Regional Movers Index

17th September 2021

Powered by:

Commonwealth Bank

REGIONAL AUSTRALIA INSTITUTE

What is Regional Movers Index?

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

The **Index** is a partnership between 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.

- The **Index** is powered by CBA data from relocations amongst its 10 million customers.
- Quarterly and annual changes are presented in the Index.
- The **Index** will be an invaluable resource for both the public and private sectors. By tracking people movements it enables early identification of growth trends, and flags places emerging as hot spots needing fresh thinking on housing and infrastructure.

See Appendix A1 for definitions and methodology.

RAI-CBA Regional Movers Index

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The RAI-CBA Regional Movers Index remained elevated in the June 2021 quarter

A

While the index – showing changes in population flows **from** capital cities **to** regional areas – dipped by 8 per cent over the June 2021 quarter, it still shows strong growth over the past year. It shows **the number of people who made this move in the June 2021 quarter is 11 per cent more than in the June 2020 quarter.**

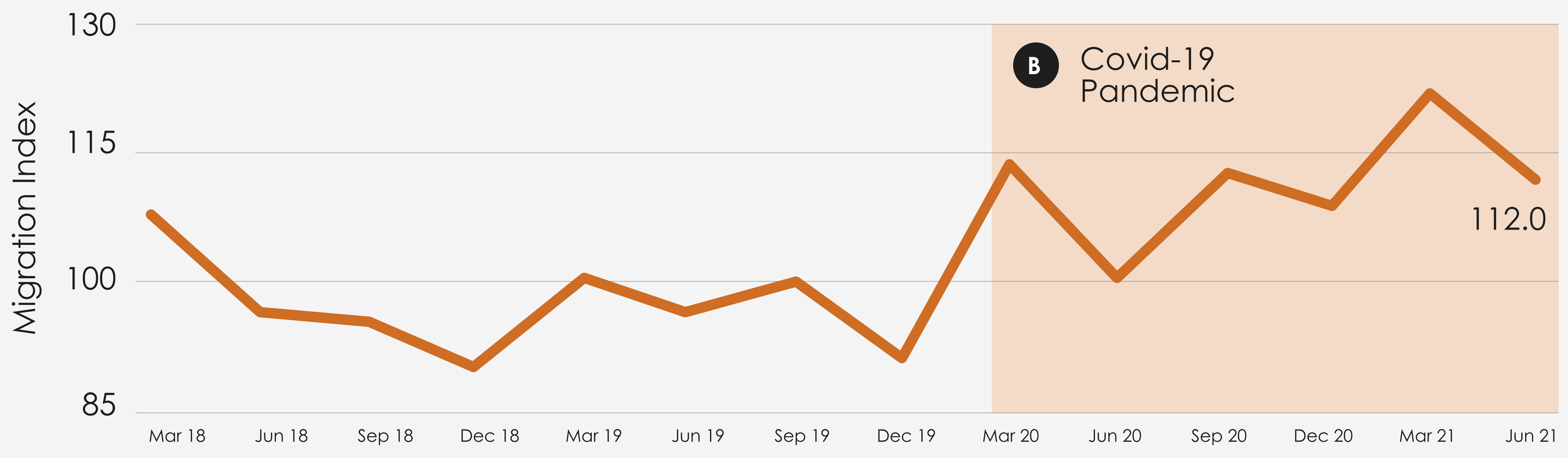
B

The dip in the index in the June 2021 quarter compared with the previous quarter is likely to largely reflect ordinary seasonal patterns in movement. That is, the RMI typically posts a decline in the June quarter of a given year.

C

People moving from capital cities to regional areas have increased their share of overall movements. **This group accounted for 6.2 per cent of all movers, up by 0.6 percentage points from the share they accounted for a year earlier**. Population flows in the reverse direction also accounted for a larger share of overall movements, up by 0.4 percentage points over the same period.

A Regional Movers Index: population flows from capital cities to Regional Australia



Index = 100, Mar 16

C Breakdown of total internal migration

To

June 2020

From	Regional Australia	Capital Cities
Regional Australia	22.2%	3.7%
Capital Cities	5.6%	68.6%

June 2021

From	Regional Australia	Capital Cities
Regional Australia	22.2%	4.1%
Capital Cities	6.2%	67.6%

Net Internal Migration To Regional Australia

Net migration to regional Australia

A

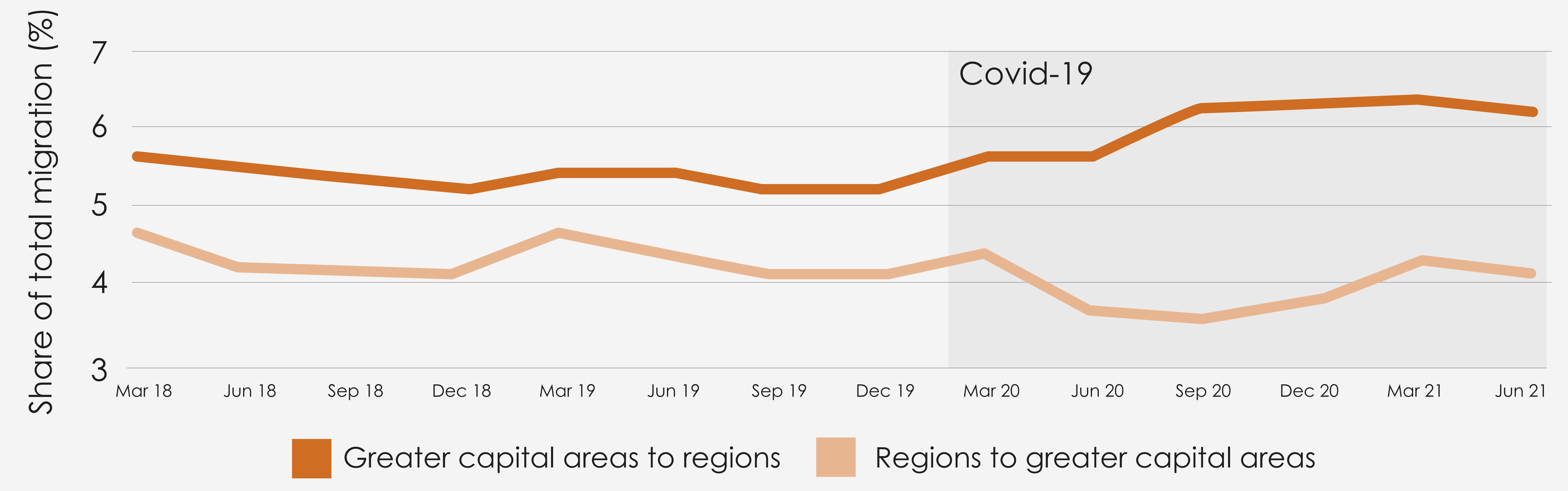
COVID-era migration patterns are underscored by an increasing preference for regional areas: capital-city dwellers are moving to the regions in greater numbers, while regional people are electing to stay in place in greater numbers.

