

Elizabeth Colman
Michael Bachelard

A SHARP rise in the number of women getting married and giving birth has arrested a decade-long fertility slump, with mothers in their 30s credited with producing a mini baby boom.

Population figures released yesterday show 254,600 babies were born to Australian women over the past year — a rise of 2.9 per cent, defying experts' predictions of a continuing decline.

It was the biggest jump in births since 1991, according to the figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

So encouraging is the data that leading demographer Peter McDonald declared Australia had "done the job" and arrested its declining fertility rate, thanks mainly to women in their mid to late 30s.

New parents Poppy Brown, 31, and her husband, Nick Harrison, said financial security was significant in their decision to have children.

"You have to be able to fund a family," Ms Brown said.

And there was a baby boom among her friends — mostly in their early 30s — with "about three-quarters" having babies recently. "We're in the family stage of life," Ms Brown said.

Formerly a management consultant in London, Ms Brown has been working part-time as a project officer since

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Mid-30s mums give birthrate a much-needed bounce

From Page 1

the birth of her first child. "I think it's a good time of life to have a baby. You've travelled, started a career, found the right person to settle down with," she said.

Gradual changes to government policy over the past five years had probably encouraged women to have children, Professor McDonald said.

"We are seeing an increase in the birthrate for women in

the 35-39 age group that helps to explain this," he said.

Professor McDonald said "underlying factors" that affected birthrates were also marriage and the numbers of women in the workforce.

ABS figures tracing marriage rates in 2003, also released yesterday, showed a 3 per cent rise over a year — the first increase in registered marriages since 1999.

"I am confident now that we will not head down the Euro-

pean or East Asian path," Professor McDonald said.

"In many ways Australia has done the job in trying to stabilise its fertility rate."

Some countries suffer birthrates of about 1.2 per cent.

"Women in their 30s are simultaneously having the babies they had delayed having before," he said.

Economists last night drew on low unemployment, stable interest rates and high consumer confidence to explain

the changing patterns. "Australia is experiencing something of a baby boom and the buoyant economic times have probably got a lot to do with it," Commsec economist Craig James said.

But the big picture remained bleak with projections that the population will continue to age due to fertility staying below the 2 per cent replacement rate at about 1.75 per cent.

In addition, the ABS figures show that the number of

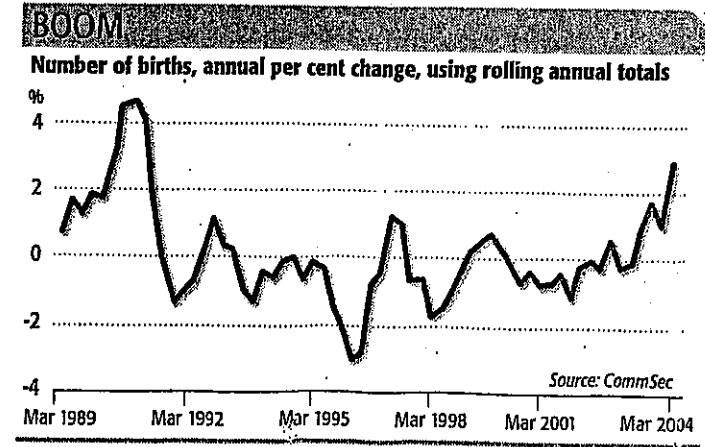
deaths increased marginally Australia's population, at 20.111 million, had a growth rate in the past year of 1.2 per cent, just higher than the world rate of 1.1 per cent.

Queensland gained strongly, with 36,700 people from other states moving there. But Victoria will celebrate its own milestone within three weeks: its 5 millionth resident.

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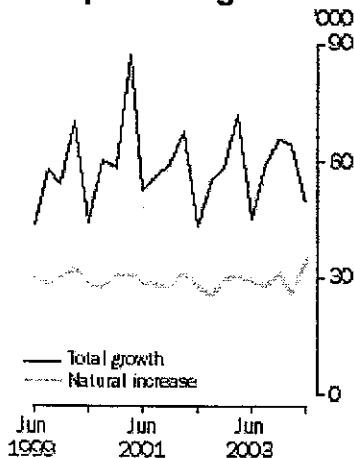
JUNE KEY FIGURES

PRELIMINARY DATA	Population at end Jun qtr	Change over previous	Change over previous
	2004 '000	year '000	year %
New South Wales(a)	6,731.3	49.2	0.7
Victoria	4,972.8	61.4	1.2
Queensland	3,882.0	81.0	2.1
South Australia	1,534.3	7.9	0.5
Western Australia	1,982.2	32.3	1.7
Tasmania	482.1	4.8	1.0
Northern Territory	199.9	1.4	0.7
Australian Capital Territory	324.0	0.7	0.2
Australia(b)	20,111.3	238.7	1.2

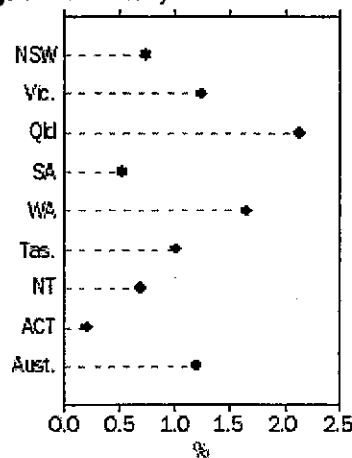
(a) June quarter 2004 births for New South Wales are high due to a lag in registration processing in the previous quarter. This backlog was cleared and included in June quarter 2004 estimates.

