

Regional Movers Index

June 2023 Quarter Report

Powered by:



Commonwealth
Bank



REGIONAL
AUSTRALIA
INSTITUTE

What is Regional Movers Index?



The **Regional Movers Index** presents fresh analysis of movements between Australia's capital cities and regions.

The **Index** is a partnership between Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) and the Regional Australia Institute (RAI), powered by analysis of proprietary data to create an up-to-date and granular picture of a large sample of relocations.

The **Index** updates the trends identified in the RAI's 2019 Big Movers report – that in recent decades more people have been moving from Australia's capital cities to regions than in the opposite direction.

Established at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to track the movement of capital city people to the regions, the RMI publication has also highlighted that regional people were tending to stay in regions to avoid those severe capital-city lockdowns. Now that Australia is living with COVID and population flows from regions to capitals have resumed, the RMI publication is honing its focus on the **net** migration inflows that Australia's regions are continuing to experience. See pp18-20 in the Appendix for details on the various revision to the methodology that focuses on these net flows.

-
- The **Index** is powered by CBA data from relocations amongst its 16 million customers.
 - Quarterly and annual changes are presented in the Index.
 - This **Index** is an invaluable resource for both the public and private sectors. By tracking people's movements it enables early identification of growth trends, and flags places emerging as hot spots needing fresh thinking on housing and infrastructure.

Regional Movers Index

Earlier year momentum fails to hold as Regional Movers Index follows typical June slump

The number of people moving from capital cities to the regions waned in the June quarter, repeating the typical quarterly high/low cycle in the index.

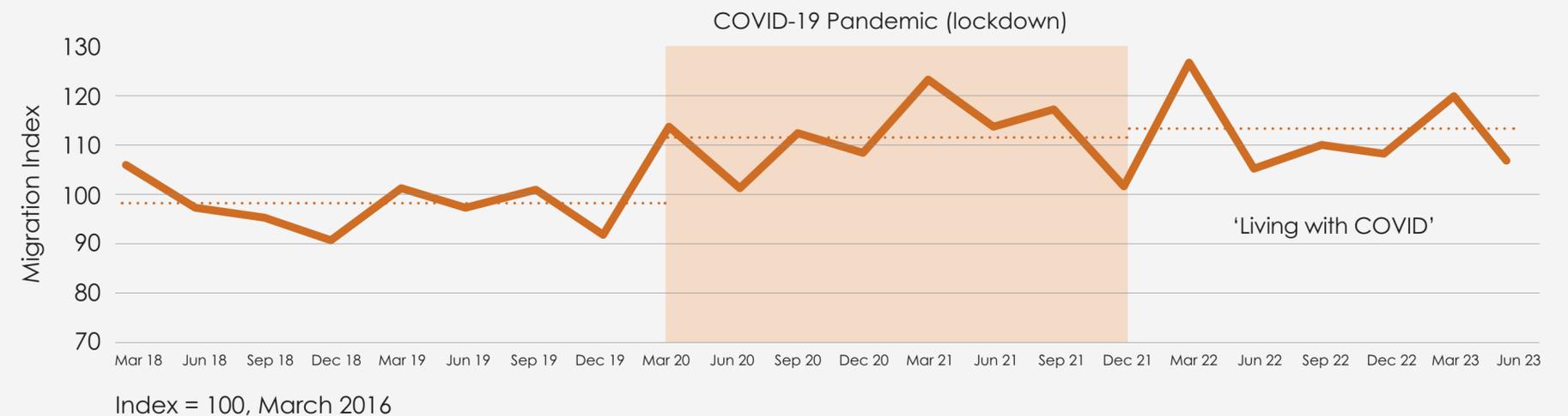
The June 2023 dip (at 10.8 per cent) followed typical seasonal patterns, with June quarter migration flows declining by an average 9.6 per cent over the last five years.

Despite the quarter's slowdown, city dwellers continue to move to the regions at a higher rate in the aftermath of the pandemic, with city to regional flows up by 16.3 per cent, on-average, compared to 2018 and 2019 and slightly above the levels reported during the height of the pandemic.

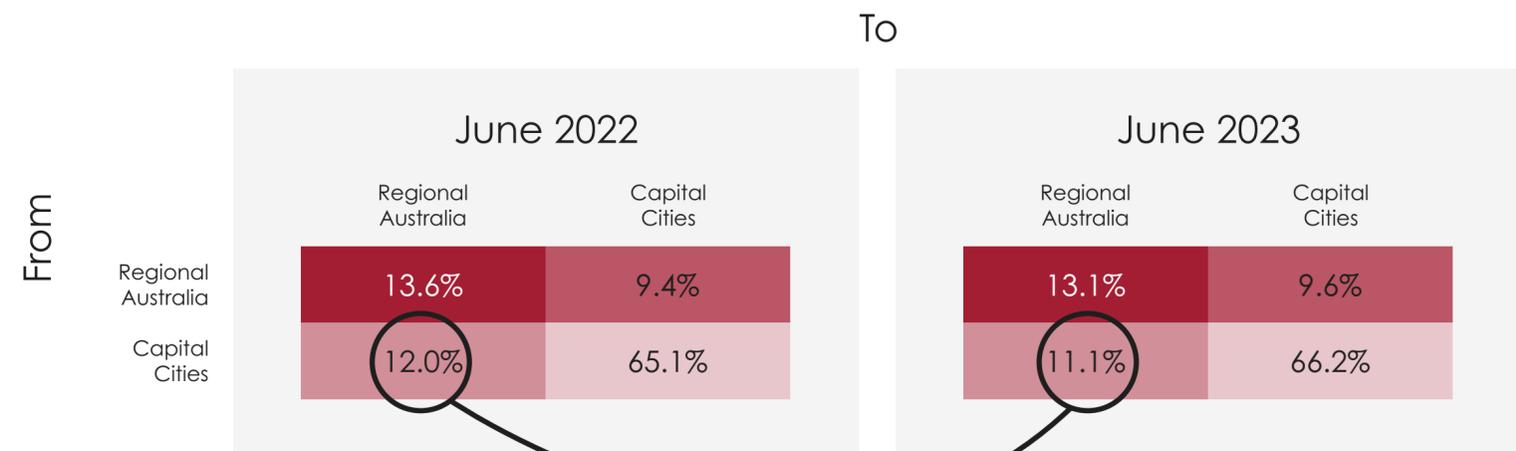
With more people continuing to move from the city to the regions – than the opposite direction – capital to regional migration accounted for an 11.1 per cent share of all relocations. While this was down 0.9 per cent on a year ago (to June 2022) this compared to 9.6 per cent moving from the regions to the capitals.

See p20, Note on methodology: definitions of inter-regional, inter-capital, region-region and capital-region migration – discussing the shares under this breakdown of total major relocations.

Regional Movers Index: Population flows from Capital cities to Regional Australia



Breakdown of total relocations within Australia



Net Internal Migration to Regional Australia

Migration patterns appear to be normalising post-COVID

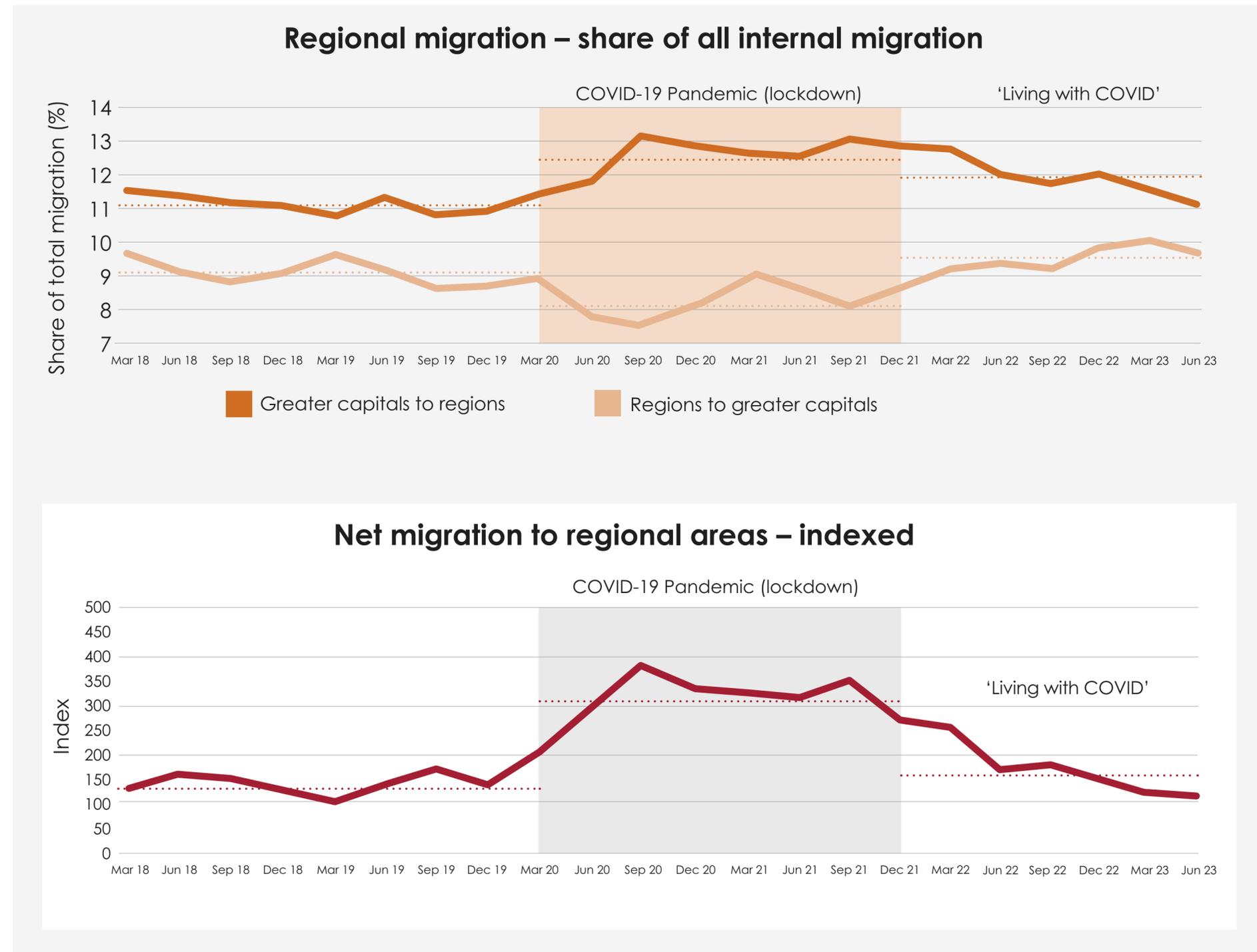
Migration patterns appear to be normalising back to pre-COVID levels, with the gap between migration flows from capitals to regions, and regions to capitals, narrowing after a marked divergence during COVID.

