

# bitre

## Chapter 2

### Population





# Chapter 2      Population

This chapter discusses some key characteristics of the population of Northern Australia, paying particular attention to population size and growth rates; population density; ethnicity; age and sex profiles; and migration (namely migration into and out of the regions of Northern Australia, and population turnover by SLA).

With respect to population size, Northern Australians represented 4.7 per cent of the total Australian population in 2006. The majority of people within Northern Australia live in the northern regions of Queensland. The Australia Bureau of Statistics predicts that the proportion of Australians living in Northern Australia will remain roughly the same between 2006 and 2016. Within Northern Australia, the population is expected to grow fastest in the Mackay, Pilbara and Darwin-East Arnhem regions over the same ten year period.

Northern Australia exhibits a pattern of small but relatively highly concentrated population areas surrounded by large areas of sparse population. Within Northern Australia, Queensland is generally more densely populated than the northern regions of the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Indigenous people comprise a relatively large proportion of the Northern Australian population (14.3 per cent) compared to the whole of Australia (2.3 per cent). The proportion of overseas born to non-overseas born people in Northern Australia is approximately half that of Australia as a whole.

The population of many northern Australian regions is younger than that of Australia, and working age males often outnumber working age females. There are more young people (aged 0–14) and fewer old people (aged 65 and over) within Northern Australia, compared with the rest of Australia.

Higher population turnover is common in some areas of Northern Australia, but in other areas the population is remarkably static. There are particularly high levels of population movement in the Darwin-East Arnhem and Pilbara regions; however, the ten Australian SLAs with the least turnover are also all from Northern Australia and contain high numbers of Indigenous Australians. This, however, does not take into account habitual movements of the Indigenous population which is not fully reflected in the official statistics such as population censuses.

## 2.1      Population and population growth rates

Table 2.1.1 shows that the population of Northern Australia in 2006 was in excess of 950 000 people and represented 4.7 per cent of the total population of Australia. The majority lived in northern Queensland, representing 16.7 per cent of the total population in that state. The second largest population in Northern Australia is that of the Northern Territory, which represents 1 per cent of the total population of Australia and nearly all of the population of the Northern Territory. Western Australia's Pilbara

and Kimberley region populations were, between them, only 0.38 per cent of the total population of Australia and 3.9 per cent of the population of that state in 2006.

Northern Australia is not intensively urbanised with only about half of the population living in towns. There are only four cities with population larger than 50 000 people. These are Townsville with about 128 800 inhabitants, Cairns (113 800), Mackay (66 800) and Darwin (66 300), in 2006 (ABS 2006b) (see Table 2.1(a) on the CD).

Northern Australia's population is expected to remain at roughly the same proportion of the Australian population from 2006 (4.7 per cent) to 2016 (4.8 per cent). However, Northern Australia's population is predicted to grow 0.4 per cent faster than Australia, during 2006–11. Northern Australia's population is expected to grow fastest in the Pilbara (Western Australia), Darwin-East Arnhem (Northern Territory) and Mackay (Queensland) regions. In those regions, the average population growth rates for 2011 and 2016 are expected to exceed rates for Western Australia and the Northern Territory. In the northern regions of Western Australia, the population is expected to grow faster than in the rest of the state. In the Northern Australian regions of Queensland, the population is anticipated to grow slower than in the rest of Queensland by about 0.2 of a per cent, with the Longreach region population numbers to decline between 2011 and 2016.

## 2.2 Population density

Northern Australia exhibits a pattern of small, but relatively concentrated population areas, surrounded by large areas of sparse population. This is particularly true of northern Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Table 2.2.1 shows that northern Queensland was generally more densely populated than the northern regions of the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The Northern Australian UCLs with the highest population densities were Townsville-Thuringowa and Darwin, and the regions with highest population densities were Barkly-Central NT and Longreach. The UCLs with the lowest population densities were Charters Towers and Weipa, and the regions with the lowest population densities were Katherine-Lower Top End and the Kimberley.

Table 2.1.1 Northern Australia—usually resident population numbers and growth rates, 2001–16

Region	2001 population			2006 population			Projected
	Actual	Percentage of total Australian usually resident population, 2001	Actual	Percentage of total Australian usually resident population, 2006	Population increase/decrease 2001–06	Average annual growth 2001–06 (per cent)	
Northern Australia (WA)	74 392	0.38	79 510	0.38	5 118	1.34	88 890
Pilbara Region	41 767	0.22	46 505	0.22	4 738	2.17	52 834
Kimberley Region	32 625	0.17	33 005	0.16	380	0.23	36 056
Western Australia state total	1 901 159	9.79	2 059 045	9.95	157 886	1.61	2 276 851
Northern Australia (NT)	193 466	1.00	206 347	1.00	12 881	1.30	226 493
Darwin-East Arnhem Region	135 100	0.70	146 266	0.71	11 166	1.60	163 962
Katherine-Lower Top End Region	17 791	0.09	18 646	0.09	855	0.94	19 838
Barkly-Central NT Region	40 575	0.21	41 435	0.20	860	0.42	42 693
Northern Territory total	197 768	1.02	210 674	1.02	12 906	1.27	230 893
Northern Australia (QLD)	616 058	3.17	683 184	3.30	67 126	2.09	750 546
Mackay Region	160 465	0.83	186 349	0.90	25 884	3.04	206 619
Northern Region	190 266	0.98	209 588	1.01	19 322	1.95	229 915
Far North Region	224 163	1.15	247 589	1.20	23 426	2.01	273 975
North West Region	37 207	0.19	35 900	0.17	-1 307	-0.71	36 463
Longreach Region	3 957	0.02	3 758	0.02	-199	-1.03	3 574
Queensland state total	3 628 946	18.69	4 091 546	19.77	462 600	2.43	4 528 815
Northern Australia subtotal	883 916	4.55	969 041	4.68	85 125	1.86	1 065 929
Australia total	19 413 240		20 697 880		1 284 640	1.29	22 319 066

(continued)

