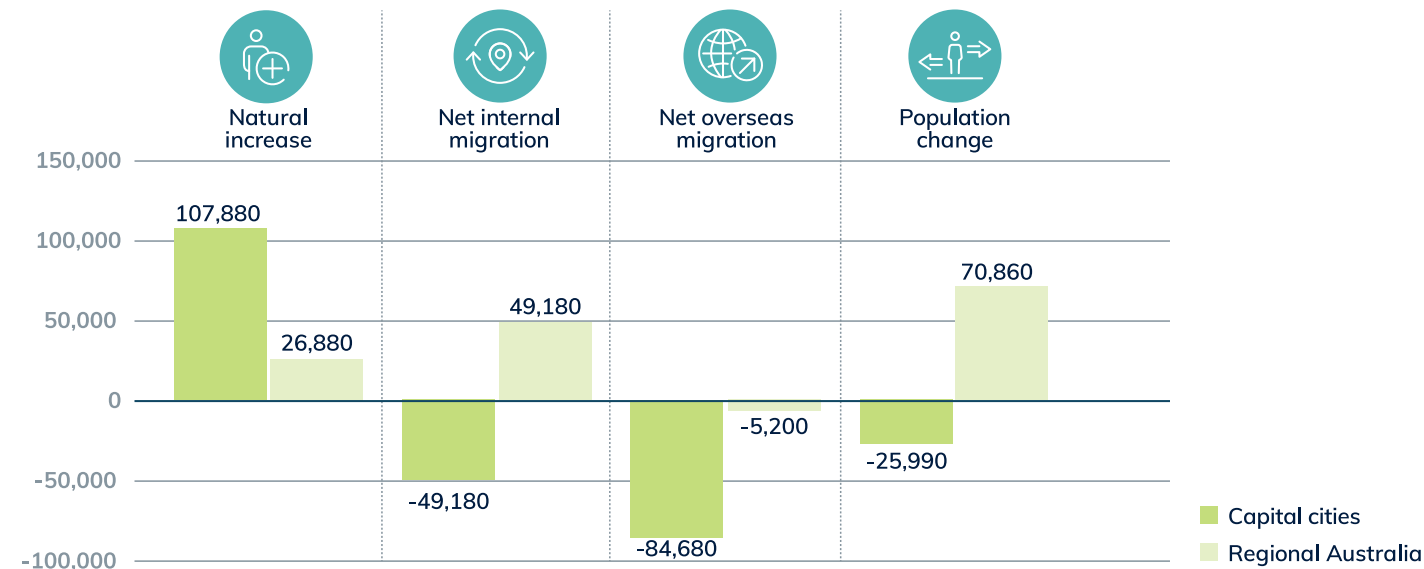
<sup>1</sup> Source for data in this fact sheet: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022, Regional Population, 29/03/2022 release, [www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/regional-population/2020-21](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/regional-population/2020-21) Note: Numbers have been rounded to the nearest ten

## Population by Capital Cities and Rest of State

Capital city and rest of state	Population 2021	Change 1 year	Change 1 year	Change 5 years	Average annual change 5 years
		no.	%	no.	%
Sydney	5,361,470	-5,150	-0.1	336,540	1.3
Rest of NSW	2,827,190	26,780	1.0	119,250	0.9
Melbourne	5,096,300	-60,510	-1.2	381,910	1.6
Rest of Vic.	1,552,770	15,710	1.0	93,980	1.3
Brisbane	2,582,010	21,870	0.9	219,340	1.8
Rest of Qld	2,639,230	24,120	0.9	156,750	1.2
Adelaide	1,378,410	1,900	0.1	54,360	0.8
Rest of SA	394,980	1,220	0.3	6,200	0.3
Perth	2,141,830	16,170	0.8	122,570	1.2
Rest of WA	540,420	1,880	0.3	3,710	0.1
Hobart	238,380	-330	-0.1	12,460	1.1
Rest of Tas.	302,940	1,110	0.4	11,340	0.8
Darwin	146,980	-330	-0.2	-120	0.0
Rest of NT	98,930	0	0.0	350	0.1
ACT	431,610	400	0.1	28,510	1.4
Other territories	4,700	40	0.8	100	0.4
Australia	25,738,140	44,880	0.2	1,547,240	1.2