It should be noted, however, that the overall number of people moving is still much higher than pre-COVID levels – with the number of movers at its fourth highest level since March 2018, despite being 7.7 per cent down on last quarter’s record.

Against this backdrop of high mobility, the share of those moving from the cities to the regions has stepped down from the heights reported during COVID to account for an 11.1 per cent share of all relocations in the June quarter – putting it in line with the pre-COVID average.

Meanwhile movement from regions to cities has regained momentum in recent months and is now tracking slightly above pre-COVID levels. There was a fall in the share of these flows in the June quarter, down by 0.5 percentage points to 9.6 per cent of all relocations.

This narrowing of the spread has seen net migration to the regions continue to edge lower, to now track around pre-COVID levels.



Migration Patterns By State

Sydney remains biggest shedder, with regional Queensland, NSW and Victoria the biggest beneficiaries

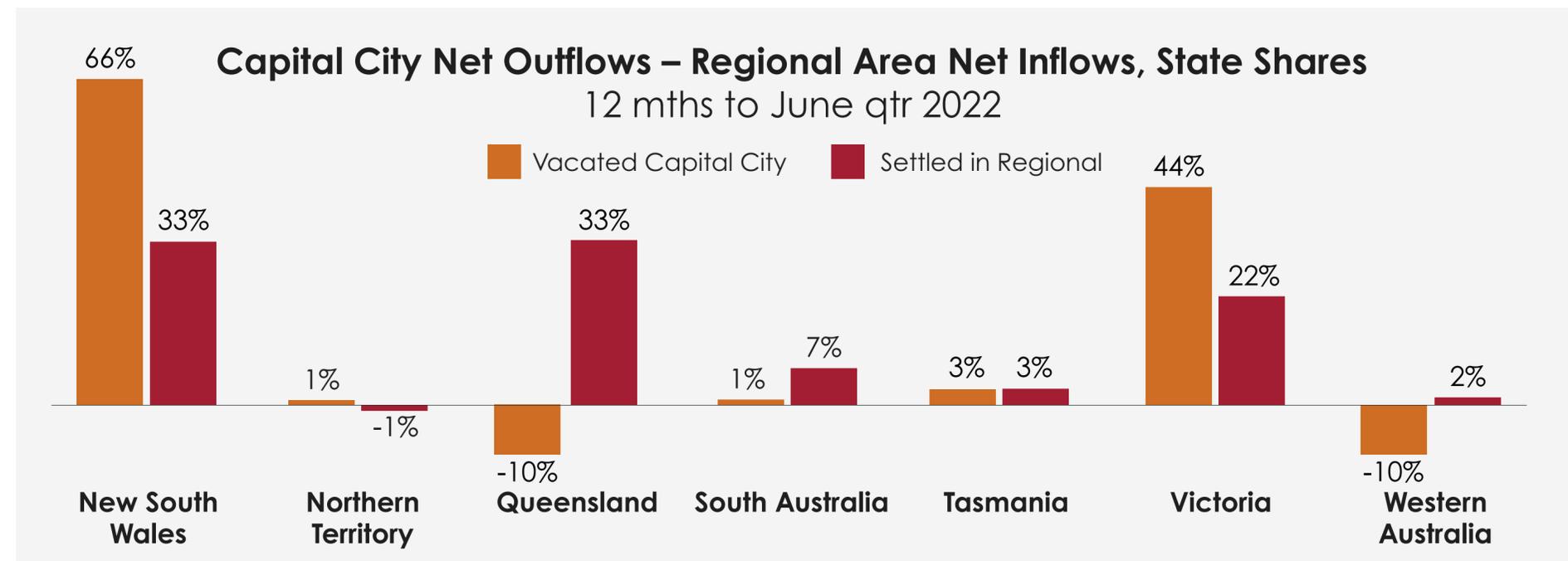
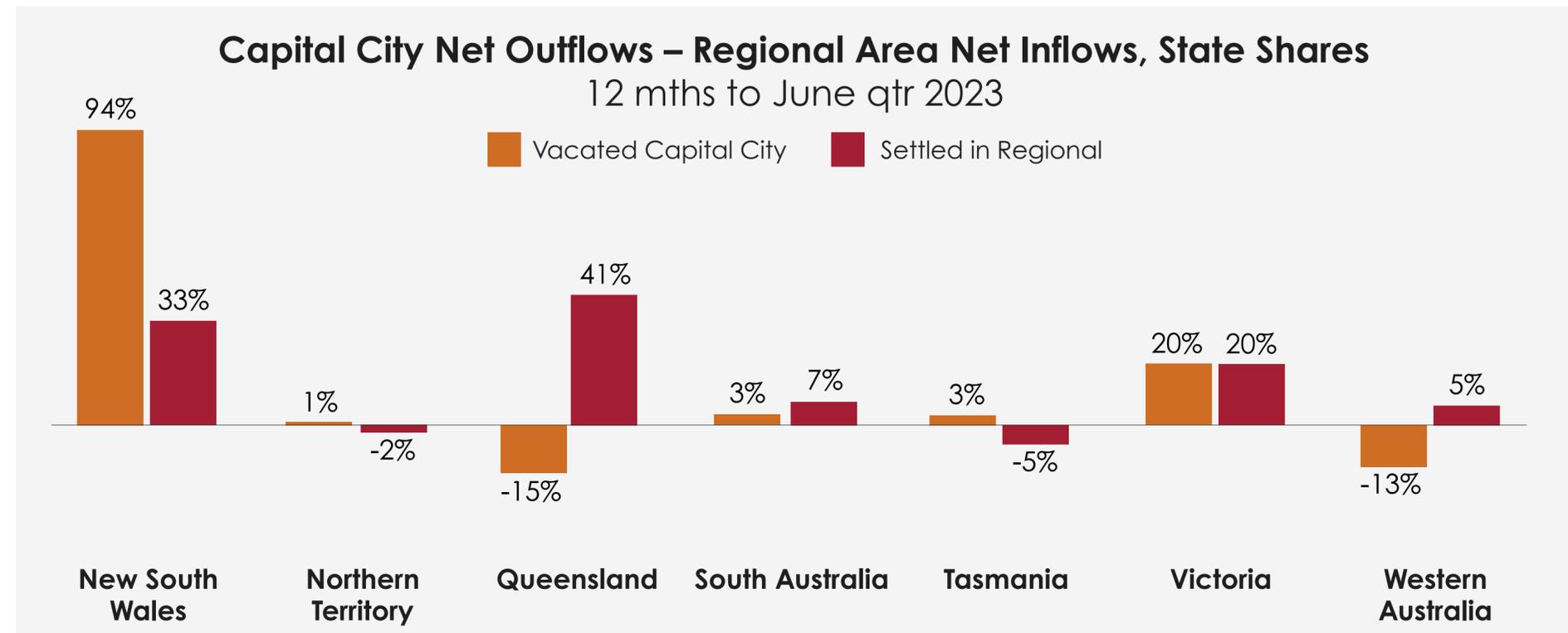
The charts opposite show the breakdown of net migration on a state by state basis in terms of the share of **net migration out of capital cities** and the **net migration into regional areas**.

Regional Queensland proved increasingly attractive for city dwellers moving to the regions, accounting for 41 per cent of net capital outflows – up from 33 per cent in the 12 months to June 2022. While there was little change in flows to regional New South Wales and Victoria, with their share of net capital outflows standing at 33 and 20 per cent, respectively.

Regional South and Western Australia retained similar shares to those recorded in the previous 12 month period to June 2022, while regional Tasmania and the Northern Territory each recorded a small net outflow – as slightly more people moved out of, rather than into, their regions.

Sydney remained the largest population shedder, accounting for 94 per cent of capital city net outflows in the 12 month period to June 2023, up from 66 per cent a year ago. Melbourne, meanwhile, accounted for a smaller share of net capital city outflows at 20 per cent, down from 44 per cent in the 12 months to June 2022.

In contrast, Brisbane and Perth continued to attract strong net inflows from other capital cities and regions, in the vicinity of 15 and 13 per cent, up from the 10 per cent share they both held in the 12 months to June 2022.



Regional Hotspots



Top Five LGAs: the largest net internal migration inflows

The LGAs in close proximity to the east coast capitals of Brisbane and Melbourne proved the most popular migration destinations – in terms of share of net internal migration flows – in the 12 month period to June 2023.

While four of the Top Five positions were again taken out by the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast, Greater Geelong and Fraser Coast – Moorabool in Victoria entered the Top Five for the first time, after its debut on the ‘growth’ list last quarter.