(b) Includes Other Territories comprising Jervis Bay Territory, Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

Population growth



Population growth rate, Year ended current quarter



JUNE KEY POINTS

ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION

- The preliminary estimated resident population (ERP) of Australia at June 2004 was 20,111,300 persons, an increase of 238,700 persons since June 2003 and 49,500 persons since March 2004.
- Preliminary natural increase for the year ended June 2004 was 121,000 persons. This represents an increase of 5,900 persons (5.1%) on the number recorded for the year ended June 2003 (115,200).
- Preliminary net overseas migration was 117,600 persons in the year ended June 2004, 1% higher than in the year ended June 2003 (116,500).

POPULATION GROWTH RATES

- The national growth rate during the 12 months ended June 2004 was 1.2%. This was similar to the growth rate of the world's population (1.1%) during the 12 months ended June 2004.
- All states and territories recorded positive growth in the year ended June 2004. Queensland recorded the highest growth rate (2.1%) while the Australian Capital Territory recorded the lowest (0.2%).

NOTES

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

ISSUE (QUARTER)	Release Date
September 2004	24 March 2005
December 2004	3 June 2005
March 2005	22 September 2005
June 2005	9 December 2005
September 2005	21 March 2006

INTRODUCTION

Estimated resident population (ERP) data in this publication are based on the 2001 Census of Population and Housing (2001 census). Exceptions are Tables, 17, 18 and 19 (excluding 2001 estimates), which are still based on the 1996 Census of Population and Housing (1996 census).

CHANGES IN THIS ISSUE

The layout and content of this publication has changed. The major changes are detailed

below.

- This issue of **Australian Demographic Statistics** has introduced a change in the treatment for External Territories of Australia. For the first time, separate population estimates as at 30 June 2004 have been shown for the Territory of Ashmore and Cartier Islands, the Coral Sea Islands Territory, the Australian Antarctic Territory, and the Territory of Heard and McDonald Islands. These are included in Table 7.
- An international comparisons table of population growth rate and rank has been included in the Main Features of this issue.

Revisions included in this issue are as follows:

- Population estimates for Capital City Statistical Divisions and selected Statistical Districts have been revised for 2003. See Table 5 in this issue.
- Data for experimental estimated and projected resident Indigenous population are now based on 2001 census data and are included in Table 9.

ERP DATA STATUS

At any point in time this publication contains final, revised and preliminary ERP data. The status of the ERP data included in this issue is as follows:-

- Final - All ERP data up to and including June quarter 2001
- Revised - ERP data from September quarter 2001 to June quarter 2003, inclusive
- Preliminary - ERP data from September quarter 2003 to June quarter 2004, inclusive.

NEW SOUTH WALES BIRTHS

June quarter 2004 births for New South Wales are high due to a lag in registration processing in the previous quarter. This backlog was cleared and included in June quarter 2004 estimates.

DATA NOT YET AVAILABLE

Household estimates for 2002 and 2003 in Tables 17, 18 and 19 are currently under review.

INQUIRIES

For further information about these and related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

SUMMARY COMMENTARY

MAIN FEATURES

INTRODUCTION

The preliminary estimated resident population (ERP) of Australia at June 2004 was 20,111,300 persons, an increase of 238,700 since June 2003 and 49,500 since March quarter 2004.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

For the 12 months ended June 2004 Australia's population growth rate (1.2%) was just above the world's population growth rate (1.1%). Australia's growth rate was comparable with that of New Zealand (1.1%), higher than those of Germany (which experienced almost no change), Japan (0.1%) and the United Kingdom (0.3%) and lower than those of Papua New Guinea (2.4%), Malaysia (1.9%) and Singapore (1.8%).

In figures provided by the **US Bureau of Census (International Data Base)** for 227 countries, arranged from highest to lowest population size, Australia's population ranked 52nd in the year 2004 and is projected to rank 65th in 2050.

Population, Growth rate and Rank, Selected countries - at 30 June

Country	ESTIMATED POPULATION			PROJECTED POPULATION	RANK	
	2003 million	2004 million	Growth rate %	2050 million	2004 no.	2050 no.
Australia	19.9	20.1	1.2	26.4	52	65
Canada	32.2	32.5	0.9	41.4	35	42
China	1,291.5	1,298.8	0.6	1,424.2	1	2
Germany	82.4	82.4	-	73.6	14	23
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	6.8	6.9	0.7	6.2	96	115
India	1,049.7	1,065.1	1.5	1,601.0	2	1
Indonesia	234.9	238.5	1.5	336.2	4	5
Japan	127.2	127.3	0.1	99.9	9	17
Malaysia	23.1	23.5	1.9	43.1	46	41
New Zealand	4.0	4.0	1.1	4.8	121	123
Papua New Guinea	5.3	5.4	2.4	10.7	108	91
Singapore	4.3	4.4	1.8	4.6	119	128
Thailand	64.3	64.9	0.9	74.0	19	22
United Kingdom	60.1	60.3	0.3	64.0	21	29
United States of America	290.3	293.0	0.9	420.1	3	3
World	6,299.8	6,372.8	1.1	9,190.3

.. not applicable

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

ABS for Australian estimates and projected populations (Series B); US Bureau of Census, International Data Base (IDB) for selected countries and world estimated and projected populations and all rankings.