# Population Components 2020–21

## Population components



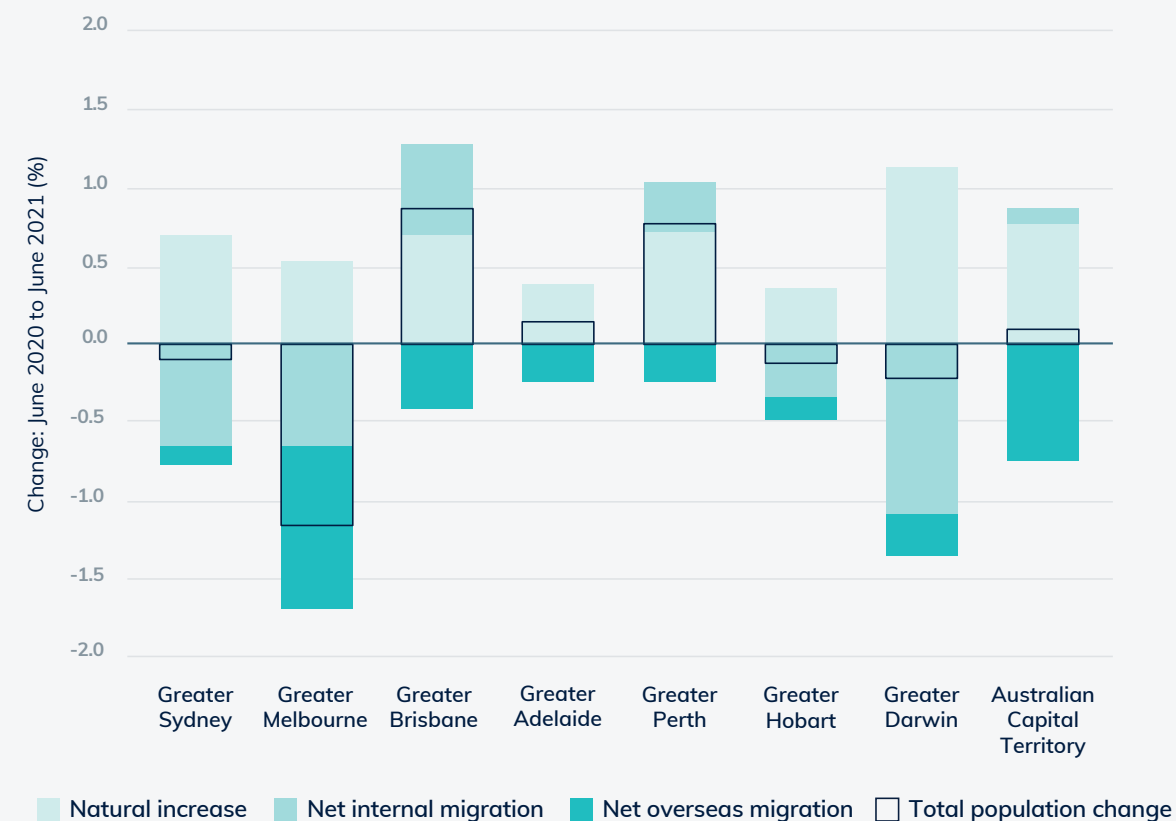
**Sydney** recorded the first year of negative population growth since 1953 **(-0.1%)** and **Melbourne** decline for the first time since the Great Depression (1930 to 1932) **(-1.2%)**.<sup>2</sup>

This was driven by outflows of overseas migrants and internal migrants in both cities.