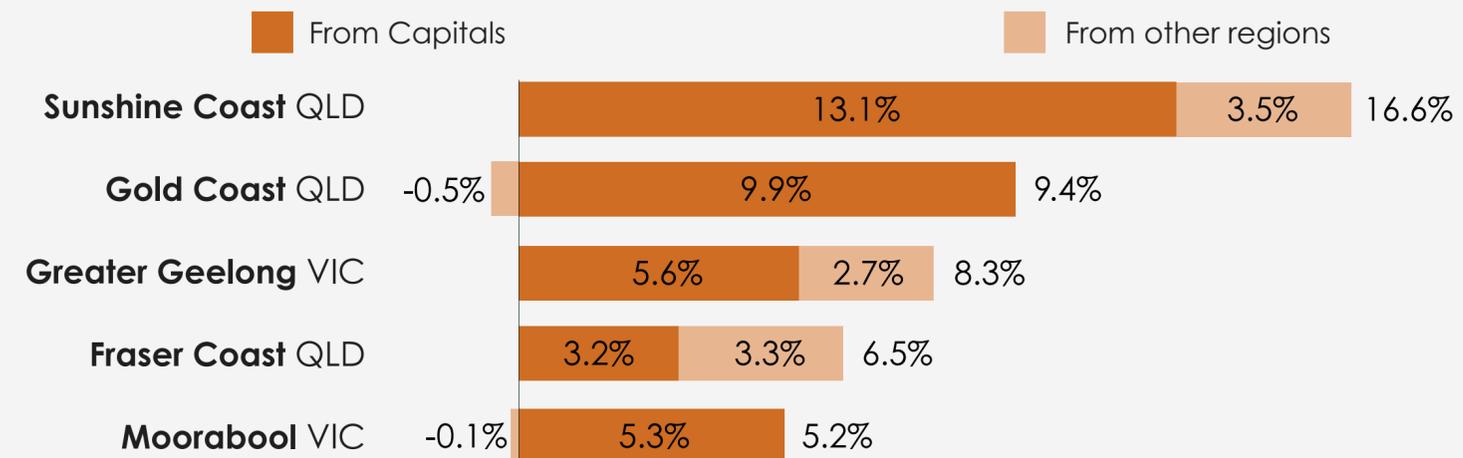
The Sunshine Coast topped the list for the third consecutive quarter, with a 16.6 per cent share of all net internal migration flows – of which, more than three quarters came from capital cities.

The Gold Coast swapped places with Greater Geelong to come in second spot, with a 9.4 per cent share of net internal migration – despite a small outflow to other regions. While Greater Geelong recorded an 8.3 per cent share, with the majority of its flows coming from the capitals.

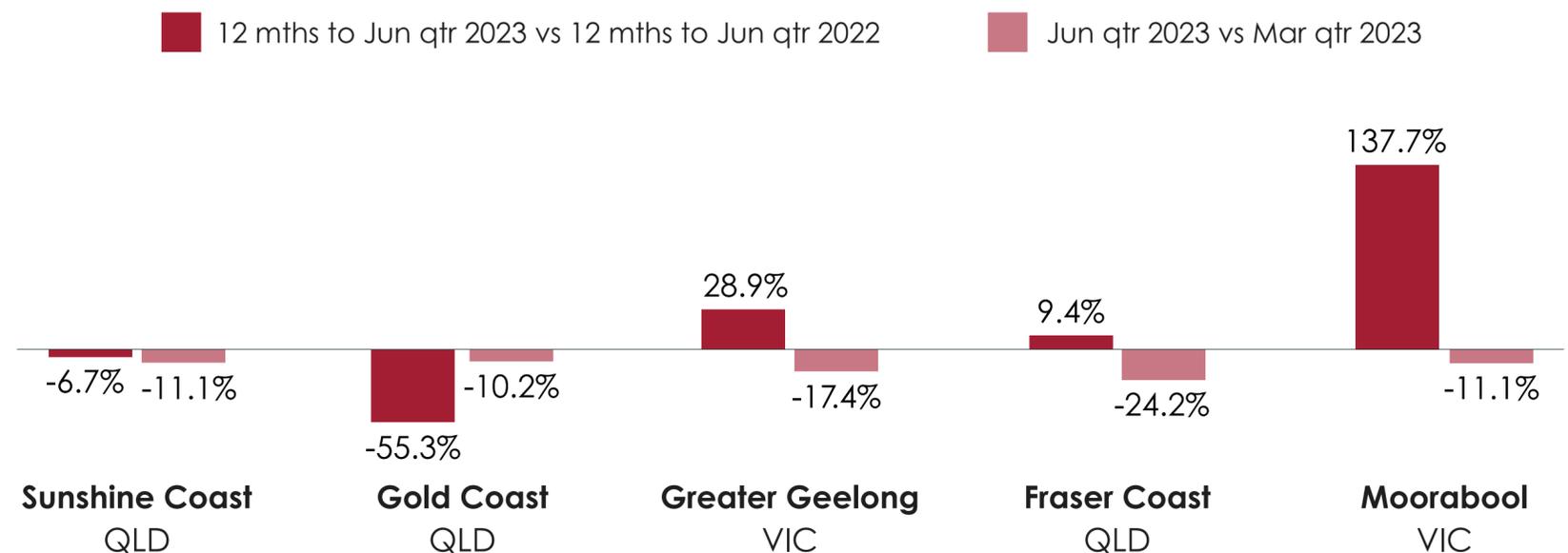
Queensland’s Fraser Coast again came in fourth, with inflows evenly sourced from capitals and regions, while new entrant Moorabool recorded a 5.2 per cent share on the back of strong migration flows from capitals.

While net internal migration was down across all the Top Five on a quarterly basis – in line with the decline in the number of overall movers – Moorabool recorded strong annual growth of 137.7 per cent, and it was up by 28.9 and 9.4 per cent, respectively, in Greater Geelong and the Fraser Coast.

Top Five LGAs by share of total net internal migration to Regional Australia
12 mths to June qtr 2023



Changes in total net internal migration inflows to Top Five LGAs



Regional Hotspots



Top Five LGAs: greatest growth in net internal migration inflows

The regional LGAs experiencing the greatest growth in net internal migration inflows (over the year to June 2023), saw some more remote LGAs make their way onto the 'growth list', with Western Australia in particular emerging as a growth hotspot.

Greater Geraldton topped the 'growth list' with a five-fold annual increase in net internal migration flows – largely on the back of strong net inflows from other regional areas.

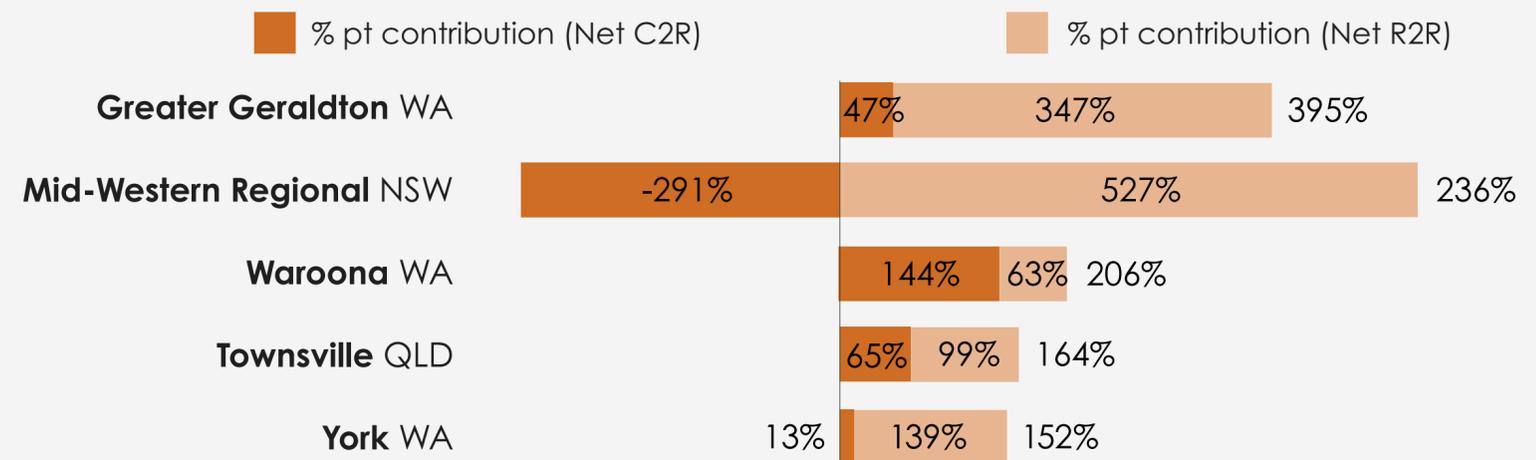
Second on the list was the Mid-Western Regional LGA, located in the Central Tablelands region of New South Wales, which recorded a more than three-fold increase due to a high inflow from other regions. This regional influx was enough to sustain the outflow to capital cities, with more moving from the LGA to capital cities than the other direction.

Waroona in Western Australia came in third, with around two thirds of net inflows coming from the capitals. Townsville, meanwhile, edged down the list from first to fourth spot, with a near three-fold increase in net inflows. And York rounded out the Top Five with high inflows from other regions.

