Territory Population Update


Summary

Population figures just published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the total Estimated Resident Population of the Northern Territory reached 245,048 at the end of December 2016, an increase of 645 over one year earlier. This represents a growth rate of 0.3%. The population of 245,048 gives the Territory a 1.0% share of the national population of 24,385,635. These statistics differ slightly from those previously presented because they have been updated to incorporate the results of the 2016 Census.

The graph below illustrates how the Territory’s population has changed over the last few years. Following strong increases in 2012 and early 2013, population growth has been limited over the most recent years.

Note: Population statistics are for the end of each month shown
Source: ABS
The bar chart below shows how the Territory’s population growth rate during 2016 compares with that of the other States and Territories. Relative to other jurisdictions, the Territory’s population growth rate is quite low.

Source: ABS

What factors are driving population change in the Territory?

Population change in the Territory is the result of several demographic processes. These are:

- births
- deaths
- in-migration from interstate
- out-migration to interstate
- immigration from overseas
- emigration to overseas.

These six factors are often summarised as:

- natural change (births minus deaths)
- net interstate migration (in-migration minus out-migration)
- net overseas migration (immigration minus emigration).
The diagram below shows how these factors of population change affected population growth during 2016. Processes which remove people from the Territory are shown in red; those which add people to the population are shown in green.

- During 2016 there were 3,923 births and 1,044 deaths to Territory residents, giving natural change of 2,879.
- There were an estimated 14,524 in-migration moves to the Territory from interstate, while there were 17,702 out-migrations to other parts of Australia. Net interstate migration was -3,178.
- The Territory’s population experienced immigration of 5,958 from overseas, while emigration to other countries was 5,120. Net overseas migration was 838.
- Total population change was estimated to be 645.
- Although overall population change was modest, the churn of population (numbers of people being added and removed from the population) was substantial. This is a long-established characteristic of the Territory’s demography.

**Factors affecting population change in the Territory during 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Births</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Interstate in-migration</th>
<th>Interstate out-migration</th>
<th>Immigration</th>
<th>Emigration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,923</td>
<td>1,044</td>
<td>14,524</td>
<td>17,702</td>
<td>5,958</td>
<td>5,120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Natural change

\[= \text{Births} - \text{Deaths}\]

\[= 2,879\]

Net interstate migration

\[= \text{In-migration} - \text{Out-migration}\]

\[= -3,178\]

Net overseas migration

\[= \text{Immigration} - \text{Emigration}\]

\[= 838\]

Population change

\[= \text{Natural change} + \text{Net interstate migration} + \text{Net overseas migration}\]

\[= 645\]

Source: calculated from ABS data

Note: Components of population change may not sum to total population change due to measurement errors
Factors affecting population change in recent years

Much of the volatility in the Territory’s population growth over the years is due to fluctuations in migration, which in part reflects fluctuations in the Territory’s economy. The graph below shows how natural change, net interstate migration, and net overseas migration have varied on a quarterly basis in recent years. The slow growth of the Territory’s population over the last few years is due to net interstate migration losses and lower levels of net overseas migration.

![Factors affecting population change in the Territory in recent years](image)

Note: Periods are quarters of the year; e.g. “Qtr 1 2016” refers to the first quarter of 2016
Source: ABS
Note: Components of population change may not sum to total population change due to measurement errors

Author
Dr Tom Wilson, Northern Institute, Charles Darwin University.

Data sources
All data are derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics bulletin Australian Demographic Statistics (released quarterly and containing data up to a date six months prior to publication) and the online data service ABS.Stat. Be aware that these statistics are estimates, not precise values.

Interested in finding out more about the Territory’s population?
See the webpage of the Demography & Growth Planning team at the Northern Institute, and our blog, demographyNorth.