**Table 2.1.1 Northern Australia—usually resident population numbers and growth rates, 2001 to 2016 (continued)**

Region	2011 projected population			2016 projected population			
	Percentage of total Australian usually resident population, 2011	Population increase/decrease 2006–11	Average annual growth 2006–11 (per cent)	Projected	Percentage of total Australian usually resident population, 2016	Population increase/decrease 2011–16	Average annual growth 2011–16 (per cent)
Northern Australia (WA)	0.40	9 380	2.26	98 230	0.41	9 340	2.02
Pilbara Region	0.24	6 329	2.58	59 310	0.25	6 476	2.34
Kimberley Region	0.16	3 051	1.78	38 920	0.16	2 864	1.54
Western Australia state total	10.20	217 806	2.03	2 486 052	10.37	209 201	1.77
Northern Australia (NT)	1.01	20 146	1.88	246 709	1.03	20 216	1.72
Darwin-East Arnhem Region	0.73	17 696	2.31	181 921	0.76	17 959	2.10
Katherine-Lower Top End Region	0.09	1 192	1.25	20 983	0.09	1 145	1.13
Barkly-Central NT Region	0.19	1 258	0.60	43 805	0.18	1 112	0.52
Northern Territory total	1.03	20 219	1.85	251 157	1.05	20 264	1.70
Northern Australia (QLD)	3.36	67 362	1.90	812 892	3.39	62 346	1.61
Mackay Region	0.93	20 270	2.09	226 881	0.95	20 262	1.89
Northern Region	1.03	20 327	1.87	248 264	1.04	18 349	1.55
Far North Region	1.23	26 386	2.05	297 437	1.24	23 462	1.66
North West Region	0.16	563	0.31	36 901	0.15	438	0.24
Longreach Region	0.02	-184	-1.00	3 409	0.01	-165	-0.94
Queensland state total	20.29	437 269	2.05	4 955 943	20.68	427 128	1.82
North Australia subtotal	4.78	96 888	1.92	1 157 831	4.83	91 902	1.67
Australia total		1 621 186	1.52	23 966 982		1 647 916	1.43

Notes: This table shows actual usually resident population growth from 2001 to 2006, and projected usually resident population growth from 2006 to 2011. Population projections at SLA level were prepared by the ABS as consultant to DOHA. The projections are not official ABS data. With respect to population projections, in SLAs with total ERP under 500, estimated resident populations were generally held constant by ABS as reliable projections were not possible for the very small age/sex groups involved.

Sources: ABS (2007a); ABS (2008b); ABS for DOHA (2008).

**Table 2.2.1 Northern Australia—usually resident population, area, and population density by region and selected UCL, 2006**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Usually resident population</i>	<i>Area of region (square kilometres)</i>	<i>Population density</i>
Northern Australia (WA)	72 360	933 879	0
Pilbara Region	43 065	513 079	0
Exmouth	1 846	7	273
Port Hedland	11 558	119	97
Kimberley Region	29 295	420 799	0
Northern Australia (NT)	187 123	500 403	0
Darwin-East Arnhem Region	133 707	153 619	1
Darwin	66 290	78	845
Katherine-Lower Top End Region	16 463	346 143	0
Katherine	5 849	16	371
Barkly-Central NT Region	36 953	641	58
Alice Springs	21 623	30	726
Tennant Creek	2 920	19	156
Northern Australia (QLD)	639 878	901 837	1
Mackay Region	175 134	101 998	2
Mackay town	66 874	107	624
Northern Region	196 683	80 039	2
Townsville	128 807	156	828
Charters Towers	7 978	42	190
Far North Region	231 064	273 162	1
Weipa	2 830	10	292
Cairns	113 843	152	751
North West Region	33 474	446 494	0
Mount Isa	18 857	58	322
Longreach Region	3 523	144	24
Longreach	2 976	8	383
Northern Australia subtotal	899 361	2 336 119	0

Note: This table shows the population, area (square kilometres) and population density (persons per square kilometres). The population density figures provided above need to be approached with caution, given the differing sizes of each of the regions and UCLs in square kilometres.

Source: ABS (2006b).

## 2.3 Ethnicity

Indigenous people represent a relatively large proportion of the Northern Australian population compared to the whole of Australia (see Table 2.3.1 and Table 2.3.2). The highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Northern Australia was noted in the Northern Territory (27.3 per cent) and Western Australia (24.9 per cent). The proportion was relatively smaller in northern Queensland (8.3 per cent); however, this was still well above the rest of Australia (2.3 per cent).

In 2006, the largest proportions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the total population were in the Katherine-Lower Top End and Kimberley regions. The lowest share of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population were in the Mackay Region, as well as in the Exmouth Urban Centre/Location (UCL) of the Pilbara Region.

The proportion of overseas-born people in the population in Northern Australia (12.4 per cent) is approximately half the proportion of overseas-born people in Australia (22.2 per cent). The highest proportions of overseas-born people in the population were noted in the Darwin-East Arnhem and Far North Queensland regions. At the UCL level, the highest proportion was in Darwin (21.4 per cent), followed by Alice Springs (16.8 per cent) and Exmouth (16.4 per cent). The highest proportions of Australian-born people in the population were observed in the Longreach, Katherine-Lower Top End, and Northern Queensland regions. At the UCL level, the highest proportions of Australian-born people were recorded in Charters Towers (89.0 per cent) and Longreach (84.9 per cent).