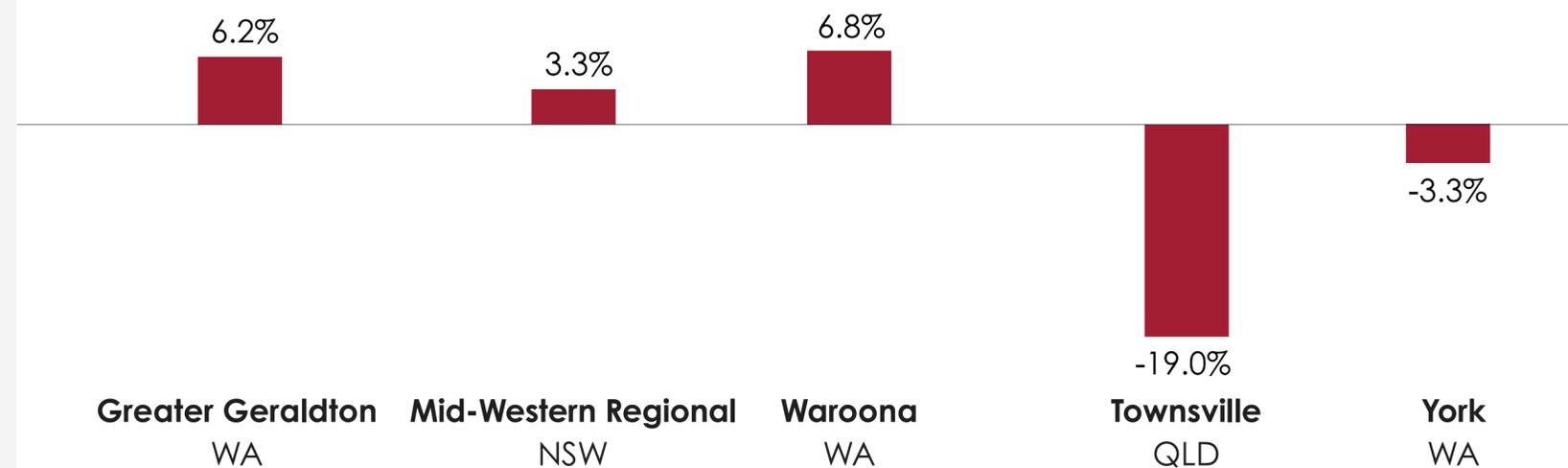
In terms of quarterly growth, the top three placegetters (Greater Geraldton, Mid-Western Regional and Waroona) all reported an increase in total net internal migration, while Townsville was down by 19 per cent and York by a lesser 3.3 per cent.

The emergence, this quarter, of these more remote regional growth hotspots reflects the ongoing strength of the regional job market and the likelihood of better house prices and availability further away from the cities. And this trend has seen some LGAs come off the boil. Several LGAs that had amongst the highest net internal migration

Top Five LGAs by annual growth in total net internal migration inflows 12 mths to June qtr 2023 vs 12 mths to June qtr 2022, % change



Quarterly change in total net internal migration to Top Five LGAs June qtr 2023 vs Mar qtr 2023, % change



inflows a year ago (to June 2022) saw net outflows in the June quarter 2023 – including Wingecarribee, Lismore, Newcastle and Byron. This switch also took place in the big regional centres of Launceston, Dubbo Regional, Albury, Wagga Wagga and Bathurst Regional.

Regional Hotspots

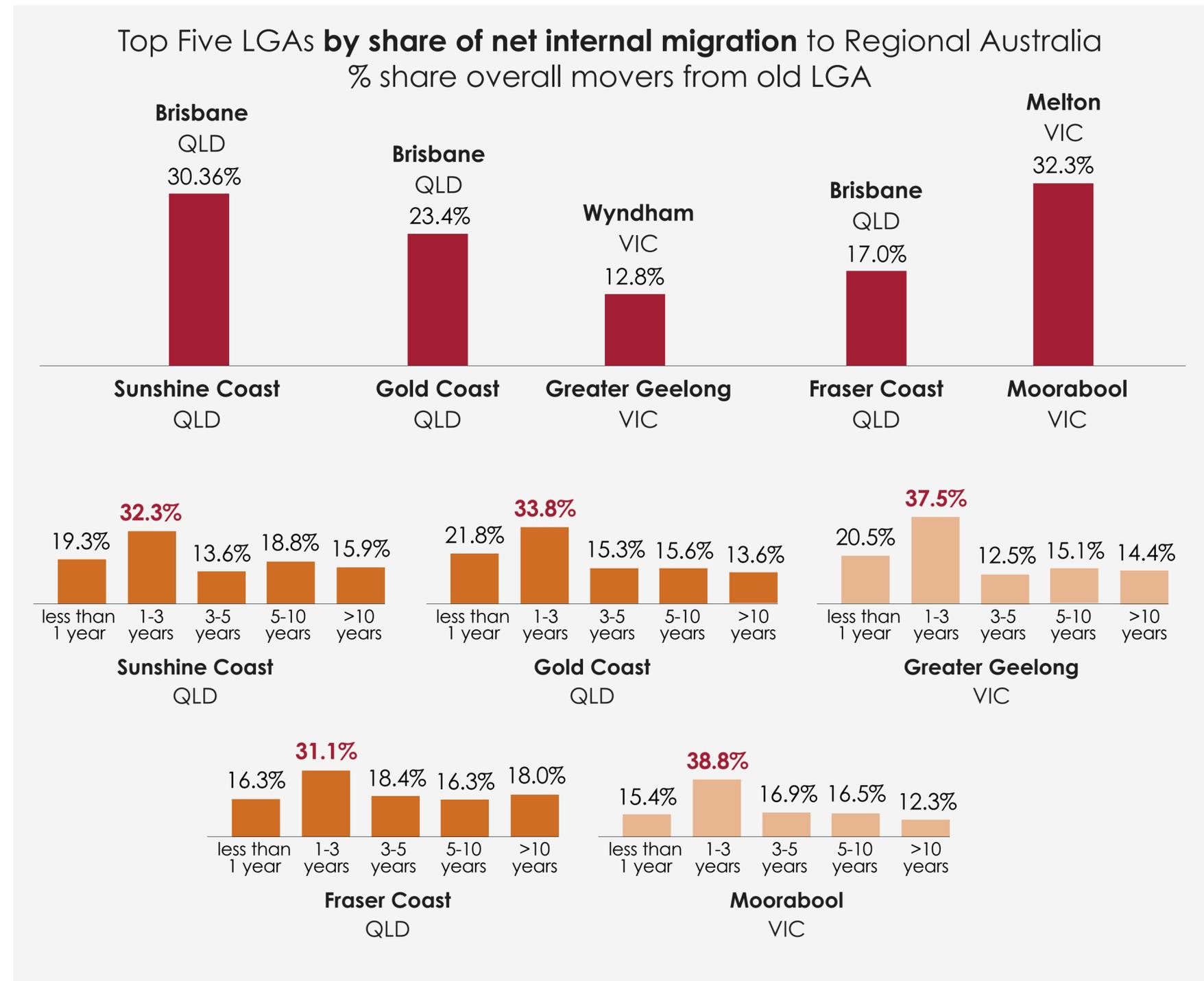


Top Five LGAs: where are they moving from and how long did it take them to make the move?

This new analysis looks at the Top Five LGAs, by share of net internal migration, in terms of where new residents came from and how long it took them to make the move.

The data shows the largest share of movers – for each of the Top Five – were ‘short-range’ moves from their proximate capital city. For example, Brisbane accounted for 30.4 per cent of those that moved to the Sunshine Coast, 23.4 per cent to the Gold Coast and 17 per cent to the Fraser Coast. While in Victoria, the outer Melbourne LGA of Wyndham accounted for 12.8 per cent of those that moved to Greater Geelong, while Melton accounted for 32.3 per cent of those that made the move to nearby Moorabool.

Of those making the move, across all of the Top Five, it was predominately people that had lived in their previous LGA (i.e. Brisbane, Wyndham and Melton) for one to three years. For those that had lived in their previous LGA for a longer period – more than 10 years – the Fraser Coast proved most popular.





Most attractive places for capital-city people

Top Five LGAs: largest net inflows from capitals

For city dwellers making the move to the regions, they continued to walk a well worn path, with the Top Five LGAs – by share of net capital to regional migration – retaining their Top Five positions from last quarter.

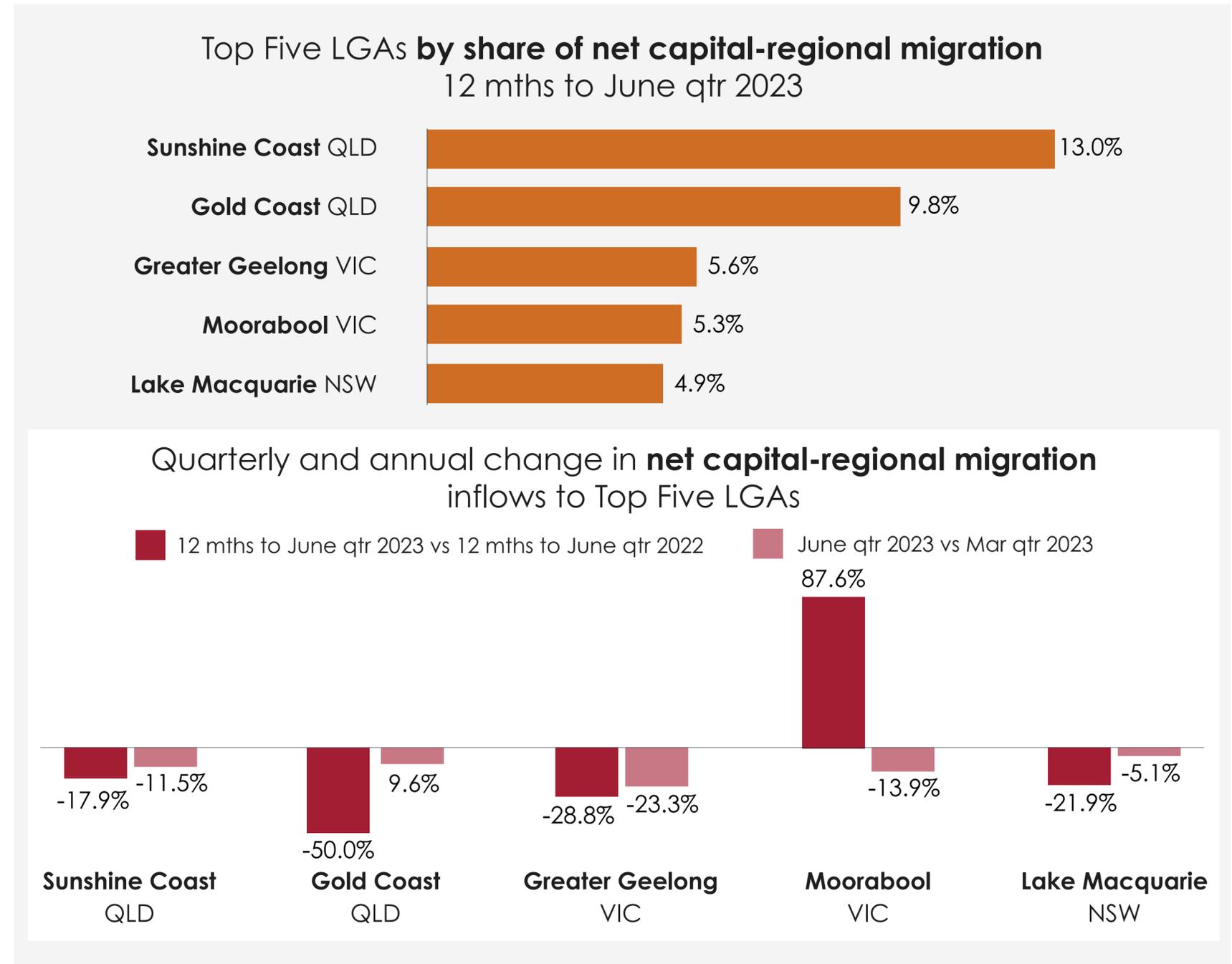
That said, the Top Five have all experienced a cooling of growth from year ago levels (to June 2022), with the exception of Moorabool, which recorded a 87.6 per cent increase in annual growth.