This has seen the former group increase its share of total quarterly movement – from around 5 per cent in the years just prior to COVID to slightly more than 6 per cent of total quarterly movement in more recent quarters. The latter group of movers – regional people moving to capital cities – has shrunk in its share of total movement. From generally staying above 4 per cent in the years prior to COVID, to reaching as little as 3.6 per cent back in the September 2020 quarter.

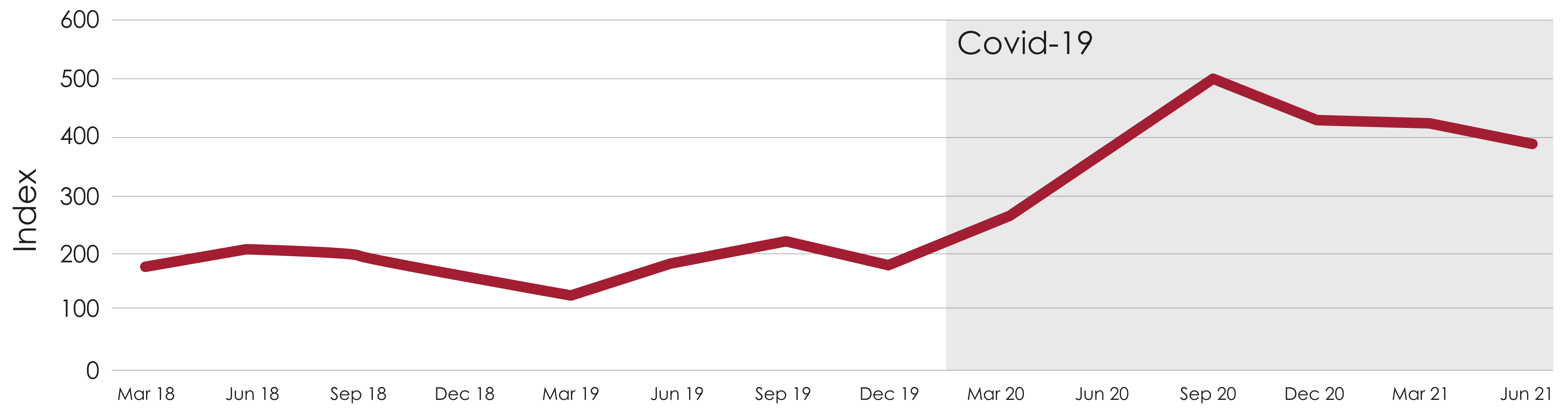
B

This drove the net migration index to its peak during that quarter. The net migration index has since scaled back as more regional people have started to move to capital cities – they still however account for a relatively small share. **The net migration index in the June 2021 quarter is still 10 per cent higher than a year earlier.**

A **Regional migration – share of all internal migration**



B **Net Migration to regional areas – indexed**



Index = 100, Mar 16

Regional Hotspots: Top Five LGAs

(by growth in capital to regional migration)

Top 5 growth areas of regional migration

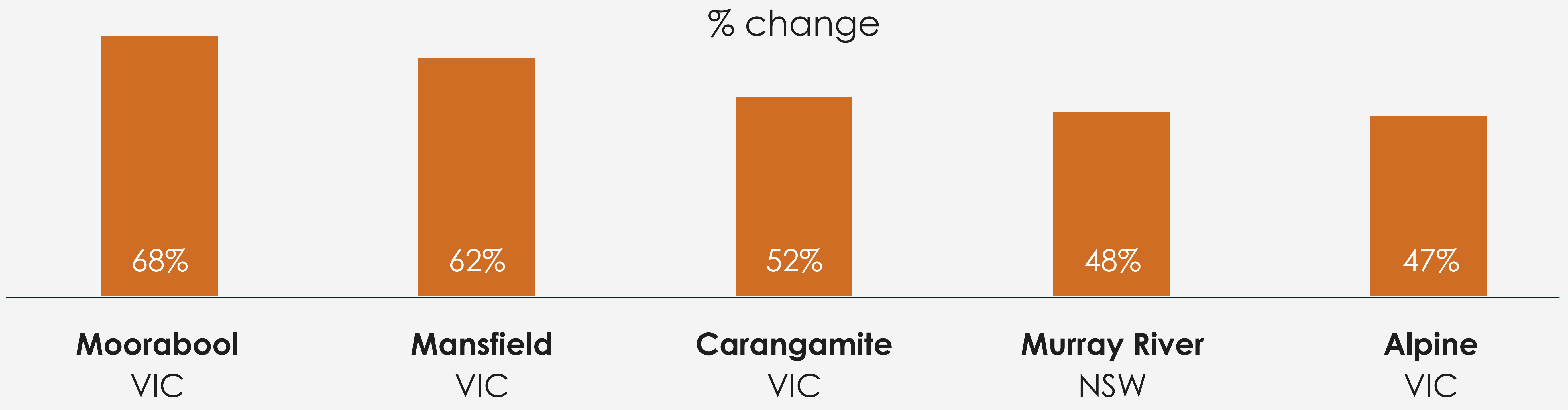
A

A conspicuous commonality among the Top 5 growth areas is their **proximity to Melbourne**, in a year marred by lockdowns. The Victorian Local Government Areas of **Moorabool, Mansfield and Corangamite experienced the strongest annual growth in inward migration from capitals** among all LGAs in the full 2020/21 financial year. These were followed by Murray River in New South Wales and Alpine in Victoria.