Table 2.3.1 Northern Australia—usually resident population by ethnicity, 2006

Region	2006 total population	Subtotal Indigenous	Aboriginal	Torres Strait Islander	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Born in Australia	Born overseas
Northern Australia (WA)	72 360	17 984	17 429	2 12	343	52 229	8 740
Pilbara Region	43 065	5 659	5 397	156	106	29 095	6 438
Exmouth	1 846	29	29	0	0	1 384	302
Port Hedland	11 558	1 525	1 440	31	54	6 637	1 713
Kimberley Region	29 295	12 325	12 032	56	237	23 134	2 302
Western Australia state total	1 959 086	58 712	56 650	1 057	1 005	1 279 222	531 743
Northern Australia (NT)	187 123	51 150	49 260	600	1 290	143 657	25 938
Darwin-East Arnhem Region	133 707	28 432	26 891	513	1 028	99 817	20 818
Darwin	66 290	6 233	5 350	271	612	45 411	14 187
Katherine-Lower Top End Region	16 463	8 269	8 087	46	136	14 007	915
Katherine	5 849	1 693	1 598	27	68	4 490	524
Barkly-Central NT Region	36 953	14 449	14 282	41	126	29 833	4 205
Alice Springs	21 623	3 615	3 526	26	63	15 952	3 631
Tennant Creek	2 920	1 424	1 405	9	10	2 222	247
Northern Territory total	192 898	53 664	51 707	610	1 347	148 166	26 539
Northern Australia (QLD)	639 878	59 720	38 936	13 673	7 111	509 842	76 865
Mackay Region	175 134	6 269	4 133	1 408	728	141 596	17 295
Mackay town	66 874	2 881	1 556	892	433	53 966	6 864
Northern Region	196 683	12 908	9 672	1 825	1 411	162 827	21 266
Townsville	128 807	7 360	5 103	1 367	890	104 874	14 917
Charters Towers	7 978	828	737	35	56	7 098	452
Far North Region	231 064	33 111	18 090	10 313	4 708	175 850	35 163
Weipa	2 830	482	224	121	137	2 266	283
Cairns	113 843	8 864	4 488	2 936	1 440	81 134	21 267
North West Region	33 474	7 277	6 908	122	247	26 557	2 922
Mount Isa	18 857	3 089	2 874	66	149	13 944	2 236
Longreach Region	3 523	155	133	5	17	3 012	219
Longreach	2 976	149	127	6	16	2 527	193
Queensland state total	3 904 534	127 580	98 716	18 376	10 488	2 935 260	699 448
Northern Australia subtotal	899 361	128 854	105 625	14 485	8 744	705 728	111 543
Australia total	19 855 288	455 027	407 700	29 516	17 811	14 072 950	4 416 032

(continued)

**Table 2.3.1 Northern Australia—usually resident population by birth, 2006 (continued)**

Region	2006 total population		Born in Australia		Born overseas		Not stated (did not answer this question)	
North Australia (WA)	72 360	52 229	8 740	11 391				
Pilbara Region	43 065	29 095	6 438	7 532				
Exmouth	1 846	1 384	302	160				
Port Hedland	11 558	6 637	1 713	3 208				
Kimberley Region	29 295	23 134	2 302	3 859				
Western Australia state total	1 959 086	1 279 222	531 743	148 121				
Northern Australia (NT)	187 123	143 657	25 938	17 528				
Darwin-East Arnhem Region	133 707	99 817	20 818	13 072				
Darwin	66 290	45 411	14 187	6 692				
Katherine-Lower Top End Region	16 463	14 007	915	1 541				
Katherine	5 849	4 490	524	835				
Barkly-Central NT Region	36 953	29 833	4 205	2 915				
Alice Springs	21 623	15 952	3 631	2 040				
Tennant Creek	2 920	2 222	247	451				
Northern Territory total	192 898	148 166	26 539	18 193				
Northern Australia (QLD)	639 878	509 842	76 865	53 171				
Mackay Region	175 134	141 596	17 295	16 243				
Mackay town	66 874	53 966	6 864	6 044				
Northern Region	196 683	162 827	21 266	12 590				
Townsville	128 807	104 874	14 917	9 016				
Charters Towers	7 978	7 098	452	428				
Far Northern Region	231 064	175 850	35 163	20 051				
Weipa	2 830	2 266	283	281				
Cairns	113 843	81 134	21 267	11 442				
North West Region	33 474	26 557	2 922	3 995				
Mount Isa	18 857	13 944	2 236	2 677				
Longreach Region	3 523	3 012	219	292				
Longreach	2 976	2 527	193	256				
Queensland state total	3 904 534	2 935 260	699 448	269 826				
Northern Australia subtotal	899 361	705 728	111 543	82 090				
Australia total	19 855 288	14 072 950	4 416 032	1 366 306				

Notes: This table shows numbers of usually resident people who identified as Indigenous in the 2006 Census, and numbers of usually resident people who specified that they were born in Australia or overseas, by region. Note not all members of the population answered this question on the Census.

Source: ABS 2006 Census DataPacks, basic community profile release 2 (Cat. 2069.0.30.001)

Table 2.3.2 Northern Australia — percentage share of usually resident population by ethnicity, 2006

Region	2006 total population	Subtotal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (per cent)	Aboriginal (per cent)	Torres Strait Islander (per cent)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (per cent)
Northern Australia (WA)	72 360	24.9	24.1	0.3	0.5
Pilbara Region	43 065	13.1	12.5	0.4	0.2
Exmouth	1 846	1.6	1.6	0.0	0.0
Port Hedland	11 958	13.2	12.5	0.3	0.5
Kimberley Region	29 295	42.1	41.1	0.2	0.8
Western Australia state total	1 959 086	3.0	2.9	0.1	0.1
Northern Australia (NT)	187 123	27.3	26.3	0.3	0.7
Darwin-East Arnhem Region	133 707	21.3	20.1	0.4	0.8
Darwin	66 290	9.4	8.1	0.4	0.9
Katherine-Lower Top End Region	16 463	50.2	49.1	0.3	0.8
Katherine	5 849	28.9	27.3	0.5	1.2
Barkly-Central NT Region	36 953	39.1	38.6	0.1	0.3
Alice Springs	21 623	16.7	16.3	0.1	0.3
Tennant Creek	2 920	48.8	48.1	0.3	0.3
Northern Territory total	192 898	27.8	26.8	0.3	0.7
Northern Australia (QLD)	639 878	9.3	6.1	2.1	1.1
Mackay Region	175 134	3.6	2.4	0.8	0.4
Mackay town	66 874	4.3	2.3	1.3	0.6
Northern Region	196 683	6.6	4.9	0.9	0.7
Townsville	128 807	5.7	4.0	1.1	0.7
Charters Towers	7 978	10.4	9.2	0.4	0.7
Far North Region	231 064	14.3	7.8	4.5	2.0
Weipa	2 830	17.0	7.9	4.3	4.8
Cairns	113 843	7.8	3.9	2.6	1.3
North West Region	33 474	21.7	20.6	0.4	0.7
Mount Isa	18 857	16.4	15.2	0.4	0.8
Longreach Region	3 523	4.4	3.8	0.1	0.5
Longreach	2 976	5.0	4.3	0.2	0.5
Queensland state total	3 904 534	3.3	2.5	0.5	0.3
Northern Australia subtotal	899 361	14.3	11.7	1.6	1.0
Australia total	19 855 288	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.00

Notes: This table shows percentages of usually resident people who were Indigenous, and numbers of usually resident people who were born overseas, by region.