The Sunshine Coast again came in top spot with a 13 per cent share, despite a drop-off in net inflows on both a quarterly (at 11.5 per cent) and annual basis (at 17.9 per cent).

The Gold Coast came in second with a 9.8 per cent share, with quarterly flows down by 9.6 per cent, and an annual 50 per cent fall recorded in the 12 months to June 2023.

The three remaining positions, held by Greater Geelong, Moorabool and Lake Macquarie, all came in around 5 per cent – with a 5.6, 5.3 and 4.9 per cent share, respectively. While Moorabool bucked the trend to record an annual increase in net migration inflows from the capitals, it was down by 28.8 and 23.3 per cent in Greater Geelong and Lake Macquarie.

It should be noted that the net migration inflows from capitals are: inflows from capitals minus outflows to capitals.



Increasingly attractive places for capital-city people



Top Five LGAs: greatest growth in net inflows from capitals

The regional LGAs experiencing the greatest growth in net migration inflows from capitals saw some new hotspots emerge, with Waroona and Livingstone the only LGAs to previously make the Top Five.

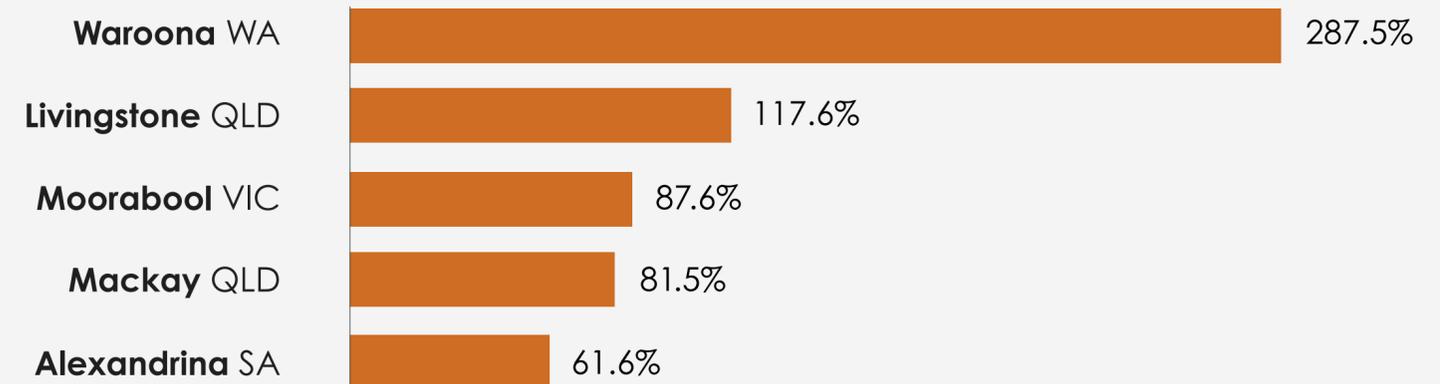
Waroona in Western Australia scaled from fifth to first this quarter, with a four-fold increase in net migration inflows from the capitals in the 12 month period to June 2023 – boosted by the quarterly increase in inflows of 10.7 per cent.

This saw Livingstone bumped down into second with a more than two-fold increase, as its growth declined by 5.6 per cent in the June quarter.

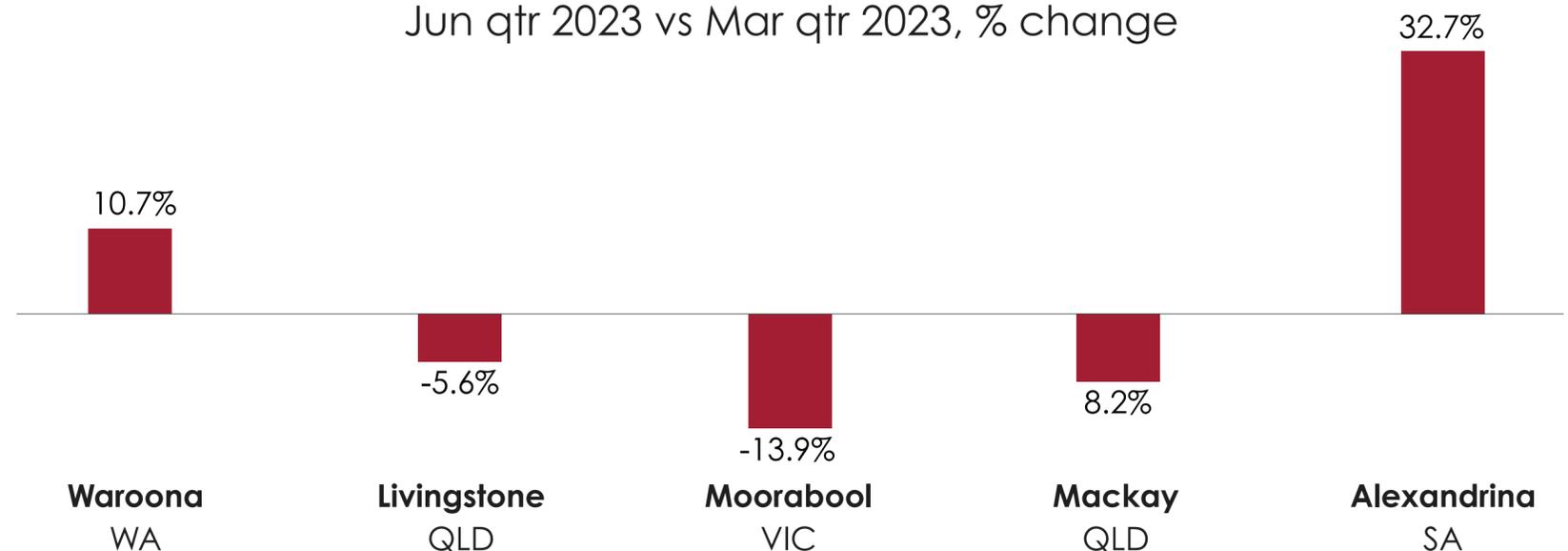
Third place went to Victoria's Moorabool, with inflows nearly two times higher than in the 12 months to June 2022 – despite a cooling of inflows from the March quarter of 13.9 per cent.

Meanwhile new entrants Mackay and Alexandrina, rounded out the Top Five. While Mackay reported a decline in quarterly growth of 8.2 per cent, Alexandrina posted the highest quarterly growth – across the Top Five – of 32.7 per cent to emerge as a new regional growth hotspot.

Top Five LGAs by annual growth in net capital-regional migration
12 mths to June qtr 2023 vs 12 mths to June qtr 2022 (%)



Quarterly change in net capital-regional migration inflows to Top Five LGAs
Jun qtr 2023 vs Mar qtr 2023, % change



Most attractive places for regional people



Top Five LGAs: largest net inflows from regions

Regional Queensland again lured a large share of regional movers, with the Sunshine Coast, Fraser Coast, Toowoomba and Bundaberg accounting for nearly a quarter of total net region to region migration in the 12 months to June 2023.

This followed the trend observed in recent quarters, with regional movers tending to gravitate towards the larger regional centres.

The Sunshine Coast increased in popularity amongst regional movers – rising from fourth place to first in the June quarter, with a 6.5 per cent share. This result was buoyed by strong year-on-year growth in net regional inflows, of 92.1 per cent, in the 12 months to June 2023.

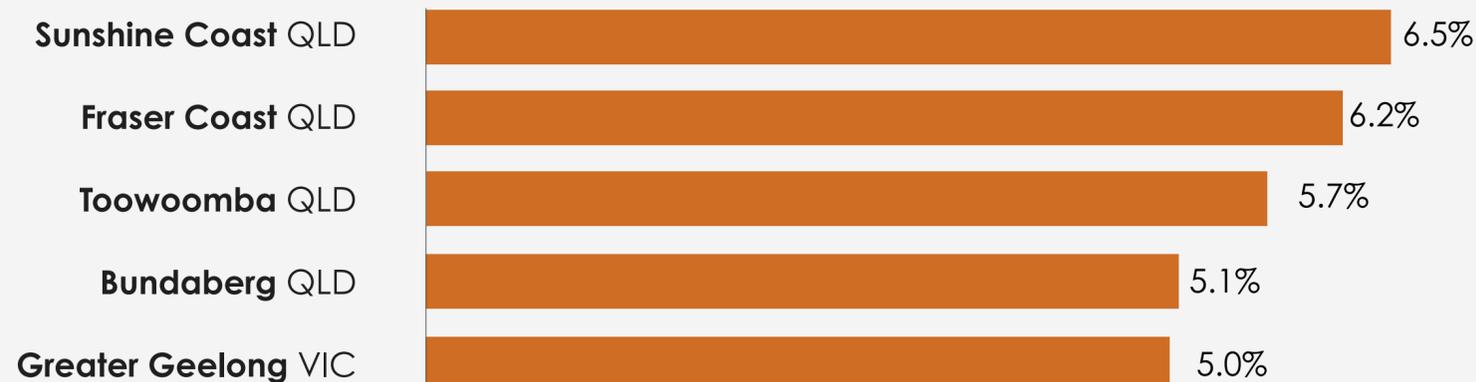
Meanwhile Fraser Coast remained in second place, with a 6.2 per cent share, with the LGA also experiencing solid annual growth in the vicinity of 16.5 per cent.

