

Net Overseas Migration - Definition and Figures

Population change in Australia is made up of two components:

1. Natural increase, which is births minus deaths; and
2. Net overseas migration.

Definition

This is how the Bureau of Statistics describes net overseas migration (“NOM”):

“It is the difference between the number of incoming travellers who stay in Australia for 12 months or more and are added to the population (NOM arrivals) and the number of outgoing travellers who leave Australia for 12 months or more and are subtracted from the population (NOM departures). With the introduction of the improved methods for estimating NOM this 12 months does not have to be continuous and is measured over a 16 month reference period. For example whether a traveller is in or out of the population is determined by their exact duration of stay in or away from Australia over the subsequent 16 months after arrival or departure.”

From *Population Estimates: Concepts, Sources and Methods 2009*, ABS 3228.0.55.001, at p.37.

Before July 2006, the ABS used a 12/12 rule whereby travellers were only counted as migrants if they stayed in Australia continuously for 12 months. This method was discarded when the new 12/16 rule was found to be more accurate. The Bureau has said:

“13 Analysis undertaken by the ABS comparing the previous method (12/12 month rule) to the current method (12/16 month rule) over a three year period (December quarter 2003 to September quarter 2006), shows the current method estimate to be on average 25% higher than the previous estimate.”

From *Technical Note: '12/16 Month Rule' Methodology for Calculating Net Overseas Migration From September Quarter 2006 Onwards*, ABS 3412.0, Migration Australia 2007-2008.

The changed methodology means that the pre and post 2006 figures are not strictly comparable in a statistical sense.

This is how the Bureau counts NOM at present:

“6.10 To measure a travellers actual duration of stay the ABS uses a unique personal identifier provided with the administrative data supplied by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). To be able to apply the 12/16 rule the personal identifier is used to match a travellers movements over time and construct a movement history for each arrival and departure record.”

From *Population Estimates: Concepts, Sources and Methods 2009*, ABS 3228.0.55.001, at p.38.

The Figures

The official Net Overseas Migration figures are those published by the ABS, but they are released with a lag of more than six months. The most up to date figures are therefore those published quarterly by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in a publication called *The Outlook for Net Overseas Migration*. These are subject to revision as more data becomes available. The publication includes historical figures plus forecasts as to migration in different categories over the next four years. The publication for the December quarter 2012,

released in March 2013, includes the table on the next page which shows the number of arrivals, departures and net result in each of the main visa categories. The table confirms that in the year ending 31 Dec 2012:

- ▶ 219,400 migrants entered Australia
- ▶ This included 50,500 persons in what We Will Decide calls the International Obligations category (10,900 humanitarian entrants and 39,600 New Zealanders), and
- ▶ 168,900 people in what We Will Decide classifies as the National Interest category.

