



Rob Stokes

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW POPULATION TO REBOUND POST PANDEMIC

NSW has continued to grow in 2020 despite the impacts of the pandemic which have resulted in a substantial drop in overseas migration, an annual analysis of population trends has found.

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Rob Stokes said the COVID-19 pandemic will slow population growth in the short-term but will not alter the long-term population growth that informs housing and land development targets.

“Not surprisingly, the biggest hit to population growth has been from the declining numbers of overseas migrants during the pandemic, due to border closures that came into effect in March and strict quarantine rules,” Mr Stokes said.

“This has led to a 99 per cent fall in the number of people both leaving and coming to Australia.

“The report also makes the assumption that Australia-wide, net overseas migration will fall from approximately 154,000 people in 2019–20 to approximately 72,000 people by the end of 2020–21.

“This is significant because for the last 15 years, the greatest driver in population change has been overseas migration. As a result, we cannot rely on this as an economic lever to pull us out of the pandemic like in previous years.”

The report, *2020 Population Insights* by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, has also shown that for the first time in 23 years fewer people are leaving NSW for Victoria.

Internal migration estimates suggest that 2,000 fewer NSW residents left for Victoria during the June Quarter 2020 when compared to same time last year, while slightly fewer people relocated to Queensland than a year ago.

“This doesn’t surprise me as it’s been clear that NSW has led the country in managing the health impacts of the pandemic while balancing it with the need to keep the economy buoyant,” Mr Stokes said.

“We’re more than happy to welcome people, jobs and businesses from interstate in the pandemic recovery.

“It’s also important to recognise that a sudden drop in immigration doesn’t correlate to a similar drop in housing demand. We still need more houses to catch up with a

structural shortage in housing supply, and to meet the changing housing preferences of our community, preferences that continue to change in response to the pandemic.

The report also found:

- The NSW population continues to grow, reaching 8.164 million people at 30 June, an increase of 76,700 people or 0.09 per cent over the course of the year
- This growth was sustained by natural increase, with births outnumbering deaths in NSW by 42,700 (in 2019-20)
- In 2018–19, net overseas migration added 82,000 people to the NSW population (or 60 per cent of population growth). For Greater Sydney, it contributed 72,500 people (70 per cent of population growth)
- Australia wide, net overseas migration is assumed to gradually increase to approximately 201,000 people in 2023–24
- Housing prices in regional NSW have outperformed those in Greater Sydney with prices in regional NSW rising by 3 per cent since April 2020, whereas in Sydney they have fallen by 3 per cent.

The department delivers official NSW population projections twice every five-year census cycle and the next update is due in early 2022.

The Annual Insights are available to view at: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Research-and-Demography/Population-projections/Insights

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