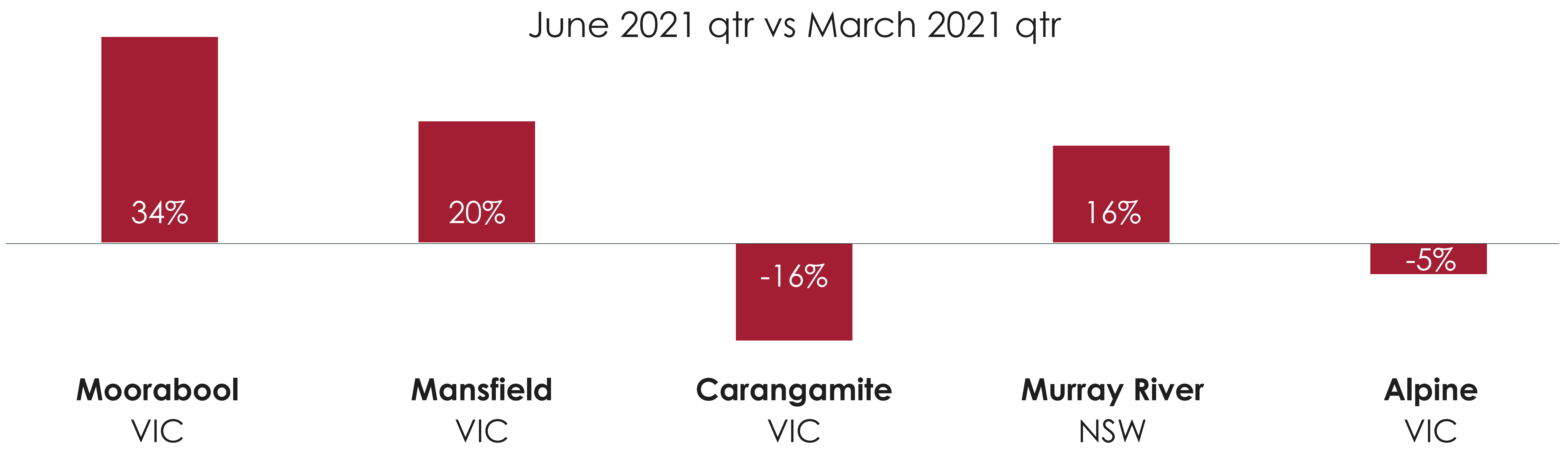
B

The growth in migration to Moorabool is a live trend – this LGA also experienced the strongest growth in capital-city migration in the June 2021 quarter (up by 34 per cent). Similarly for Mansfield (+20 per cent) and Murray River (+16 per cent). Migration into Corangamite and Alpine fell by 16 per cent and 5 per cent, respectively.

A Top 5 LGAs by annual growth in migration – 2020/21 vs 2019/20



B Quarterly growth in migration for Top 5 LGAs – June 2021



Regional Hotspots: Top Five LGAs

(by share of capital to regional migration)

Migration to regional areas: top 5 LGAs

A

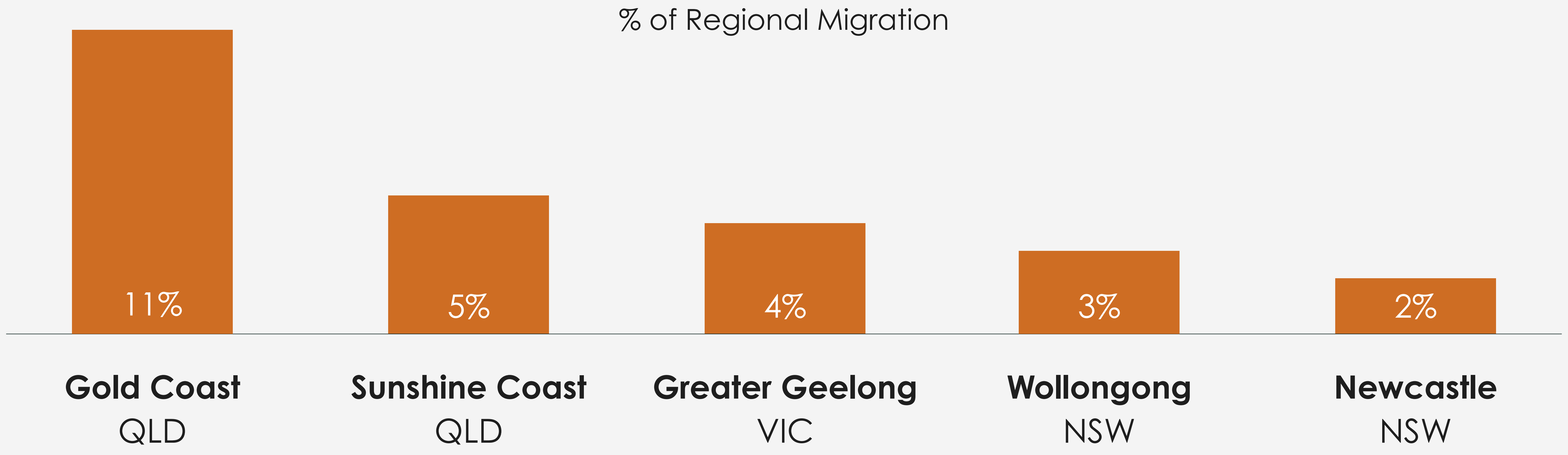
The largest numbers of capital-city dwellers moving to regional Australia continue to head for the high population coastal centres proximate to capital cities.

The Gold Coast continues to be the most popular destination among people moving from capitals to regions. The Glitter Strip welcomed 11 per cent of all capital city dwellers who moved to regional areas during the 2020/21 financial year. The next most popular destinations were the Sunshine Coast, Greater Geelong, Wollongong and Newcastle.