Table 3: Year ending forecasts of NOM

Year ending NOM arrivals '000 of persons	2012 June	2012 Sept	2012 Dec	2013 Mar	2013 June	2013 Sept	2013 Dec	2014 June	2015 June	2016 June
Students	83.5	85.2	85.7	88.2	88.1	89.3	90.2	92.9	98.0	103.4
Subclass 457	43.5	45.7	45.8	45.4	45.1	44.9	45.1	46.0	47.5	48.2
Working Holiday Makers	53.5	54.6	54.7	54.9	55.7	56.1	57.2	59.4	60.1	60.6
Tourists	30.2	29.4	28.5	28.0	27.8	28.8	29.4	28.9	28.9	29.1
Total Temporary	210.7	215.0	214.8	216.4	216.8	219.1	222.0	227.1	234.4	241.3
Skilled	47.5	47.7	47.7	47.7	47.7	47.7	47.7	48.0	48.3	48.6
Family	32.2	34.2	35.6	37.4	39.2	39.1	39.5	40.1	40.3	40.3
Humanitarian	7.7	9.4	10.9	12.5	14.1	14.4	14.7	15.3	16.5	17.0
Total Permanent	87.5	91.2	94.3	97.6	101.1	101.3	102.0	103.5	105.2	106.0
Australian citizen	83.2	83.8	83.0	83.7	84.6	85.3	85.9	84.9	85.8	86.3
New Zealand citizen	60.8	61.2	61.7	62.1	62.6	63.1	63.6	63.9	64.4	65.4
Other	30.2	30.7	31.0	31.6	32.0	32.6	32.8	33.4	33.9	35.6
Total Other	174.1	175.6	175.7	177.4	179.2	181.1	182.3	182.1	184.2	187.3
Total Arrivals	472.3	481.8	484.8	491.4	497.0	501.5	506.2	512.7	523.8	534.6
Year ending NOM departures '000 of persons	2012 June	2012 Sept	2012 Dec	2013 Mar	2013 June	2013 Sept	2013 Dec	2014 June	2015 June	2016 June
Students	51.5	52.1	49.3	45.9	44.3	43.6	44.2	44.6	41.7	44.1
Subclass 457	13.3	14.9	16.5	17.6	19.6	19.1	18.7	18.0	18.4	19.0
Working Holiday Makers	18.0	19.3	20.6	21.7	24.1	24.3	24.6	25.1	26.7	27.0
Tourists	18.5	16.9	15.2	13.6	12.1	11.8	11.6	11.1	11.6	11.5
Total Temporary	101.4	103.2	101.6	98.8	100.0	98.9	99.1	98.8	98.4	101.6
Skilled	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9
Family	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Humanitarian	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Permanent	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Australian citizen	85.2	84.5	85.7	86.1	86.3	86.4	86.7	88.0	89.0	90.3
New Zealand citizen	21.4	21.6	22.1	22.3	22.1	21.8	21.7	22.4	22.7	23.0
Other	49.7	49.7	49.8	49.8	50.1	50.2	50.5	50.6	50.7	51.3
Total Other	156.3	155.7	157.6	158.3	158.5	158.4	158.9	161.0	162.4	164.5
Total Departures	264.0	265.2	265.4	263.4	265.0	263.8	264.4	266.3	267.4	272.7
Year ending Net NOM '000 of persons	2012 June	2012 Sept	2012 Dec	2013 Mar	2013 June	2013 Sept	2013 Dec	2014 June	2015 June	2016 June
Students	32.0	33.1	36.5	42.3	43.8	45.7	46.0	48.3	56.3	59.4
Subclass 457	30.2	30.8	29.3	27.8	25.5	25.7	26.5	27.9	29.1	29.2
Working Holiday Makers	35.5	35.4	34.1	33.2	31.7	31.8	32.6	34.3	33.3	33.6
Tourists	11.7	12.4	13.4	14.4	15.7	17.0	17.8	17.8	17.3	17.5
Total Temporary	109.3	111.8	113.2	117.6	116.7	120.2	122.9	128.3	136.0	139.7
Skilled	43.7	43.9	43.9	43.8	43.8	43.8	43.8	44.1	44.4	44.7
Family	29.8	31.8	33.3	35.0	36.7	36.6	37.0	37.5	37.8	37.8
Humanitarian	7.7	9.3	10.9	12.4	14.1	14.4	14.7	15.3	16.5	17.0
Total Permanent	81.2	85.0	88.0	91.2	94.6	94.8	95.5	97.0	98.7	99.5
Australian citizen	-2.0	-0.7	-2.7	-2.4	-1.6	-1.1	-0.8	-3.1	-3.2	-4.0
New Zealand citizen	39.3	39.6	39.6	39.8	40.4	41.3	41.9	41.5	41.7	42.4
Other	-19.5	-19.0	-18.8	-18.2	-18.1	-17.5	-17.6	-17.2	-16.8	-15.7
Total Other	17.8	19.9	18.2	19.1	20.7	22.7	23.5	21.1	21.7	22.7
Total Net NOM	208.3	216.6	219.4	228.0	232.0	237.7	241.8	246.4	256.4	261.9

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics and Department of Immigration and Citizenship