COMPONENTS OF AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION CHANGE

The growth of Australia's population has two components; natural increase (the number of births minus the number of deaths) and net overseas migration (net permanent and long-term movement plus the migration adjustment).

Natural increase

For the year ended June 2004, natural increase was 121,000 persons, an increase of 5,900 persons (5.1%) on the number recorded in the year ended June 2003 (115,200). The number of births registered in the year ended June 2004 (254,600) increased by 2.9% when compared with the previous 12 months (247,400). The number of deaths increased by 1.1% over the same period from 132,200 in 2003 to 133,600 in 2004.

Births in New South Wales for the June quarter 2004 are high due to a lag in registration processing in the previous quarter. The backlog was cleared and included in June quarter 2004 estimates.

Net overseas migration

Net overseas migration was 117,600 persons in the year ended June 2004, an increase of 1.0% from the number recorded in the year ended June 2003 (116,500). On a quarterly basis, net overseas migration in the June quarter 2004 (14,300) was 11.4% lower than in the June quarter 2003 (16,100).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) applies a number of adjustments to the overseas arrivals and departures data used to produce estimates of net overseas migration (NOM). These mainly comprise adjustments designed to reflect differences between stated travel intentions and actual travel behaviour, but (in the case of revised NOM estimates) also include adjustments to transform numbers of overseas movements into numbers of travellers. These are collectively referred to as 'migration adjustments'. For more information see the **Technical Note - Measuring Net Overseas Migration**.

STATES AND TERRITORIES

Population

The population of Australia's states and territories at June 2004 were as follows: New South Wales 6,731,300, Victoria 4,972,800, Queensland 3,882,000, South Australia 1,534,300, Western Australia 1,982,200, Tasmania 482,100, Northern Territory 199,900, and the Australian Capital Territory 324,000.

Consistent with the recent amendments to the **Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918**, estimates of the population of each of the Other and External Territories are listed separately in Table 7 of this publication. The populations of the Other Territories continue to

be included in the Australian totals presented in other tables (see paragraph 2 of the Explanatory Notes).

Growth rates

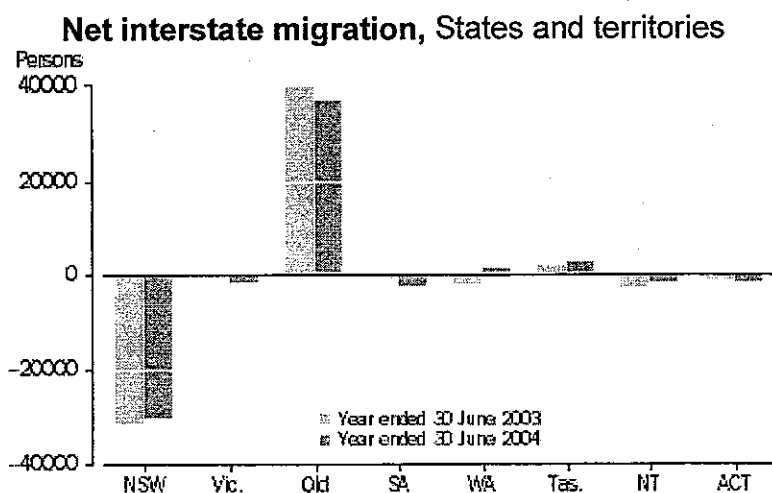
All states and territories recorded positive growth in the year ended June 2004. Queensland recorded the highest growth (2.1%) followed by Western Australia (1.7%), Victoria (1.2%), Tasmania (1.0%), New South Wales and the Northern Territory (each 0.7%), South Australia (0.5%) and the Australian Capital Territory (0.2%).

All states and territories recorded a positive growth in the June quarter 2004. The largest gain was recorded by Queensland (0.5%) and the lowest was by South Australia and Tasmania (each 0.1%). The Australian Capital Territory experienced little change during the quarter.

Interstate migration

In the year ended June 2004 Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia recorded net interstate migration gains, and the remaining states and territories recorded net losses. Queensland had a gain of 36,700 persons while Tasmania gained 2,500 persons and Western Australia gained 1,300 persons. This is the second financial year in which Tasmania has experienced a net gain through interstate migration since the year ended June 1992. New South Wales lost the largest number of persons through interstate migration (-30,400) followed by South Australia (-3,200), the Australian Capital Territory (-2,400), Victoria (-2,300) and the Northern Territory (-2,100).

Similarly, for the June quarter 2004 Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania recorded net gains through interstate migration, with the rest of the state and territories recording net losses.



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