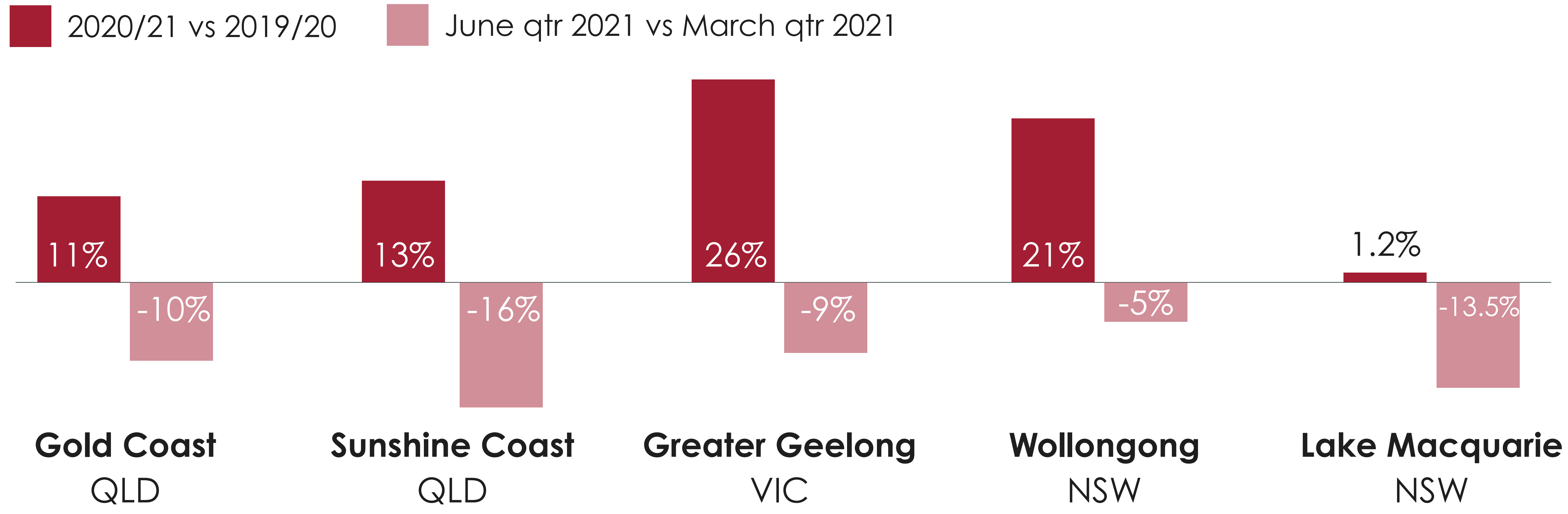
B

Of these Top 5 LGAs, Greater Geelong recorded the strongest growth in migration from capital cities in the full 2020/21 financial year compared with the previous financial year. In line with the national trend, migration to each of these Top 5 LGAs dipped during the June 2021 quarter, but was higher over the full 2020/21 financial year.

A **Top 5 LGAs by share of regional migration – 2020/21**



B **Quarterly (June 2021) and Annual Growth (FY 2020/21) among Top 5 LGAs**



Top 5 Spotlight: Greater Geelong

(Regional Movement)

Capital-city migration to Greater Geelong outpaces the national RMI

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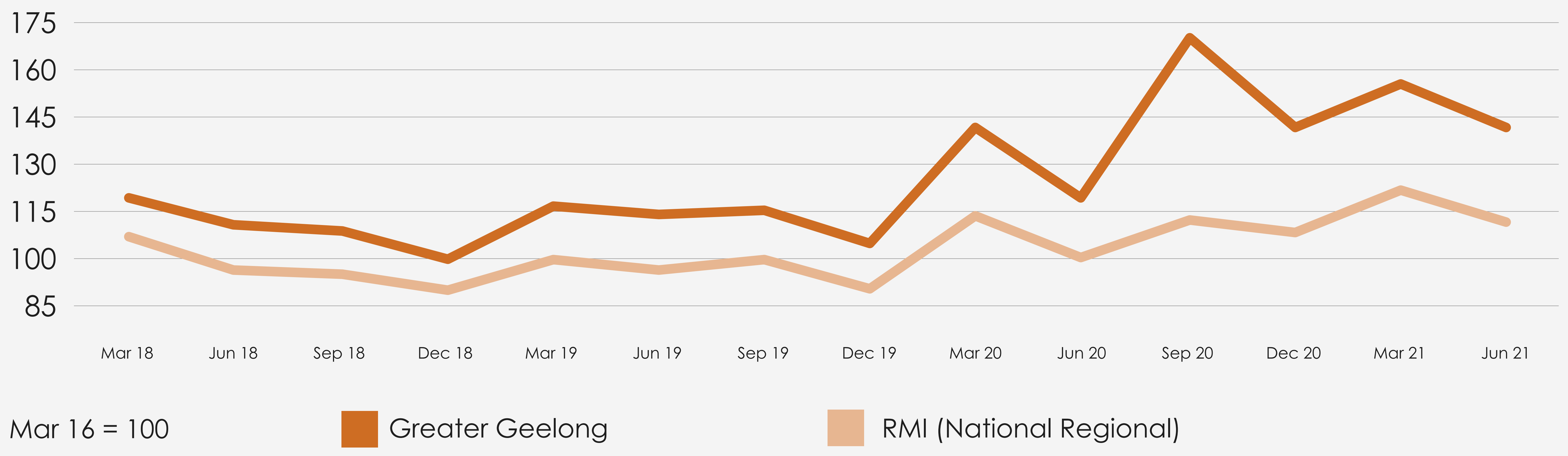
The pandemic-led acceleration of city-dweller migration into the regions is especially pronounced for the Greater Geelong area. Growth in this form of migration into the **Greater Geelong area has outpaced the national Regional Movers Index**, that is national population flows from capital cities to regional areas. The number of capital-city dwellers who moved into Greater Geelong in the June 2021 quarter is 19 per cent more than in the June 2020 quarter. For regional areas as a whole, the increase over this period – the increase in the RMI – was 11 per cent.

