



Population size and growth rate

“The rapid urbanisation on the outer fringes of capital cities, impacts of sea-change and tree-change movement into some regional areas, changing population demographics and the depopulation of other parts of rural and regional Australia, have resulted in rapid changes to the profile and characteristics of communities.”

Australian Heritage Council, submission 364

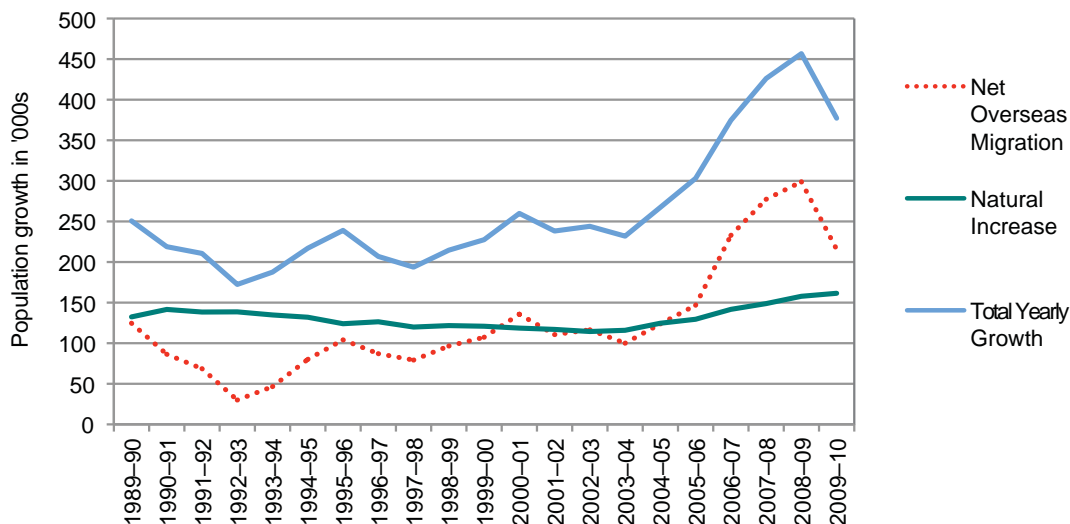
Over the past 40 years Australia’s population has grown at an average annual rate of 1.4 per cent per annum, taking Australia’s total population to approximately 22.4 million in 2010. The annual population growth rate was 1.6 per cent for the year ending September 2010, which represented an increase of 345,500 people over the previous year. This was down from the peak growth rate of 2.2 per cent for the year ending December 2008.¹

A country’s population is never static. Current projections suggest Australia’s population will continue to grow over time, but at slower rates than in the past. Changes in the rate of growth of Australia’s population are inevitable as a result of changes in the fertility rate, increased life expectancy, and net overseas migration (NOM) levels. Of the three measures, NOM has in recent years had the largest impact on overall population change (Figure 1). From a peak in 2008–09, (due to an influx of temporary migrants), NOM has since been falling, contributing 54 per cent of additional population in the twelve months to September 2010 compared to 65 per cent in the previous twelve months to September 2009².

1 ABS (2011) (b)

2 ABS (2010) (a)

Figure 1. Components of Population Change



Source: Derived from ABS (2010) (e)