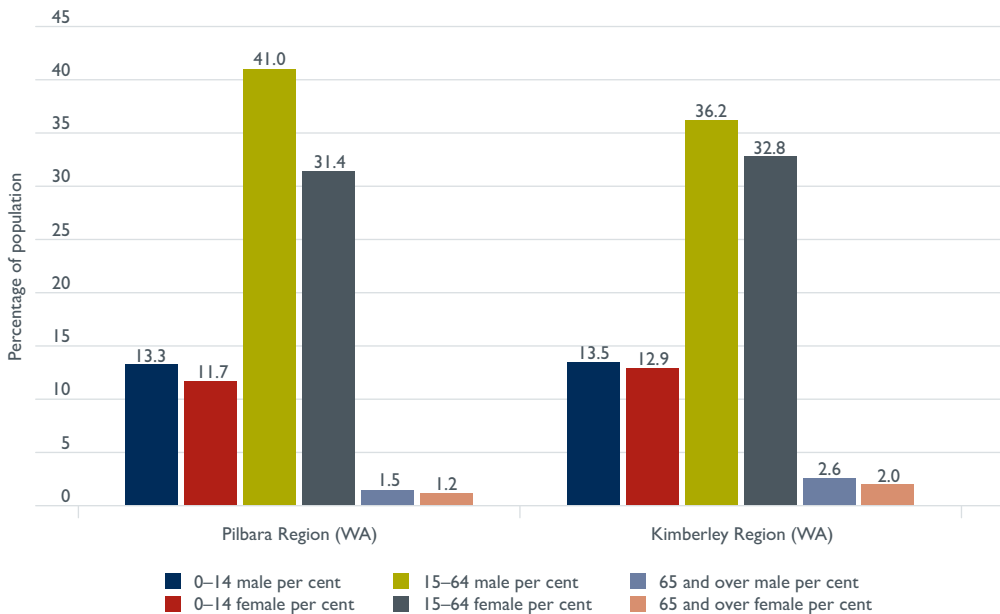
Source: ABS (2006b).

## 2.4 Population by age and sex

In the majority of northern regions, the working-age male population outnumbers females in the same age group. The highest proportion of working-age males was noted in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions of Western Australia, as well as in the Darwin-East Arnhem Region (Northern Territory) and North-West and Mackay regions of Queensland (for male-to-female ratios by SLA see Table 2.4 (j) on the CD).

By contrast, the proportion of people aged over 65 years among both sexes was smallest in the northern regions of Western Australia (2.0 per cent male and 1.5 per cent female) and Northern Territory (2.5 per cent male and 2.2 per cent female), as compared with the totals for Australia (5.8 per cent male and 7.1 per cent female). In the northern regions of Queensland, the proportion of people aged over 65 years (at 4.9 per cent of males and 5.2 per cent of females) was also lower than in Australia, although the proportions were not as low as in other areas in Northern Australia. Many of Queensland’s northern regions are a destination of retired people, especially those from the eastern coast.

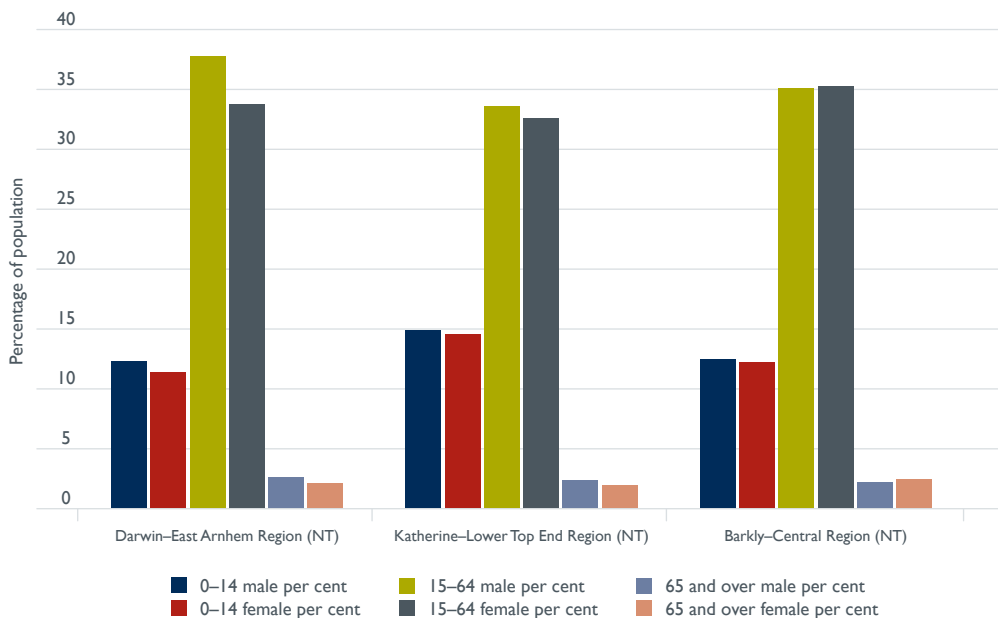
**Figure 2.4.1 Northern Australia – population distribution by age group and sex, by region, 2006 (Western Australia)**



Notes: This graph shows population profiles by selected age bracket by northern Australian region in Western Australia.

Sources: ABS (2006b); ABS (2007b).

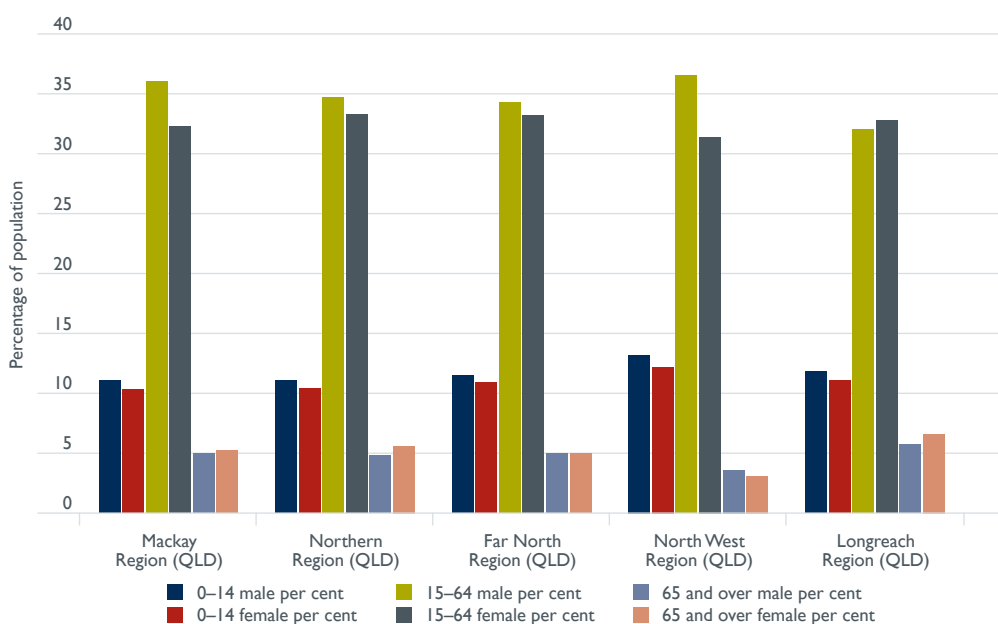
**Figure 2.4.2 Northern Australia—population distribution by age group and sex, by region, 2006 (Northern Territory)**