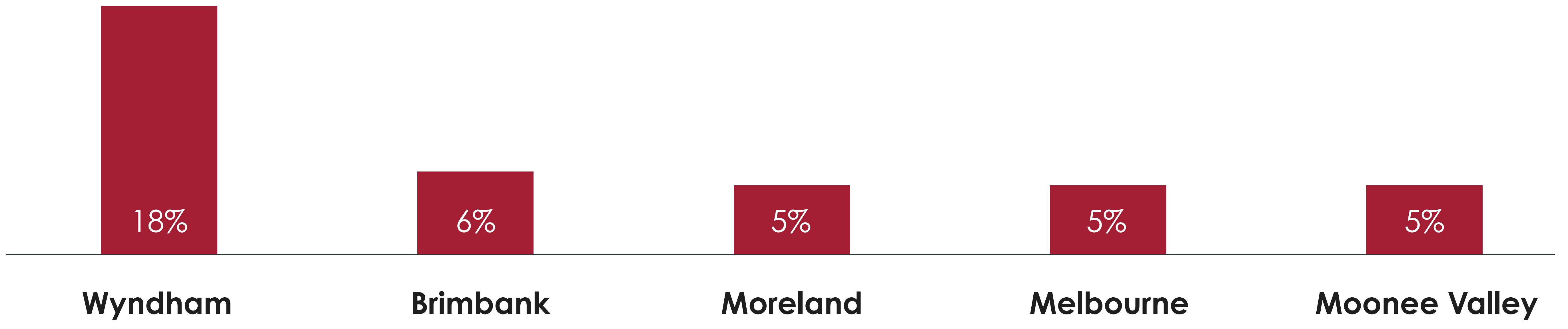
B

Unsurprisingly, Melbourne is the main source of this capital-city migration into Greater Geelong, accounting for a 90 per cent share. Within Melbourne, the **LGA of Wyndham (which neighbours Geelong) was the largest source of this migration, at 18 per cent**. This is followed by other Melbourne LGAs: Brimbank, Moreland, Melbourne and Moonee Valley municipalities.

A Population flows from capital cities to regional areas – Greater Geelong vs the national Regional Movers Index



B Top 5 Melbourne LGAs moving to Greater Geelong – by share of capital to Greater Geelong migration in 2020/21



Top 5 Spotlight: Greater Geelong

(Property Sector)

More city goers in Geelong coincides with local building boom

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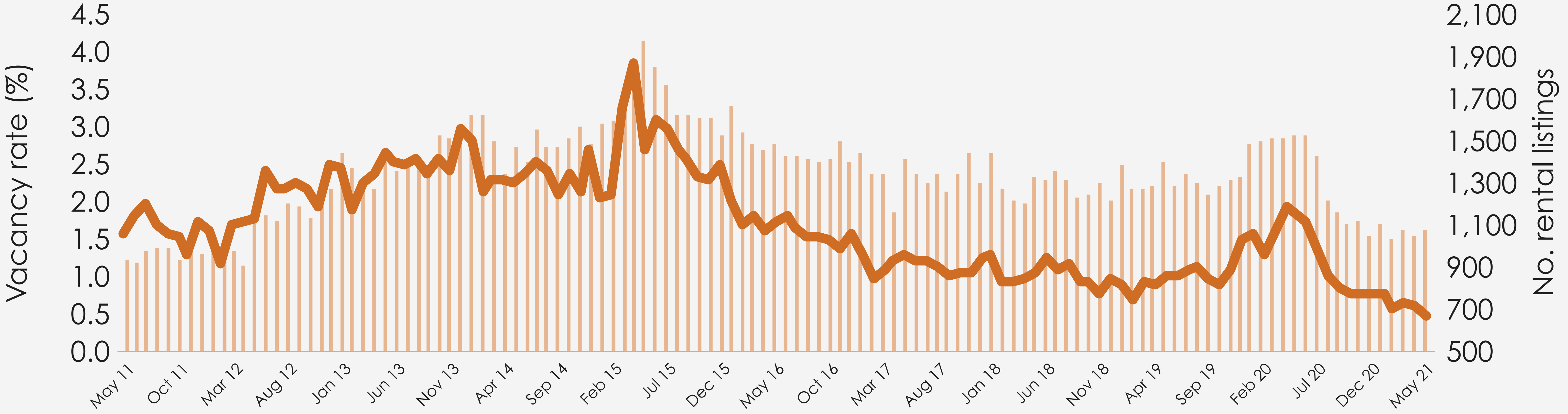
At the same time as more Melburnians relocate to Geelong, available properties for rent have declined quite sharply since the onset of the pandemic, driving a **tight rental market**. The vacancy rate in May 2021 was just 0.5 per cent. This has put pressure on **rents**. The median asking rent in Greater Geelong during the 3 months to May 2021 was 8 per cent higher than a year earlier.

B

Local housing construction is responding to the demand, with the number of homes being approved for construction growing strongly. Some 4,600 dwellings were approved in 2020/21, 48 per cent more than in the previous year. There has been growth in multi-unit developments in central Geelong as well as growth in detached houses in fringe suburbs.

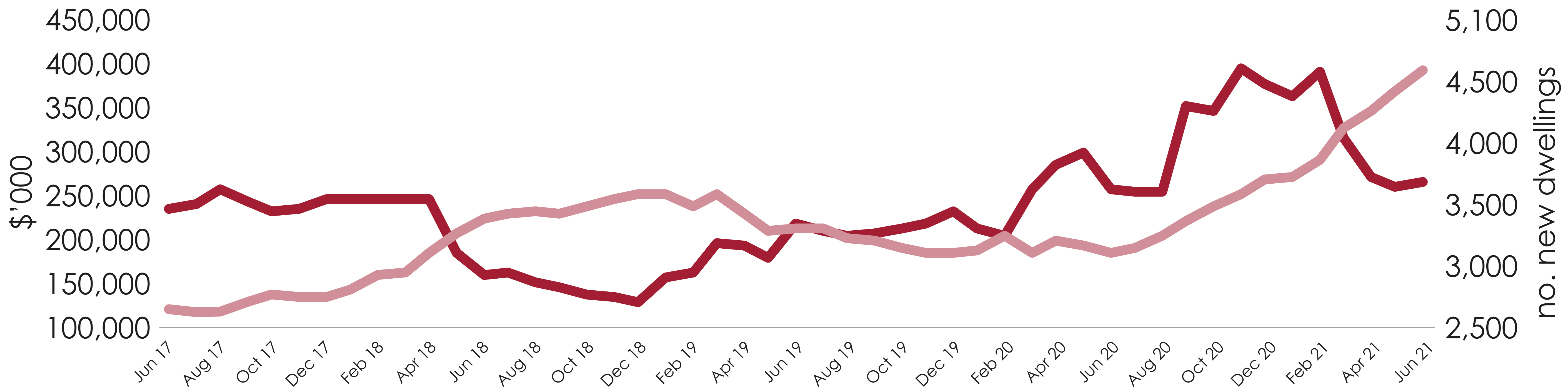
Additionally, a **significant volume of non-residential building projects entered the local pipeline** in the 2019/20 financial year – the value of these developments some 18 per cent more than in the previous year. New government offices, new hotels and new education facilities in and around the CBD are now under way.