Toowoomba slipped into third, after taking the crown last quarter, with its 5.7 per cent share, while Bundaberg edged down to fourth at 5.1 per cent.

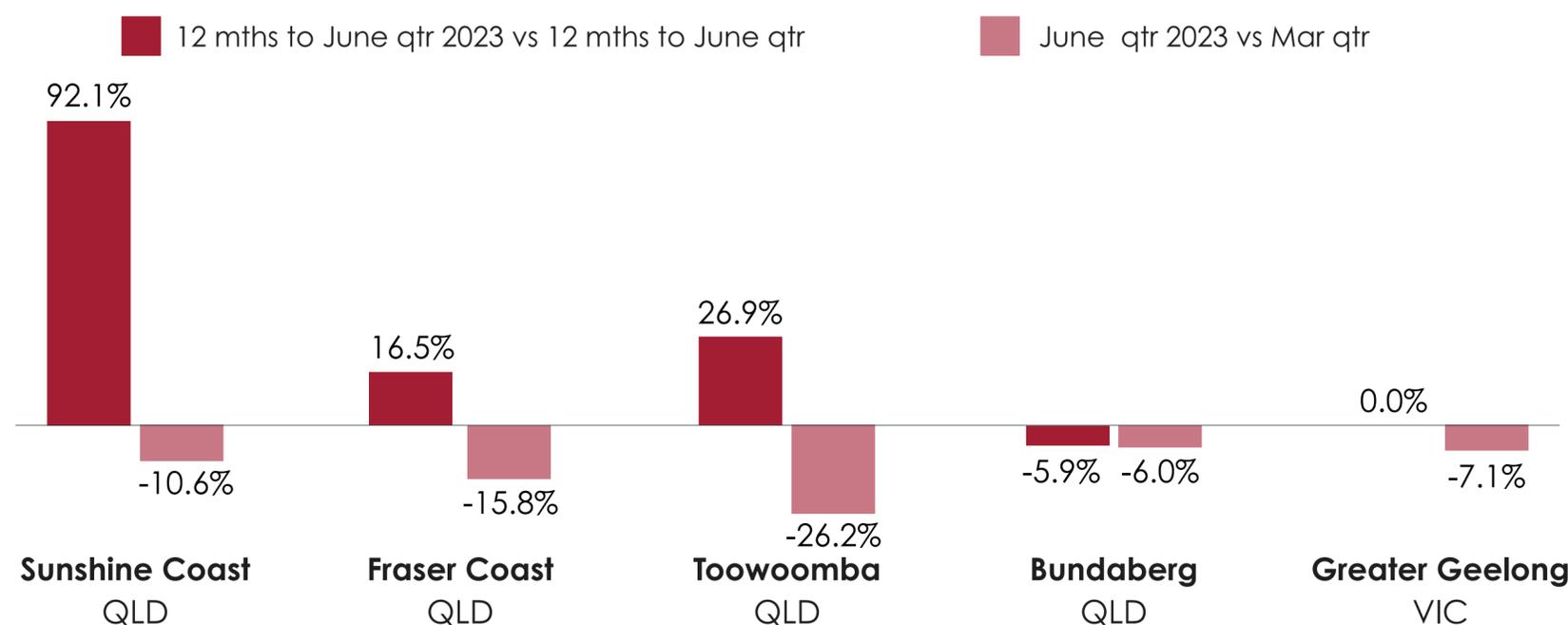
Greater Geelong nudged its way into the Queensland-dominated list, with a 5 per cent share, and as the only LGA (alongside the Sunshine Coast) to also make the Top Five list by share of net city to region migration. This was despite stagnant annual growth in the 12 months to June 2023 and a 7.1 per cent dip in the June quarter.

*Total net region-region migration across the country is considered as the sum of net regional migration inflows to **LGAs that experienced net inflows from other regions** (some LGAs experience net outflows to other regions).

Top Five LGAs by share of net regional-regional* migration
12 mths to June qtr 2023



Quarterly and annual change in net regional-regional migration inflows to Top Five LGAs



Increasingly attractive places for regional people



Top Five LGAs: greatest growth in net inflows from regions

The regional LGAs experiencing the greatest growth in net migration flows from other regions saw a new Top Five emerge – with Wodonga the exception – as growth was more evenly spread across Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia in larger, more prominent regional centres.

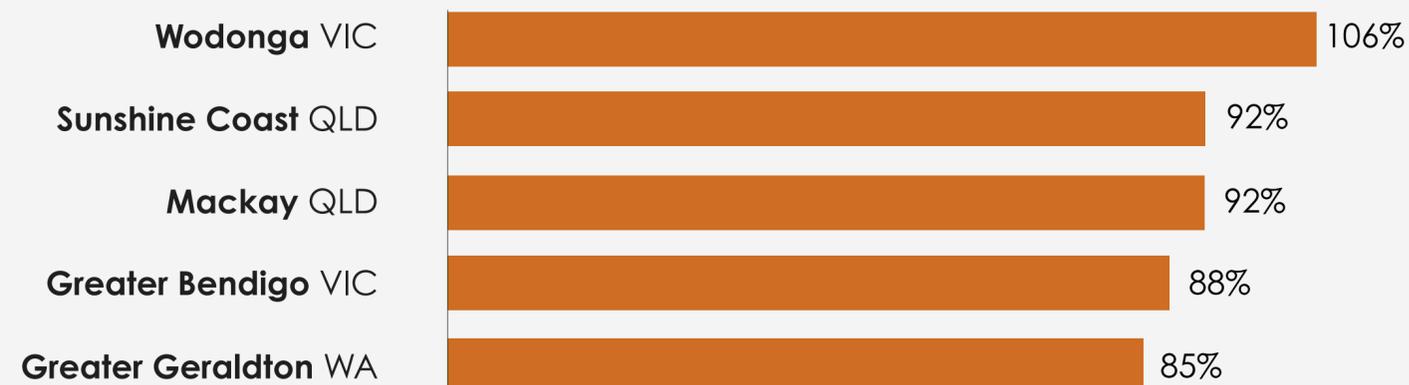
The Victorian LGA of Wodonga topped the list for the second consecutive quarter, with a more than two fold year-on-year increase in the 12 months to June 2023. This was despite a 21.5 per cent decline in quarterly growth.

Meanwhile the Sunshine Coast and Mackay exhibited a similar annual growth rate – just shy of doubling – to come in second and third. Quarterly growth, however, was down by a respective 10.6 and 18.6 per cent.

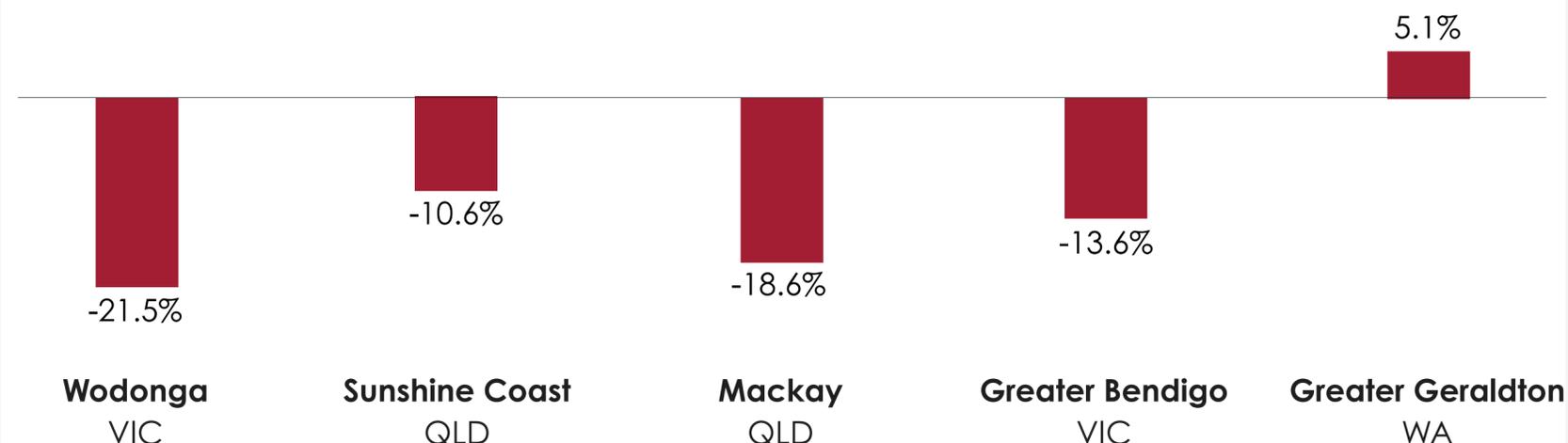
Rounding out the Top Five was Greater Bendigo in Victoria and Greater Geraldton in Western Australia, with Greater Geraldton bucking the trend as the only Top Five to record an increase in quarterly growth at 5.1 per cent.

Although not making the Top Five, other notable growth hotspots were also observed in South Australia and New South Wales, such as Murray Bridge, Clarence Valley and Maitland.