Notes: This graph shows population profiles by selected age bracket by northern Australian region in the Northern Territory.

Sources: ABS (2006b); ABS (2007b).

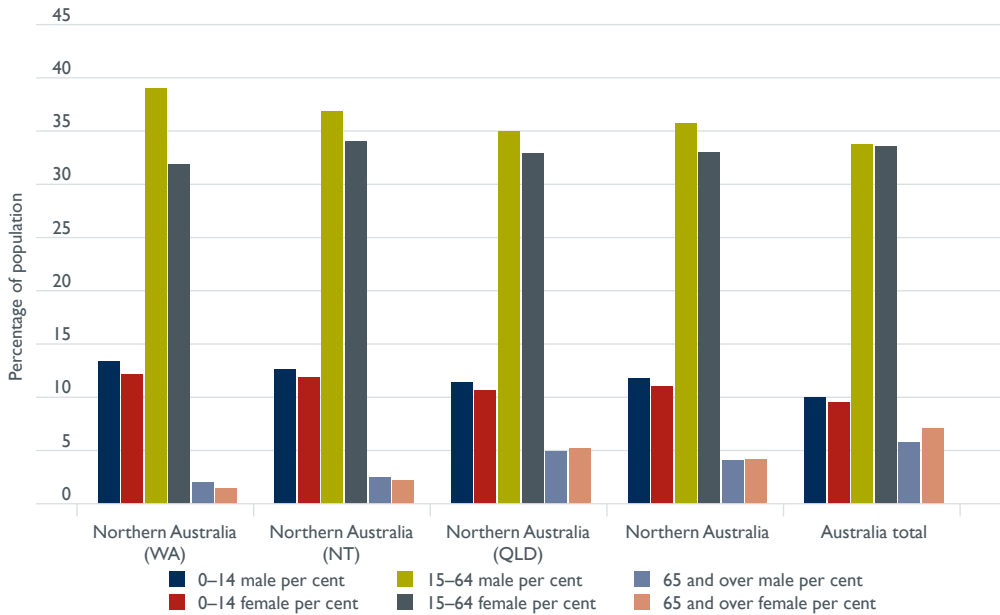
**Figure 2.4.3 Northern Australia—population distribution by age group and sex, by region, 2006 (Queensland)**



Notes: This graph shows population profiles by selected age bracket by northern Australian region in Queensland.

Sources: ABS (2006b); ABS (2007b).

**Figure 2.4.4 Northern Australia—population distribution by age group and sex, by region, 2006**



Notes: This graph shows population profiles by selected age bracket and gender for Northern Australian in comparison to Australia.

Sources: ABS (2006b); ABS (2007b).

The dominance of working age adults in the population of certain Northern Australian regions is partly related to people moving away from those areas as they reach retirement. Another reason for proportionately lower numbers of people aged 65 years in some regions is a relatively low life expectancy among Indigenous males and females generally. As Table 2.4.1 illustrates, Indigenous life expectancy is rarely above 65 years of age in Northern Australia, Western Australia, Queensland and Australia as a whole by the 1996 to 2001 period.

**Table 2.4** Life expectancy estimates—Indigenous population, selected states, 1996–2001

	<i>Life expectancy estimates (years)</i>
Queensland	
Male	59
Female	63
Western Australia	
Male	59
Female	67
Northern Territory	
Male	58
Female	65
Australia (Indigenous persons)	
Male	59
Female	65
Australia (total persons)	
Male	77
Female	82

Note: Indigenous data is from the period 1996–2001, as at the time of publication no Indigenous life expectancy estimates have been calculated later than this point. For comparative purposes, Australian data for the period 1998–2000 was used. Life expectancy refers to the average number of years a person of a given age and sex can expect to live if current age-sex specific death rates continue to apply throughout his or her lifetime. To measure life expectancy and mortality, data is required on the births and deaths of the total population. The accuracy of the estimates depends on the completeness of this data. Due to uncertainty about the estimates of these components for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, indirect experimental methods are used to calculate life expectancies for the Indigenous population. These experimental life expectancies should only be used as an indicative summary measure of the level of mortality of the Indigenous population. (ABS and AIHW 2008, p. 180). Caution should be exercised when undertaking analysis of Indigenous mortality and, in particular, trends in Indigenous mortality. Some of the issues affecting the reporting of Indigenous mortality include coverage of Indigenous deaths, unexplained changes in the number of people identified as Indigenous in different data collections and over time, the use of a standard Indigenous status question, and not stated Indigenous status (ABS 2007c).