A **Greater Geelong rental market – listings and vacancy rates**



Source: CoreLogic   Vacancy Rate (lhs)   Volume of rental listings (rhs)

B **Greater Geelong building approvals – rolling annual total**



Source: ABS   Non-residential (lhs)   Residential (rhs)

MIGRATION PATTERNS BY STATE

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The capital-city net outflows – regional-area net inflows chart shows the breakdown of net migration by state. It shows the shares of net migration **out of capital cities** and shares of **net migration into regional areas**.

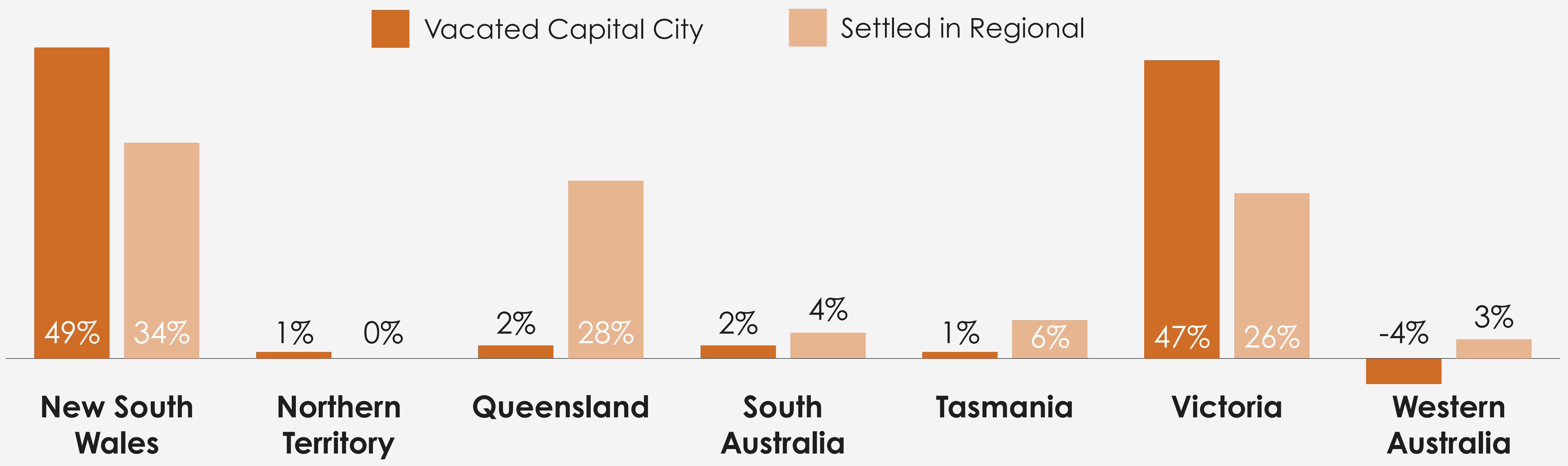
A

In the 2020/21 financial year, Melbourne's share of net capital city outflows increased to 47 per cent, almost on par with Sydney's 49 per cent. Regional Queensland's share of net migrants into regional area grew to 28 per cent while shares of both Regional NSW and Regional Victoria shrank.

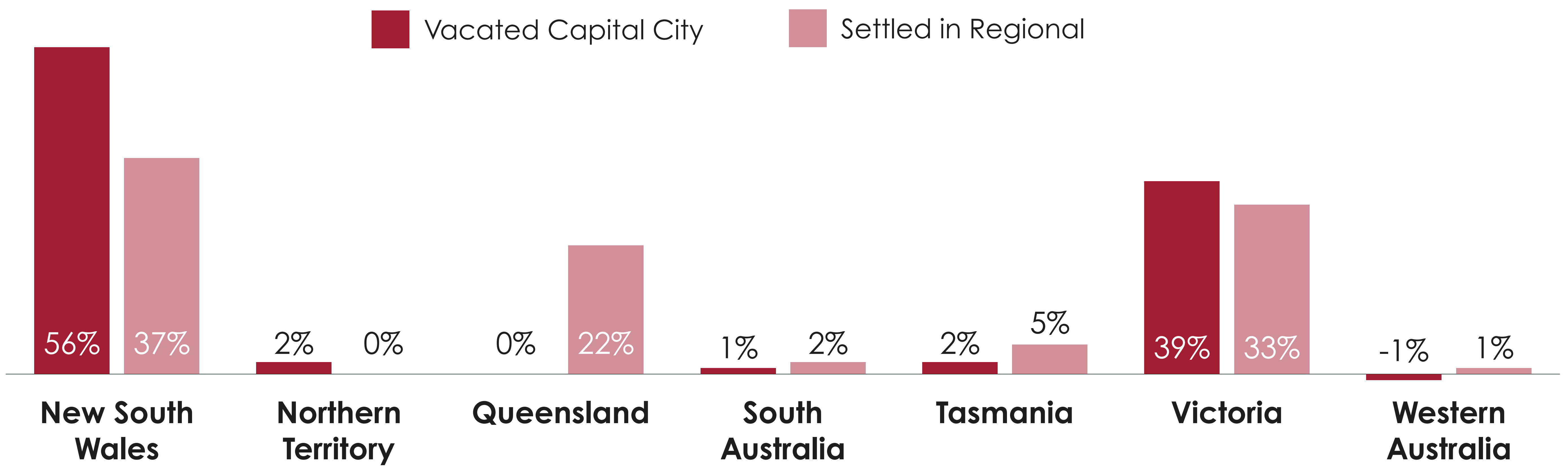
B

That distribution compares with 2019/20 financial year, where more than half of net outflows out of capital cities were from Sydney (56 per cent). Melbourne accounted for 39 per cent of outflows. Regional NSW picked up 37 per cent of net migration into regional Australia, followed by Regional Victoria (33 per cent) and Regional Queensland (22 per cent)

A Capital City Net Outflows – Regional Area Net Inflows, State Shares (2020/21)



B Capital City Net Outflows – Regional Area Net Inflows, State Shares (2019/20)



Appendix

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A1: Regional Movers Index
Methodology Notes

(1) CBA-RAI Regional Movers Index is defined as movement of CBA personal customers from capital areas 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 in address for 6 months (prior to moving) to be counted.