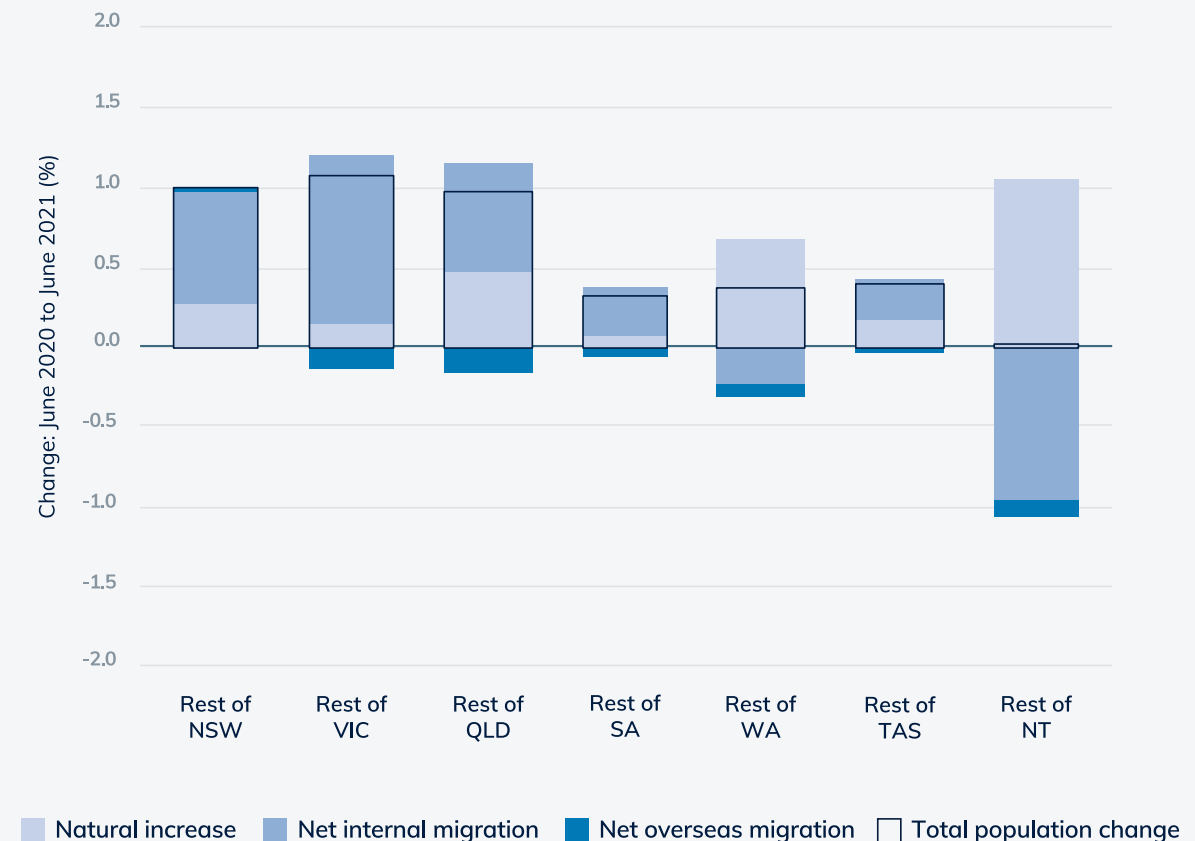


Population growth was less affected in **regional areas**, as falls in overseas migration were offset by **gains in internal migration**.

### Capital city components of population change 2020–21 (%)



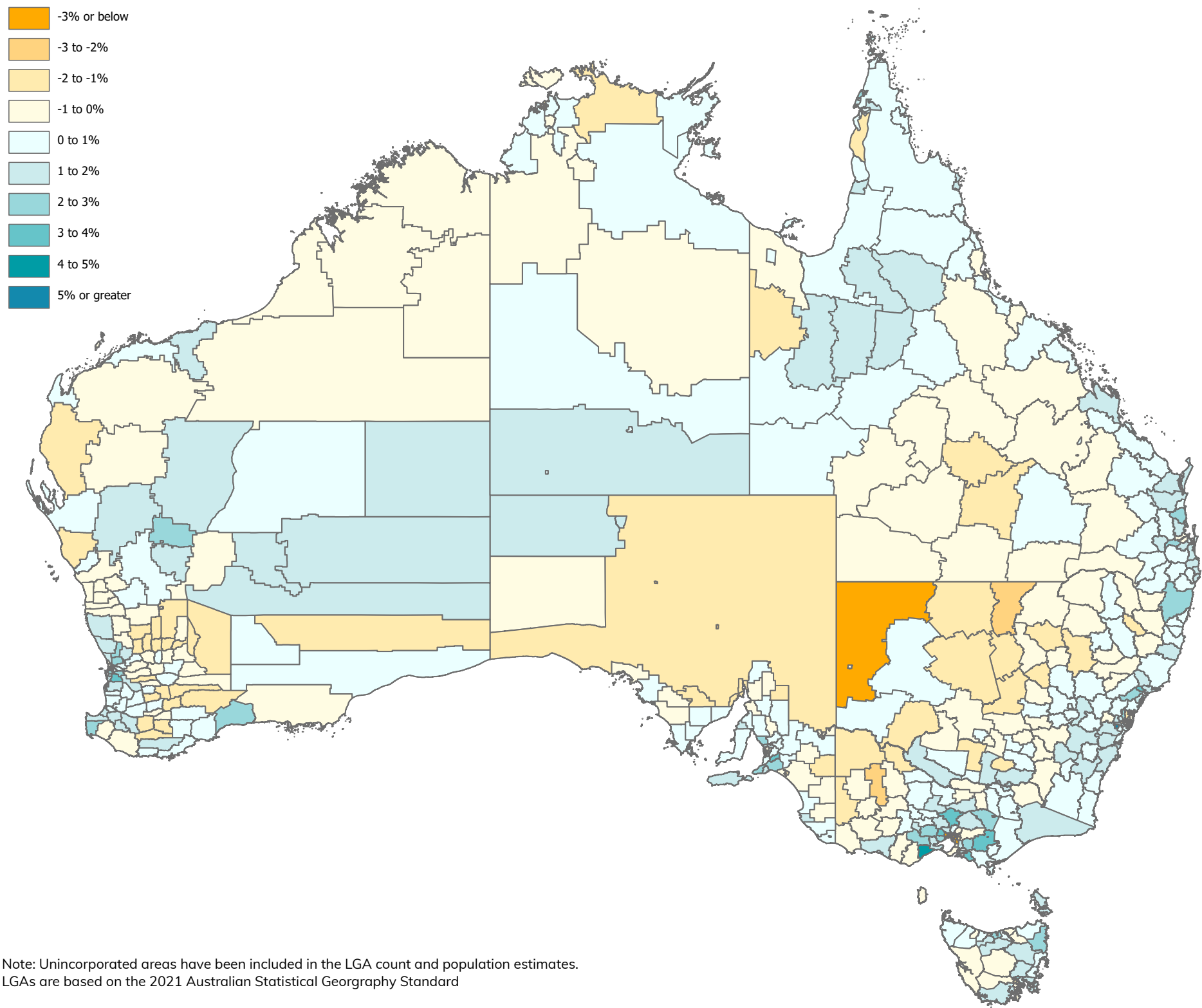
### Regional Australia components of population change 2020–21 (%)