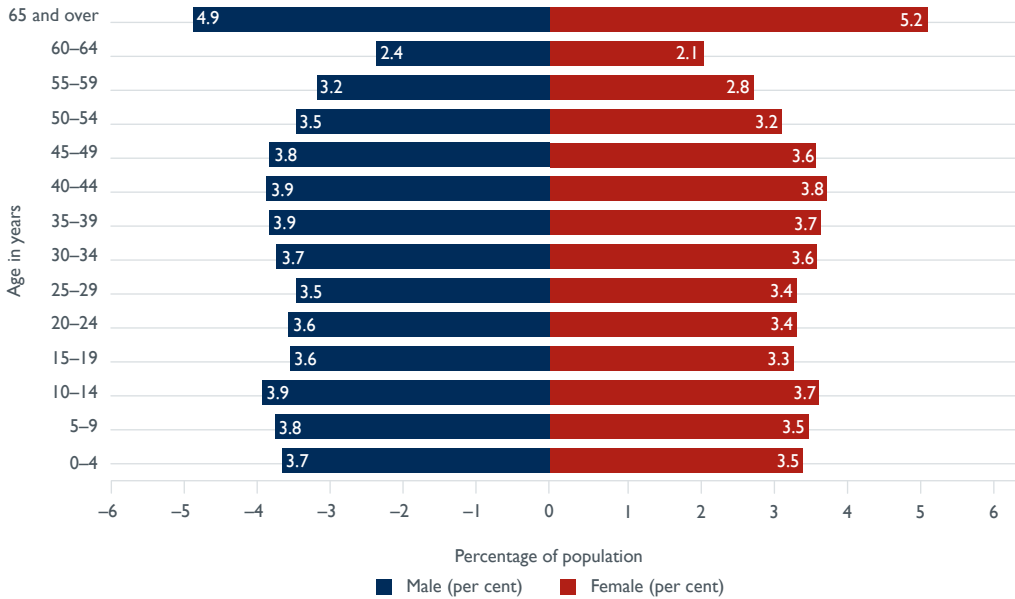
Source: ABS (2007c).

Across Northern Australia, higher percentages of males and females within the working age of 15–65 were observed. The population pyramids in Figures 2.4.5, 2.4.6, 2.4.7 and 2.4.8 indicate that although Australia’s population (Figure 2.4.8) is aging, this is not the case within Northern Australia, which has a much younger population. For example, in Western Australia, 9 per cent of the population were aged between 0–9 years (compared with 6.3 per cent of Australia’s population). At the other end of the scale, very low percentages of females aged over 70 were seen in northern Western Australia (0.2 per cent) and the Northern Territory (0.4 per cent), compared to Australia (2.3 per cent).

Whilst the indigenous population is much younger than the non-Indigenous, at older ages the proportions of people reverse and the non-indigenous older generations become more numerous. A shorter life expectancy among Indigenous people has an effect of reducing the proportions of older generations below those of the non-Indigenous group. It is obvious from Figure 2.4.9 that there was no corresponding ‘baby boom’ and ‘aging’ effect on the Indigenous population, which are visible from the shape of the plotted distribution.<sup>4</sup>

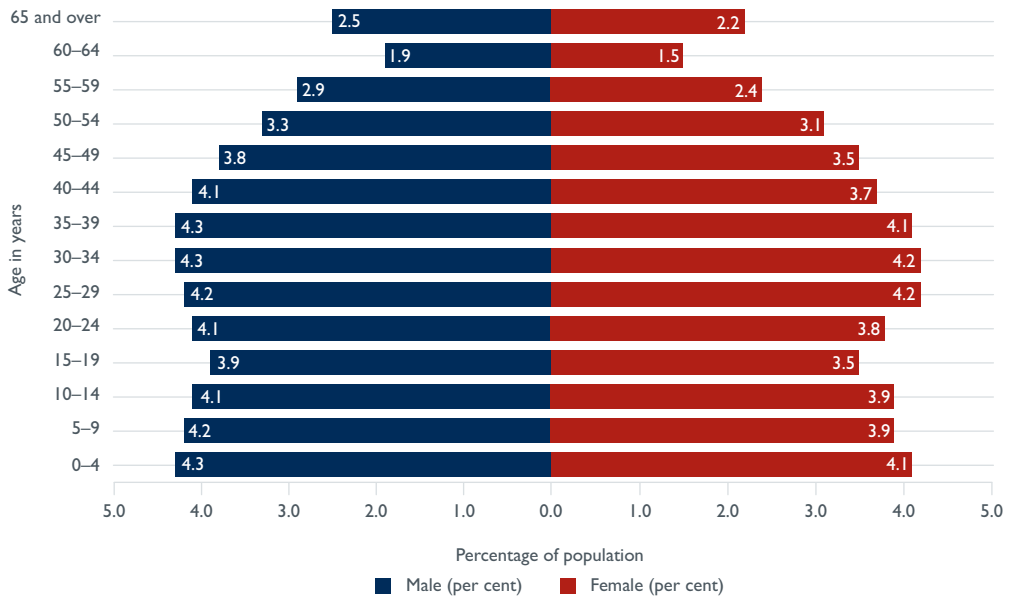
4. The last two figures are based on a different format of data presentation by ABS from those in Figures 2.4.5 to 2.4.8, where the top age bracket was ‘85 years and over’.

**Figure 2.4.5 Northern Australia (Queensland)—population, by age and sex, 2006 (per cent)**



Sources: ABS (2006b); ABS (2007b).

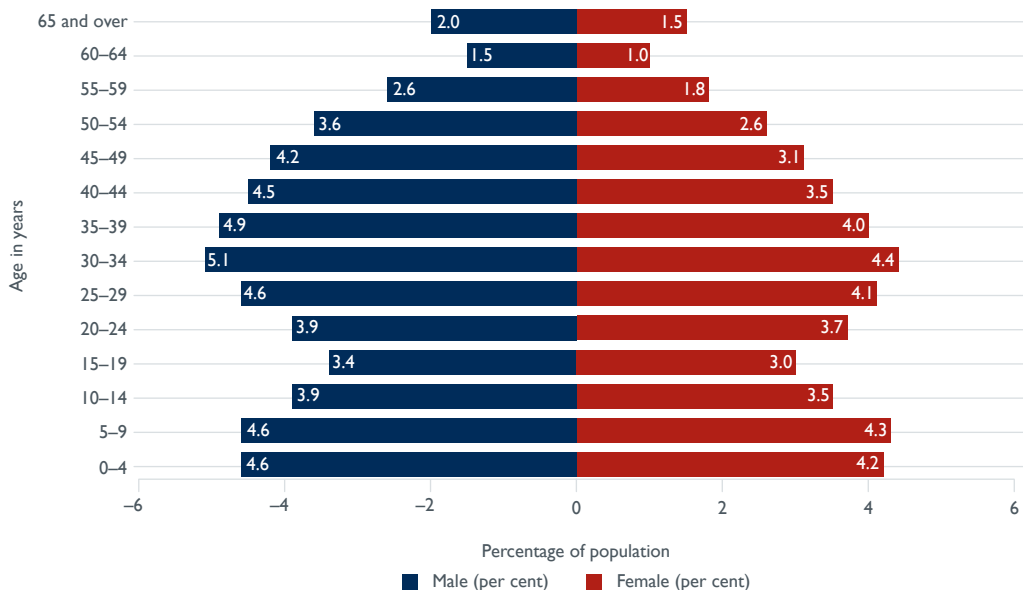
**Figure 2.4.6 Northern Australia (Northern Territory)—population, by age and sex, 2006 (per cent)**



Sources: ABS (2006b); ABS (2007b).