(3) Capital/Regional areas defined through ABS 1270.0.55.001 GCCSA boundaries. Capital areas include GCCSA_NAMES of Greater Sydney, Greater Melbourne, Greater Brisbane, Greater Adelaide, Greater Perth, Greater Hobart, Greater Darwin and Australian Capital Territory. Regional areas include 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) Net regional migration index is calculated as movement from capital areas to regional less movement from regional areas to capitals. Index = 100, March 2016 quarter.

(5) LGAs defined through ABS 1270.0.55.003 ASGS Volume 3 – Non ABS Structures. LGA must have received at least 100 persons in capital to regional migration in Mar-21 quarter to be included. 14 LGAs have a percentage of their constituency defined as Capital and the another 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.

(6) 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).

(7) In Appendix A3 – only those LGAs with at least 100 CBA personal customers moving during the financial year.

A2: Glossary

Term	Definition
"Index", "the index", RMI	Regional Movers Index which tracks population flows from capital cities to Regional Australia.
Internal migration	Internal migration constitutes of four movement types - capital cities to regional, regional to capital cities, regional to regional and capital cities to capital cities.
Net migration to regional	Movement into regional from capital cities minus movement from regional to capital cities.
Annual growth in migration	For each LGA - change in migration (capital to regional) from 2019/20 financial year to 2020/21 financial year.
Quarterly growth in migration	For each LGA - change in migration (capital to regional) from the previous quarter to the current quarter.
Share of regional migration	For each LGA - percentage share of total migration (capital to regional) in the 2020/21 financial year.
Capital city net outflow	Movement out of capital cities to regional areas minus movement into capital cities from regional areas.
Regional area net inflow	Movement into regional areas from capital cities minus movement out of regional areas to capital cities.

A3: All LGAs – Share of Migration, Changes in Migration

Share of Migration, QoQ Change, YoY Change

LGA	State	Share of 2020/21 Migration %	June qtr 2021 vs March qtr 2021	2020/21 vs 2019/20
Gold Coast	QLD	11%	-10%	11%
Sunshine Coast	QLD	6%	-16%	13%
Greater Geelong	VIC	5%	-9%	26%
Wollongong	NSW	3%	-5%	21%
Newcastle	NSW	2%	-16%	14%
Lake Macquarie	NSW	2%	-14%	1%
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional	NSW	2%	0%	22%
Cairns	QLD	2%	-12%	2%
Townsville	QLD	2%	-17%	-1%
Ballarat	VIC	2%	-15%	20%
Shoalhaven	NSW	1%	-3%	9%
Toowoomba	QLD	1%	-18%	5%
Launceston	TAS	1%	-14%	31%
Byron	NSW	1%	-14%	33%
Baw Baw	VIC	1%	-5%	20%
Greater Bendigo	VIC	1%	3%	19%
Bass Coast	VIC	1%	4%	39%
Wingecarribee	NSW	1%	-4%	10%
Tweed	NSW	1%	-2%	18%
Fraser Coast	QLD	1%	-22%	8%
Mid-Coast	NSW	1%	-12%	11%
Noosa	QLD	1%	-14%	29%
Coffs Harbour	NSW	1%	-4%	14%

LGA	State	Share of 2020/21 Migration %	June qtr 2021 vs March qtr 2021	2020/21 vs 2019/20
Port Macquarie-Hastings	NSW	1%	-19%	9%
Greater Shepparton	VIC	1%	-20%	27%
Hindmarsh	VIC	1%	-16%	-6%
Mildura	VIC	1%	-40%	35%
Bundaberg	QLD	1%	11%	1%
Surf Coast	VIC	1%	10%	40%
Mackay	QLD	1%	-15%	0%
Port Stephens	NSW	1%	-2%	0%
Dubbo Regional	NSW	1%	5%	13%
Latrobe	VIC	1%	-1%	1%
East Gippsland	VIC	1%	-13%	11%
Maitland	NSW	1%	-14%	13%
Albury	NSW	1%	-7%	1%
Wagga Wagga	NSW	1%	-13%	10%
Mitchell	VIC	1%	8%	-15%
Eurobodalla	NSW	1%	-2%	10%
Whitsunday	QLD	1%	9%	10%
Alice Springs	NT	1%	-22%	-12%
Wellington	VIC	1%	-9%	8%
Shellharbour	NSW	1%	20%	2%
Rockhampton	QLD	1%	-3%	12%
Cessnock	NSW	1%	-1%	17%
Orange	NSW	1%	-21%	11%
South Gippsland	VIC	1%	9%	24%

LGA	State	Share of 2020/21 Migration %	June qtr 2021 vs March qtr 2021	2020/21 vs 2019/20
Ballina	NSW	1%	-9%	13%
Busselton	WA	1%	-6%	8%
Gladstone	QLD	1%	-20%	2%
Wodonga	VIC	1%	-5%	20%
Kalgoorlie/Boulder	WA	0%	-9%	-15%
Gympie	QLD	0%	-1%	12%
Clarence Valley	NSW	0%	-16%	7%
Tamworth Regional	NSW	0%	2%	3%
Campaspe	VIC	0%	-4%	17%
Karratha	WA	0%	-10%	-14%
Moira	VIC	0%	9%	42%
Bathurst Regional	NSW	0%	38%	-2%
Macedon Ranges	VIC	0%	-8%	14%
Southern Downs	QLD	0%	-31%	6%
Goulburn Mulwaree	NSW	0%	-12%	0%
Lockyer Valley	QLD	0%	0%	0%
Swan Hill	VIC	0%	-42%	38%
Huon Valley	TAS	0%	-6%	-6%
Devonport	TAS	0%	-16%	10%
Snowy Monaro Regional	NSW	0%	-14%	22%
Moorabool	VIC	0%	34%	68%
Lismore	NSW	0%	5%	-2%
Bega Valley	NSW	0%	0%	4%
Hepburn	VIC	0%	-20%	24%

See Appendix A1 for definitions and methodology.