Top Five LGAs by annual growth in net regional-regional migration
12 mths to June qtr 2023 vs 12 mths to June qtr 2022 (%)



Quarterly change in net regional-regional migration inflows to Top Five LGAs
June qtr 2023 vs Mar qtr 2022, % change



Inter-regional Migration



Inter-regional migration elevated with regional people also on the move

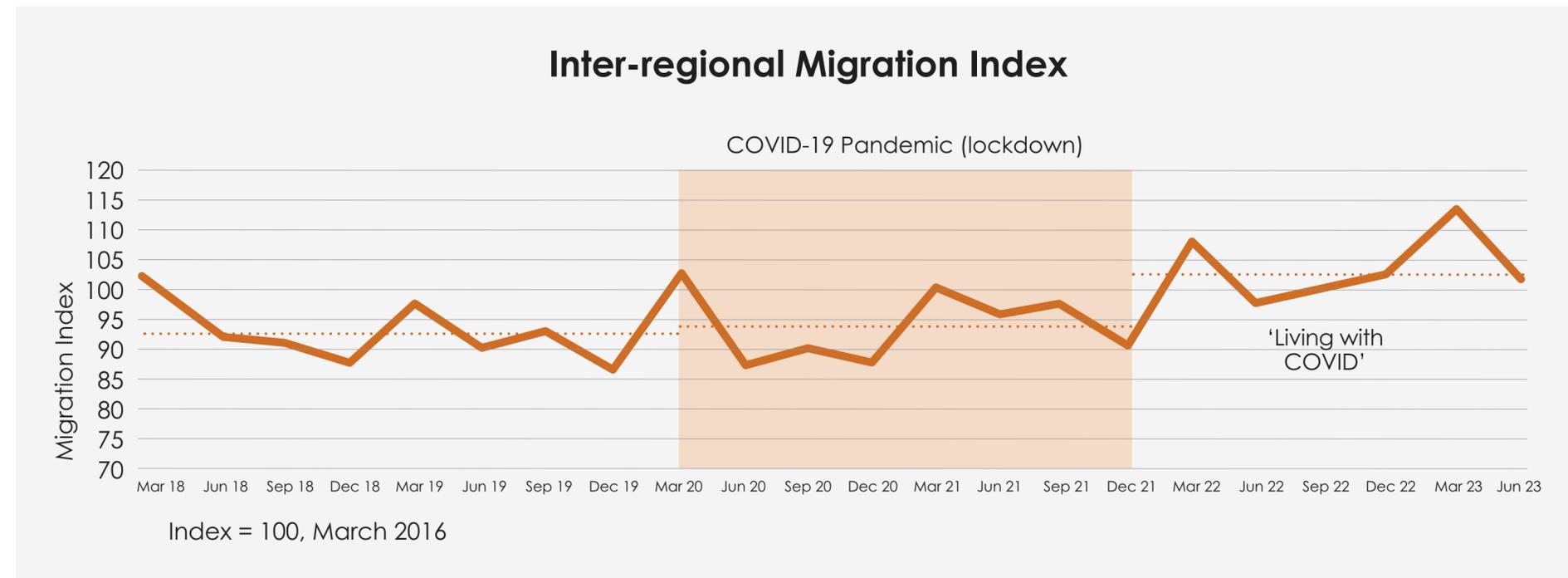
After reaching historic heights last quarter, the Inter-Regional Migration Index – which measures migration flows within and between regions – retreated back to levels reported at the end of 2022.

This 9.8 per cent fall in region-region migration followed the typical seasonal pattern observed in the June quarter, with the average June dip (over the timeseries) standing at 9.3 per cent.

Despite the seasonal drop-off, the index remained elevated at its fifth highest level, as increased regional mobility has seen inter-regional migration average 12.6 per cent above pre-COVID levels and 11 per cent above the levels reported during the pandemic.

As highlighted throughout this report, net migration inflows from regions often represent a significant source of population growth for many LGAs. In 2023, inter-regional migration accounted for the second largest share of migration (among the four elements of internal migration) at 13.1 per cent.

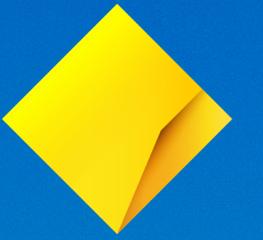
Although not explicit in the data, the lack of regional housing is likely to be playing a role in the decline in the total number of movers this quarter, with the number of capital to regional movers also down. That said, inter-regional migration remains elevated as regional movers continue to seek larger regional centres a bit further away from the cities – where housing is more available and affordable, particularly given the cost of living pressures.



Appendix



**REGIONAL
AUSTRALIA**
INSTITUTE



A1: Regional Movers Index

Methodology Notes



- (1) CBA-RAI Regional Movers Index is defined as movement of CBA personal customers from capital cities to regional areas (see A1.2). Index = 100, March 2016 quarter.
- (2) Customer movement or population flows refers to CBA personal customers changing their address as stored in CBA technological systems. Customers must have stayed at one address for 6 months (prior to moving) to be counted.
- (3) Capital cities/Regional areas defined through ABS 1270.0.55.001 GCCSA boundaries. Capital cities go by the GCCSA_NAMES of: Greater Sydney, Greater Melbourne, Greater Brisbane, Greater Adelaide, Greater Perth, Greater Hobart, Greater Darwin and Australian Capital Territory. Regional areas go by the GCCSA_NAMES of: Rest of NSW, Rest of Vic, Rest of QLD, Rest of SA, Rest of TAS, Rest of NT. Offshore and 'No usual address' GCCSA_NAMES excluded. ACT has no regional areas.
- (4) Relocations within capitals and within regions are those that are across different LGAs. That is, relocations WITHIN a given LGA are not considered or counted as a relocation. See p19, *Note on methodology: definitions of inter-regional, inter-capital, region-capital and capital-region migration*.
- (5) The Net regional migration index is calculated as movement from capital areas to regional less movement from regional areas to capital cities. Index = 100, March 2016 quarter.
- (6) LGAs are defined through ABS 1270.0.55.003 ASGS Volume 3 – Non ABS Structures.
- (7) To be listed on the RMI appendix – and considered for the various Top 5 rankings – an LGA must:
 - Have had net internal migration inflows in 2023 of 50 or more people
 - Have had a base of net internal migration, net capital-region or net region-region inflows of more than 10 people. This is to filter out significant outlier results associated with changes in small numbers. Significant outlier growth rates are not published or ranked.
- (8) 14 LGAs have a percentage of their constituency defined as Capital and the other percentage defined as Regional. These LGAs include Scenic Rim (R), Light (RegC), Barossa (DC), Yarra Ranges (S), Lockyer Valley (R), Kingborough (M), Murrindindi (S), Derwent Valley (M), Murray (S), Mallala (DC), Moorabool (S), Mitchell (S), Macedon Ranges (S), Unincorporated NT.
- (9) The proportion of CBA customers in each state as percentage of total customers is representative of overall Australian population (ABS National, state and territory population released 18th March 2021 for September 2020 reference period).

A2: All LGAs

Share of Migration, Changes in Total Net Internal Migration



LGA	State	Share of TOTAL NIM (%)	Share of NET C2R Migration (%)	Share* of NET R2R Migration (%)	Growth in TOTAL NIM 12 mths to Jun 2023 vs 12 mths to Jun 2022 (%)
Sunshine Coast	QLD	17%	13%	7%	-7%
Gold Coast	QLD	9%	10%	-1%	-55%
Greater Geelong	VIC	8%	6%	5%	29%
Fraser Coast	QLD	6%	3%	6%	9%
Moorabool	VIC	5%	5%	0%	138%
Bundaberg	QLD	4%	2%	5%	3%
Lake Macquarie	NSW	4%	5%	-2%	-30%
Cessnock	NSW	3%	2%	3%	5%
Maitland	NSW	3%	1%	5%	-17%
Baw Baw	VIC	3%	4%	-1%	-4%
Ballarat	VIC	3%	2%	2%	-4%
Toowoomba	QLD	3%	0%	6%	-26%
Port Macquarie-Hastings	NSW	3%	3%	0%	-42%
Mackay	QLD	3%	1%	4%	89%
Gympie	QLD	3%	1%	3%	-5%
Greater Bendigo	VIC	2%	1%	2%	-20%
Bass Coast	VIC	2%	2%	0%	-33%
Mid-Coast	NSW	2%	3%	-1%	-42%
Busselton	WA	2%	2%	1%	-6%
Shellharbour	NSW	2%	1%	2%	-26%
Cairns	QLD	2%	1%	2%	-33%

LGA	State	Share of TOTAL NIM (%)	Share of NET C2R Migration (%)	Share* of NET R2R Migration (%)	Growth in TOTAL NIM 12 mths to Jun 2023 vs 12 mths to Jun 2022 (%)
Townsville	QLD	2%	0%	4%	164%
South Burnett	QLD	2%	1%	1%	21%
Alexandrina	SA	2%	1%	0%	77%
Livingstone	QLD	2%	0%	2%	29%
Augusta-Margaret River	WA	2%	1%	1%	11%
Hindmarsh	VIC	2%	2%	-1%	-34%
Gladstone	QLD	2%	0%	3%	-2%
Port Stephens	NSW	2%	2%	0%	-51%
Clarence Valley	NSW	2%	1%	2%	8%
Shoalhaven	NSW	2%	2%	-1%	-57%
East Gippsland	VIC	1%	1%	0%	-19%
Southern Downs	QLD	1%	1%	1%	44%
Tweed	NSW	1%	2%	-1%	-54%
Snowy Valleys	NSW	1%	1%	0%	111%
Golden Plains	VIC	1%	1%	1%	30%
Tablelands	QLD	1%	0%	2%	20%
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional	NSW	1%	2%	-1%	-79%
Noosa	QLD	1%	3%	-3%	-41%
Wodonga	VIC	1%	0%	2%	-29%
Scenic Rim	QLD	1%	0%	1%	0%
Barossa	SA	1%	1%	0%	13%

*a negative share of Net Regional-Regional Migration indicates the LGA experienced a net outflow of people to other regions; the percentage listed is the percent this LGA's outflows represents out of the sum of outflows from all LGAs that experienced a net outflow of people to other regions.

* a positive share of Net Regional-Regional Migration indicates the LGA experienced a net inflow of people from other regions; the percentage listed is the percent this LGA's outflows represents out of the sum of inflows to all LGAs that experienced a net inflow of people from other regions. See p19 on the Appendix A3 for definitions and methodology.