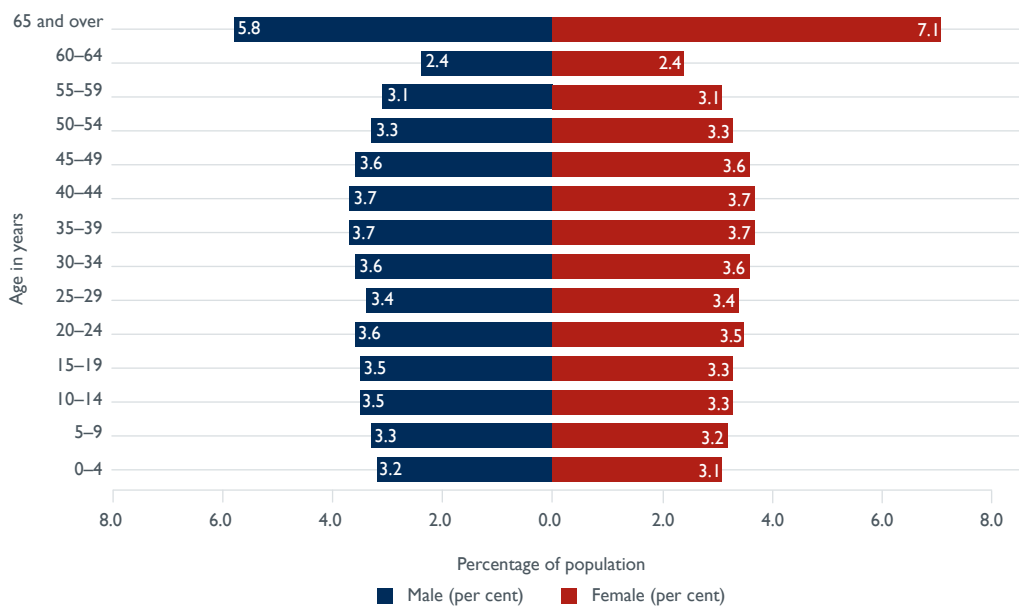


**Figure 2.4.7 Northern Australia (Western Australia)—population, by age and sex, 2006 (per cent)**



Sources: ABS (2006b); ABS (2007b).

**Figure 2.4.8 Australia—population, by age and sex, 2006 (per cent)**

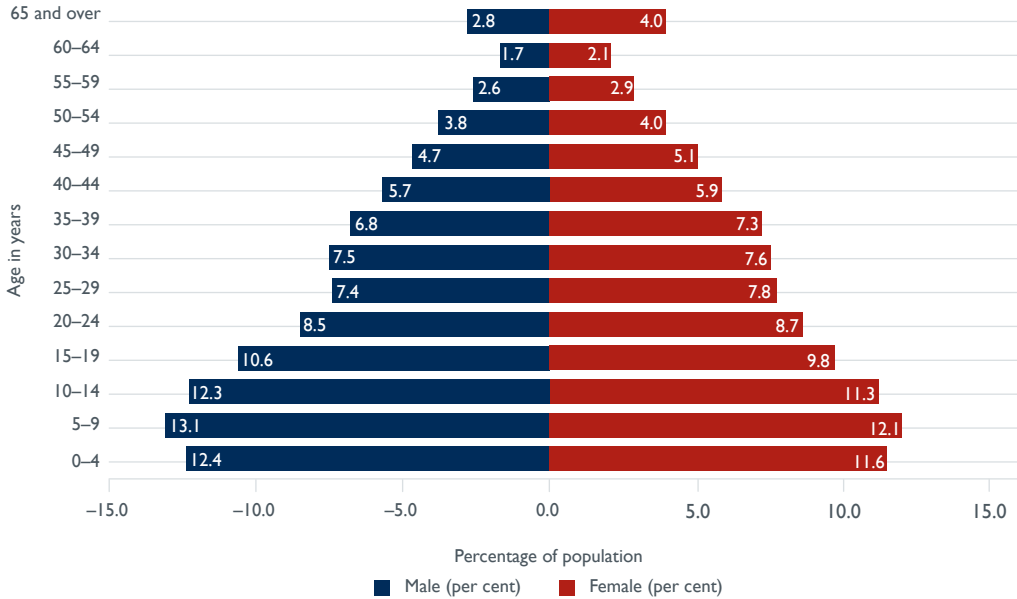


Notes: These population pyramids compare population profiles, by age and gender, for northern Western Australia, the northern Northern Territory, northern Queensland, and Australia, in 2006.

Sources: ABS (2006b); ABS (2007b).

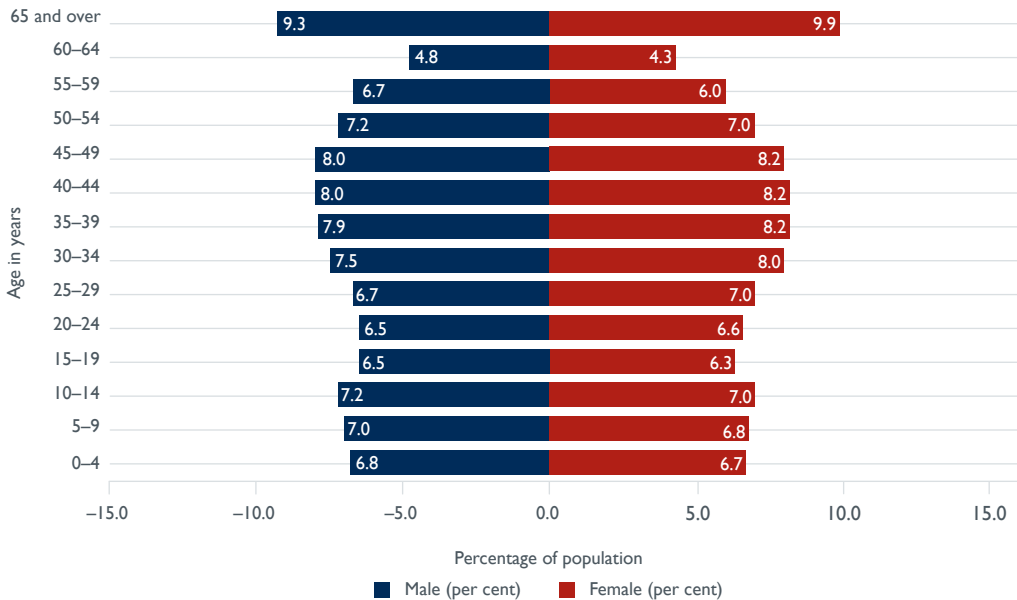
Figures 2.4.9 and 2.4.10 illustrate differences between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population of Northern Australia.