A3: All LGAs – Share of Migration, Changes in Migration

Share of Migration, QoQ Change, YoY Change

LGA	State	Share of 2020/21 Migration %	June qtr 2021 vs March qtr 2021	2020/21 vs 2019/20
Griffith	NSW	0%	-9%	-7%
Alexandrina	SA	0%	10%	-7%
South Burnett	QLD	0%	-14%	14%
Port Hedland	WA	0%	-1%	-13%
Greater Geraldton	WA	0%	-3%	14%
Bunbury	WA	0%	-25%	5%
Kiama	NSW	0%	-13%	21%
Wangaratta	VIC	0%	21%	46%
Yass Valley	NSW	0%	-2%	-5%
Warrnambool	VIC	0%	-17%	15%
Lithgow	NSW	0%	32%	5%
Broome	WA	0%	-5%	-2%
Augusta-Margaret River	WA	0%	-22%	18%
Albany	WA	0%	-10%	1%
Mount Alexander	VIC	0%	-6%	14%
Mid-Western Regional	NSW	0%	-6%	15%
Western Downs	QLD	0%	27%	32%
Murrindindi	VIC	0%	62%	22%
Barossa	SA	0%	-12%	24%
Cassowary Coast	QLD	0%	-21%	19%
West Tamar	TAS	0%	-22%	15%
Kempsey	NSW	0%	-27%	13%
Livingstone	QLD	0%	0%	30%

LGA	State	Share of 2020/21 Migration %	June qtr 2021 vs March qtr 2021	2020/21 vs 2019/20
Katherine	NT	0%	-16%	6%
Mansfield	VIC	0%	20%	62%
Alpine	VIC	0%	-5%	47%
Scenic Rim	QLD	0%	-23%	35%
Douglas	QLD	0%	15%	21%
Armidale Regional	NSW	0%	-1%	-1%
Colac-Otway	VIC	0%	-11%	8%
Harvey	WA	0%	-4%	13%
Benalla	VIC	0%	14%	33%
Victor Harbor	SA	0%	-8%	10%
Snowy Valleys	NSW	0%	-26%	31%
Murray Bridge	SA	0%	-26%	24%
Central Highlands	QLD	0%	-31%	-20%
Central Coast	TAS	0%	-22%	33%
Northam	WA	0%	54%	27%
Nambucca Valley	NSW	0%	-8%	-3%
Mount Gambier	SA	0%	-8%	39%
Mareeba	QLD	0%	-15%	23%
Meander Valley	TAS	0%	-39%	22%
Burnie	TAS	0%	-34%	1%
Mount Isa	QLD	0%	-25%	-9%
Strathbogie	VIC	0%	-22%	37%
Golden Plains	VIC	0%	-6%	2%
Murray River	NSW	0%	16%	48%

LGA	State	Share of 2020/21 Migration %	June qtr 2021 vs March qtr 2021	2020/21 vs 2019/20
Glenelg	VIC	0%	30%	14%
Southern Midlands	TAS	0%	22%	-2%
Hilltops	NSW	0%	-18%	-7%
Whyalla	SA	0%	22%	8%
Singleton	NSW	0%	-23%	6%
Indigo	VIC	0%	31%	25%
Tablelands	QLD	0%	-16%	7%
Federation	NSW	0%	-25%	44%
Glamorgan/Spring Bay	TAS	0%	6%	41%
Horsham	VIC	0%	-44%	11%
Port Augusta	SA	0%	15%	39%
Copper Coast	SA	0%	18%	37%
Moyne	VIC	0%	-22%	30%
Isaac	QLD	0%	-15%	-5%
Richmond Valley	NSW	0%	15%	7%
Ashburton	WA	0%	32%	-7%
Northern Grampians	VIC	0%	-20%	14%
Wyndham-East Kimberley	WA	0%	-30%	-8%
Corangamite	VIC	0%	-16%	52%
Renmark Paringa	SA	0%	16%	24%
Circular Head	TAS	0%	-51%	39%
Central Goldfields	VIC	0%	-27%	-8%
Chittering	WA	0%	-34%	12%

See Appendix A1 for definitions and methodology.

A3: All LGAs – Share of Migration, Changes in Migration

Share of Migration, QoQ Change, YoY Change

LGA	State	Share of 2020/21 Migration %	June qtr 2021 vs March qtr 2021	2020/21 vs 2019/20
Bellingen	NSW	0%	40%	-5%
Ararat	VIC	0%	-10%	25%
Burdekin	QLD	0%	-18%	12%
Muswellbrook	NSW	0%	100%	26%
Cowra	NSW	0%	-17%	14%
East Pilbara	WA	0%	-3%	14%
Gingin	WA	0%	-24%	15%
Capel	WA	0%	39%	8%
Manjimup	WA	0%	-21%	11%
Esperance	WA	0%	-11%	5%
Kingborough	TAS	0%	-28%	21%
Southern Grampians	VIC	0%	24%	11%
Northern Midlands	TAS	0%	-8%	17%
Upper Hunter Shire	NSW	0%	-21%	5%
Waratah/Wynyard	TAS	0%	58%	11%
Broken Hill	NSW	0%	26%	6%
Maranoa	QLD	0%	-19%	18%
Light	SA	0%	-26%	6%
Latrobe	TAS	0%	-29%	6%
Berri and Barmera	SA	0%	-15%	4%
Mid Murray	SA	0%	27%	-26%
Dardanup	WA	0%	35%	-5%

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