<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019, Historical Population, 18/04/2019 release, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/historical-population/2016>

# Local Government Areas

## 2020–21 Population Change



Note: Unincorporated areas have been included in the LGA count and population estimates.  
LGAs are based on the 2021 Australian Statistical Geography Standard



Of the 547 LGAs, **313 experienced population growth** over the past year. The 234 LGAs that experienced declines was a 52% increase over the previous year.



**Camden LGA** in South West Sydney experienced the strongest population growth of any LGA, with a population increase of **6.2%**, primarily driven by internal migration.



By number, parts of Queensland including the **Gold Coast** and the **Sunshine Coast** had the largest population growth, driven by internal migration. In percentage terms, LGAs **in regional Victoria** and in the outer suburbs of Melbourne also experienced strong population growth.



LGAs **within Melbourne** experienced some of the largest declines – with **Melbourne LGA** experiencing the biggest decline, both by number (-13,770) and percentage (-7.5%), generated by significant negative net overseas migration.

# Local Government Areas

## Growth

Top 5 Population growth LGAs, 2020–21, by number

LGA	Population 2021	Change 1 year (no.)	Change 1 year (%)	Change 5 years (no.)	Average annual change 5 years (%)
Gold Coast (QLD)	643,460	8,400	1.3	68,160	2.3
Sunshine Coast (QLD)	343,590	7,150	2.1	40,750	2.6
Moreton Bay (QLD)	486,650	7,070	1.5	47,350	2.1
Ipswich (QLD)	236,710	6,910	3.0	36,610	3.4
Camden* (NSW)	114,520	6,720	6.2	34,250	7.4

Top 5 Population growth LGAs, 2020–21, by percentage

LGA	Population 2021	Change 1 year (no.)	Change 1 year (%)	Change 5 years (no.)	Average annual change 5 years (%)
Camden* (NSW)	114,520	6,720	6.2	34,250	7.4
Surf Coast (VIC)	36,280	1,520	4.4	5,810	3.6
Melton (VIC)	179,110	6,710	3.9	37,690	4.8
Bass Coast (VIC)	38,830	1,390	3.7	5,360	3.0
Maitland (NSW)	90,450	3,060	3.5	11,390	2.7

## Decline

Top 5 Population decline LGAs, 2020–21, by number

LGA	Population 2021	Change 1 year (no.)	Change 1 year (%)	Change 5 years (no.)	Average annual change 5 years (%)
Melbourne* (VIC)	169,860	-13,770	-7.5	23,760	3.1
Monash (VIC)	197,980	-6,870	-3.4	5,360	0.5
Brimbank (VIC)	201,680	-6,470	-3.1	-2,510	-0.2
Sydney (NSW)	242,240	-6,430	-2.6	19,520	1.7
Boroondara* (VIC)	176,630	-6,340	-3.5	-640	-0.1

Top 5 Population decline LGAs, 2020–21, by percentage

LGA	Population 2021	Change 1 year (no.)	Change 1 year (%)	Change 5 years (no.)	Average annual change 5 years (%)
Melbourne* (VIC)	169,860	-13,770	-7.5	23,760	3.1
Unincorporated NSW	930	-40	-3.7	-190	-3.6
Port Philip (VIC)	112,090	-4,330	-3.7	3,470	0.6
Stonnington (VIC)	114,340	-4,230	-3.6	3,340	0.6
Boroondara* (VIC)	176,630	-6,340	-3.5	-640	-0.1

\*Denotes LGAs with both significant population growth/decline by number and percentage.