**Figure 2.4.9 Northern Australia – Indigenous population by age and sex, 2006 (per cent)**



Source: ABS (2006c).

**Figure 2.4.10 Northern Australia – non-Indigenous population by age and sex, 2006 (per cent)**



Source: ABS (2006c).

## 2.5 Migration and population turnover

Population movements in Northern Australia stem from various activities, such as migration, tourism, work in the region on short-term basis (construction workers), 'fly-in, fly-out', 'drive-in, drive-out' and other forms of mobility, which may not be well-recorded in the official statistics. Table 2.5.1 indicates the level of migration which occurs within or between regions in Northern Australia. There is a large population flow around Northern Australia, as registered by the 2006 Census. This movement does not necessarily suggest that people have left a particular region (or the country) but instead indicates those people who have changed where they live; in some cases, people have moved around a lot within the same region, such as in the Mackay and Longreach regions (see Table 2.5.1). There were particularly high levels of population movement by those living in the Darwin-East Arnhem and Pilbara regions. As the Pilbara Region has a strong mining industry, this may reflect a high fluctuation of employees in a dynamic employment market. Population movement within Northern Australia may be driven by people adjusting their housing situation in order to fit with their changing needs, as they progress through the life cycle. For example, younger people within Northern Australia may move in order to follow jobs or to access educational facilities, while older residents may move in order to be closer to health services, et cetera.

Population turnover is discussed here as a further measure of migration in Northern Australia. A table of population turnover across Northern Australian SLAs is provided in the electronic versions of this publication. It shows the effects of both in-migration and out-migration on the population, by adding the two together to calculate 'turnover'.

There was significant diversity among SLAs with respect to population turnover in Northern Australia, which paradoxically has some of the highest and lowest turnover SLAs across the whole of Australia. Of the ten SLAs with the highest population turnovers in Australia between the 2001 and 2006 censuses, four were located in Northern Australia. Of the ten SLAs with the highest population turnovers in Northern Australia over the same period, seven were located in and around Darwin (Nightcliff—118.0 per cent; Driver—120.7 per cent; The Gardens—120.9 per cent; Larrakeyah—126.3 per cent; Litchfield Shire Part A—129.3 per cent; Gunn-Palmerston City—134.2 per cent; and Jabiru—146.9 per cent); two were located in Townsville (Rosslea—118.9 per cent and Vincent—115.1 per cent); and one was located in Alice Springs (Alice Springs-Stuart—122.1 per cent).

**Table 2.5.1 Northern Australia—population movement, by region, 2001–06**

Region	Usually resident population, 2006	Total number of migrants (into or out of the SLA)	Migrants who moved within the same SLA	Migrants who moved within the same SLA (per cent)
Northern Australia (WA)	79 510	55 128	31 207	39
Pilbara Region	46 505	31 841	16 253	35
Kimberley Region	33 005	23 287	14 954	45
Northern Australia (NT)	206 347	148 818	87 790	43
Darwin-East Arnhem Region	146 266	105 430	60 000	41
Katherine-Lower Top End Region	18 646	13 262	8 883	48
Barkly-Central NT Region	41 435	30 126	18 907	46
Northern Australia (QLD)	683 184	505 639	340 046	50
Mackay Region	186 349	135 209	98 697	53
Northern Region	209 588	157 873	97 107	46
Far North Region	247 589	180 380	124 708	50
North West Region	35 900	28 804	17 470	49
Longreach Region	3 758	3 373	2 064	55
Northern Australia subtotal	969 041	709 585	459 043	47
Australia total	20 697 880	19 143 365	11 430 910	55

Notes: This table shows the number of people who migrated to an SLA, the number of people to have migrated but stayed within the same SLA, and the number to have left an SLA during or before 2006.

Source: ABS (2008c).

All of the ten Australian SLAs recorded as showing the lowest population turnovers between the 2001 and 2006 censuses were located in Northern Australia. All of these areas were also predominantly Indigenous but this indicates that the official population statistics do not adequately register the migratory movements so typical among these groups of population.<sup>5</sup>

## Data relating to population available in the online compendium

### 2.1 Population and population growth rates

- Northern Australia—usually resident population numbers and growth rates, by SLA, 2001 to 2016.

### 2.2 Population density

- Northern Australia—usually resident population, area, and population density by SLA and selected UCL, 2006.

### 2.3 Ethnicity

- Northern Australia—usually resident population by ethnicity, by SLA, 2006.

5. Seven of the SLAs were in the Northern Territory (Angurugu—7.5 per cent; East Arnhem Balance—14.1 per cent; West Arnhem—15.3 per cent; Thamarurr—16.9 per cent; Yugul Mangi—17.2 per cent; Numbulwar Numburindi—18.8 per cent; and Kunbarlanjnja—20.6 per cent); the remaining three communities were located in Queensland (Yarrabah—16.2 per cent; Aurukun—18.3 per cent and Kowanyama—19.3 per cent).

## 2.4 Population by age and sex

- Northern Australia—Pilbara Region, usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—Kimberley Region, usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—Western Australia, usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—Darwin-East Arnhem Region, usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—Katherine-Lower Top End Region, usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—Barkly-Central NT region, usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—Northern Territory, usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—Mackay Region, usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—Northern Region, usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—Far North Region, usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—North-West Region, usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—Longreach Region, usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—Queensland, usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Western Australia—usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Territory—usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Queensland—usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Australia—usually resident population by age and sex, 2006
- Northern Australia—usually resident population by age and sex, by SLA, 2006.

## 2.5 Population turnover

- Northern Australia—population migration, by SLA, between 2001 and 2006.