A2: All LGAs

Share of Migration, Changes in Total Net Internal Migration



LGA	State	Share of TOTAL NIM (%)	Share of NET C2R Migration (%)	Share* of NET R2R Migration (%)	Growth in TOTAL NIM 12 mths to Jun 2023 vs 12 mths to Jun 2022 (%)
Bunbury	WA	1%	0%	1%	78%
Copper Coast	SA	1%	1%	0%	0%
Ballina	NSW	1%	1%	0%	-40%
Dardanup	WA	1%	0%	1%	-18%
Victor Harbor	SA	1%	0%	0%	-13%
Albany	WA	1%	0%	1%	-24%
Whitsunday	QLD	1%	1%	0%	-60%
Mount Alexander	VIC	1%	1%	0%	-22%
Kempsey	NSW	1%	1%	0%	-41%
Wellington	VIC	1%	1%	0%	-40%
Waroona	WA	1%	0%	0%	206%
Nambucca Valley	NSW	1%	0%	0%	-61%
Greater Hume Shire	NSW	1%	0%	1%	-10%
Greater Geraldton	WA	1%	0%	2%	395%
Harvey	WA	1%	0%	1%	48%
Murray River	NSW	1%	0%	0%	-39%
Pyrenees	VIC	0%	0%	1%	151%
Murray Bridge	SA	0%	0%	1%	115%
West Tamar	TAS	0%	0%	1%	-49%
Surf Coast	VIC	0%	2%	-2%	-75%
Mount Gambier	SA	0%	1%	0%	-70%

LGA	State	Share of TOTAL NIM (%)	Share of NET C2R Migration (%)	Share* of NET R2R Migration (%)	Growth in TOTAL NIM 12 mths to Jun 2023 vs 12 mths to Jun 2022 (%)
Lithgow	NSW	0%	1%	-1%	56%
Ceduna	SA	0%	0%	0%	113%
Chittering	WA	0%	0%	0%	-24%
Mid Murray	SA	0%	0%	0%	-27%
Yorke Peninsula	SA	0%	0%	0%	-34%
Mid-Western Regional	NSW	0%	1%	-1%	236%
Kangaroo Island	SA	0%	0%	0%	66%
Denmark	WA	0%	0%	0%	4%
Singleton	NSW	0%	0%	0%	-25%
Benalla	VIC	0%	0%	0%	12%
Rockhampton	QLD	0%	0%	1%	-35%
Exmouth	WA	0%	0%	0%	76%
Light	SA	0%	0%	0%	24%
Toodyay	WA	0%	0%	0%	11%
Indigo	VIC	0%	0%	0%	-18%
York	WA	0%	0%	0%	152%
Moira	VIC	0%	0%	0%	-33%
Central Goldfields	VIC	0%	0%	0%	-23%
Gingin	WA	0%	0%	0%	-5%
Mansfield	VIC	0%	0%	0%	-48%
Hinchinbrook	QLD	0%	0%	0%	66%
Goulburn Mulwaree	NSW	0%	0%	0%	-75%

*a negative share of Net Regional-Regional Migration indicates the LGA experienced a net outflow of people to other regions; the percentage listed is the percent this LGA's outflows represents out of the sum of outflows from all LGAs that experienced a net outflow of people to other regions.

*a positive share of Net Regional-Regional Migration indicates the LGA experienced a net inflow of people from other regions; the percentage listed is the percent this LGA's outflows represents out of the sum of inflows to all LGAs that experienced a net inflow of people from other regions. See p18 on the Appendix A3 for definitions and methodology.

A3: Note on methodology

Net migration and population growth



The Regional Movers Index publication was established at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to answer the pertinent question at the time: were capital city people fleeing to the regions? The RMI showed this to be well and truly the case. It also highlighted that regional people were tending to stay in regions and avoid those severe capital-city lockdowns.

Now that Australia is largely living with COVID and population flows from regions to capitals have resumed, the RMI publication is honing its focus to understand the **NET** migration inflows that Australia's regions are continuing to experience. That is, the RMI is now not only considering the one-way flow of population movements from capitals to regions, but it is also considering the population movements in the other direction, by focusing on net flows. The RMI publication is also now considering the breakdown of net migration flows into the various regional LGAs: net migration from capital cities and net migration from other regions. Together, this provides an invaluable source of information on a key driver of local population changes: net internal migration.

A region's population will change according to changes in:

- Its **natural increase** – local births minus deaths
- Its **net overseas migration** – overseas people moving in minus local people moving overseas
- Its **net internal migration** – people from other regions (within Australia) moving in minus local people moving to other regions (within Australia)

The RMI's reporting on net internal migration sheds much-needed light on this notorious swing variable underneath total population changes. It will also provide policymakers, industry and communities with the added understanding of local population dynamics driven by capital city versus regional migration patterns.

A3: Note on methodology

Ranking the Top Five LGAs



In considering net internal migration – and its constituent parts of net migration from capitals and net migration from other regions – this edition of the RMI ranks regions accordingly, i.e. based on:

- (1) **Total Net Internal Migration** – the report identifies the top five regional local government areas receiving the largest net internal migration inflows (irrespective of whether these inflows are from capitals or other regions) during the 12 months to the June quarter 2023. It also identifies the top five regional LGAs that have experienced the most significant growth in net internal migration inflows (again, irrespective of whether these inflows are from capitals or other regions).
- (2) **Net Capital-to-Regional Migration** – the report identifies the top five regional LGAs receiving the largest net migration inflows **from capital cities**. It does so by identifying and ranking the regions that have received the greatest share of total net migration inflows from all capitals to all regional LGAs. It also identifies the top five regional LGAs that have experienced the most significant growth in net migration inflows from capital cities.
- (3) **Net Region-to-Region Migration** – the report identifies the top five regional LGAs receiving the largest net migration inflows **from regional areas**. It does so by identifying the regions that have experienced the greatest share of total net migration inflows **among the regional LGAs that have experienced net inflows**. The report also identifies the top five regional LGAs that have experienced the most significant growth in net migration inflows from regional areas.

Regarding the ranking of regions experiencing the most significant growth in net migration inflows, the RMI has sought to filter out – and not include in the rankings – significant outlier results due to changes in small numbers. There are many regional LGAs with small populations prone to experiencing small net internal migration flows and therefore large percentage changes in growth rates. These places are not included in the RMI rankings. Specifically, an LGA must meet two criteria to be considered and ranked in the RMI publication:

1. The LGA must have experienced total net internal migration inflows in the previous 12 months of 50 or more people
2. The LGA must have experienced net internal migration inflows from either capitals or other regions of more than 10 people in the base period. Specifically:
 - a) LGAs where the net migration **inflows from either capitals or regions were 10 people or less in the base period** were not ranked among the regions experiencing the most significant growth in total net migration inflows.
 - b) LGAs where the net migration **inflows from capitals were 10 people or less in the base period** were not ranked among the regions experiencing the most significant growth in net migration inflows **from capitals**.
 - c) And LGAs where the net **migration inflows from other regions were 10 people or less in the base period** were not ranked among the regions experiencing the most significant growth in net migration inflows **from regions**.

*In the 12 months to June quarter 2023 there were two LGAs that experienced total net internal migration inflows of 50 or more people, but their net inflows in the 12 months to June quarter previous year (2022) were 10 people or less, so they are excluded in Appendix A2. The growth rates in their net internal migration have therefore not been assessed in the rankings of LGAs by total net internal migration. Those LGAs are: Southern Grampians (-538%) and Inverell (+900%).

A3: Note on methodology



Definitions of inter-regional, inter-capital, region-to-capital and capital-to-region migration

The Regional Movers Index publication focuses on migration (as indicated by CBA customer relocations) from capital cities to regions. Specifically, the relocations from capital-city Local Government Areas to regional LGAs. Since December 2022 the publication also considers (but previously hadn't focused on) migration in the other direction – from regional LGAs to capital-city LGAs. These relocations are necessarily *between different* LGAs (with some exceptions noted in Appendix A1).

Other relocations that occur during any given quarter are those within and between capital-cities and also those within and between regions. In addition to relocations between different LGAs, a significant number of relocations in any given quarter are *within* a given LGA – households changing their homes, but remaining within their overall community. Until September 2022 the RMI publication **included** these relocations within its overall analytical framework. Including these gives a higher number of relocations than excluding and this influences the numbers in the RMI report up to that issue showing the shares that each type of relocation accounts for out of all relocations. These shares are highlighted typically at the beginning of each quarter's publication (see. Table, **Breakdown of total internal migration** on p3 of September 2022 edition). Under that analytical framework, of all relocations:

- those within regional Australia have accounted for roughly 22 per cent;
- those from regional Australia to capitals have accounted for around 4 per cent;
- those from capitals to regional Australia have accounted for around 6 per cent, and
- those within and between capitals have accounted for around 68 per cent each quarter.

From December 2022 the Regional Movers Index publication includes additional detailed analysis on inter-regional migration – migration within and between Australia's regions. This is to provide an indication of another key source of population growth at the LGA level (beyond the inflows from capital-city LGAs). Relocations within a given regional LGA will not affect that LGA's overall population, and excluding these moves does not affect the RMI analysis of capital to regional flows or regional to capital flows. To get more accurate results of relocations between regions, the RMI now uses a revised analytical framework to **exclude** relocations that occur within any given LGA. We have applied this framework across the relevant elements of the publication for internal consistency. Under this revised analytical framework, we are analysing fewer but what might be called major relocations (see Table, **Breakdown of total major relocations** of p3 of this edition). Reducing the base number of relocations has changed the relative shares:

- those within regional Australia account for roughly 13 per cent;
- those from regional Australia to capitals account for around 10 per cent;
- those from capitals to regional Australia account for around 12 per cent, and
- those within and between capitals account for around 65 per cent this latest quarter.

Rebasing the analysis does not change the historical pattern of **capital city to regional** flows or **regional to capital** flows that underpin the RMI net migration index.