



Tuesday, 16 September 2025

## Migration concerns surge 'post-pandemic' – almost returning to pre-pandemic levels

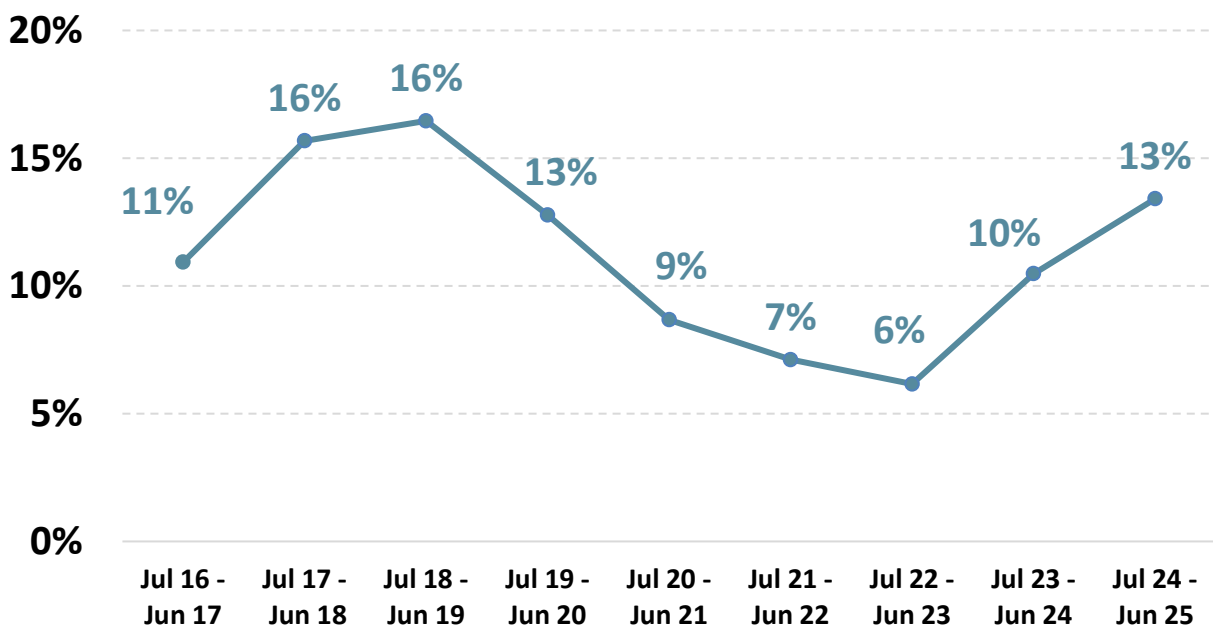
New Roy Morgan research shows almost one-in-seven Australian electors (13%) believe that 'managing immigration and population growth' is an important issue – a figure that has more than doubled in only the last two years since 2023.

However, the long-term national trend since 2016 shows the proportion who cited '*managing immigration and population growth*' as an important issue reached a pre-pandemic high of 16% in 2019, before declining during COVID, falling to 6% in June 2023. Since then, the perceived importance of immigration has surged as an issue and, as immigration to Australia increased, is up seven percentage points, to 13%.

The high perceived importance of '*managing immigration and population growth*' pre-pandemic followed a 35% lift in net overseas migration to Australia between 2015 and 2018, and a significant increase in the reporting of alleged training fraud with higher education colleges and institutions involving foreign nationals during these years.

Roy Morgan interviewed a representative cross-section of 456,069 Australian Electors aged 18+ from July 2016 to June 2025 who were asked '*Which three issues are the most important to you?*'

### Three Most Important Issues facing Australian Electors: % Mentioning 'Managing Immigration and Population Growth' as One of the Three Issues\*



**Source:** Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia). **Base:** Australian electors, aged 18+ between July 2016 to June 2025, average interviews per year (n=50,674), total: (n=456,069). \* 'Which three issues are the most important to you? (Mark the three most important issues).'

### The importance of immigration as an issue has jumped in every State since the pandemic

The State-by-State results reveal differences, but the same clear upward trend since Covid.

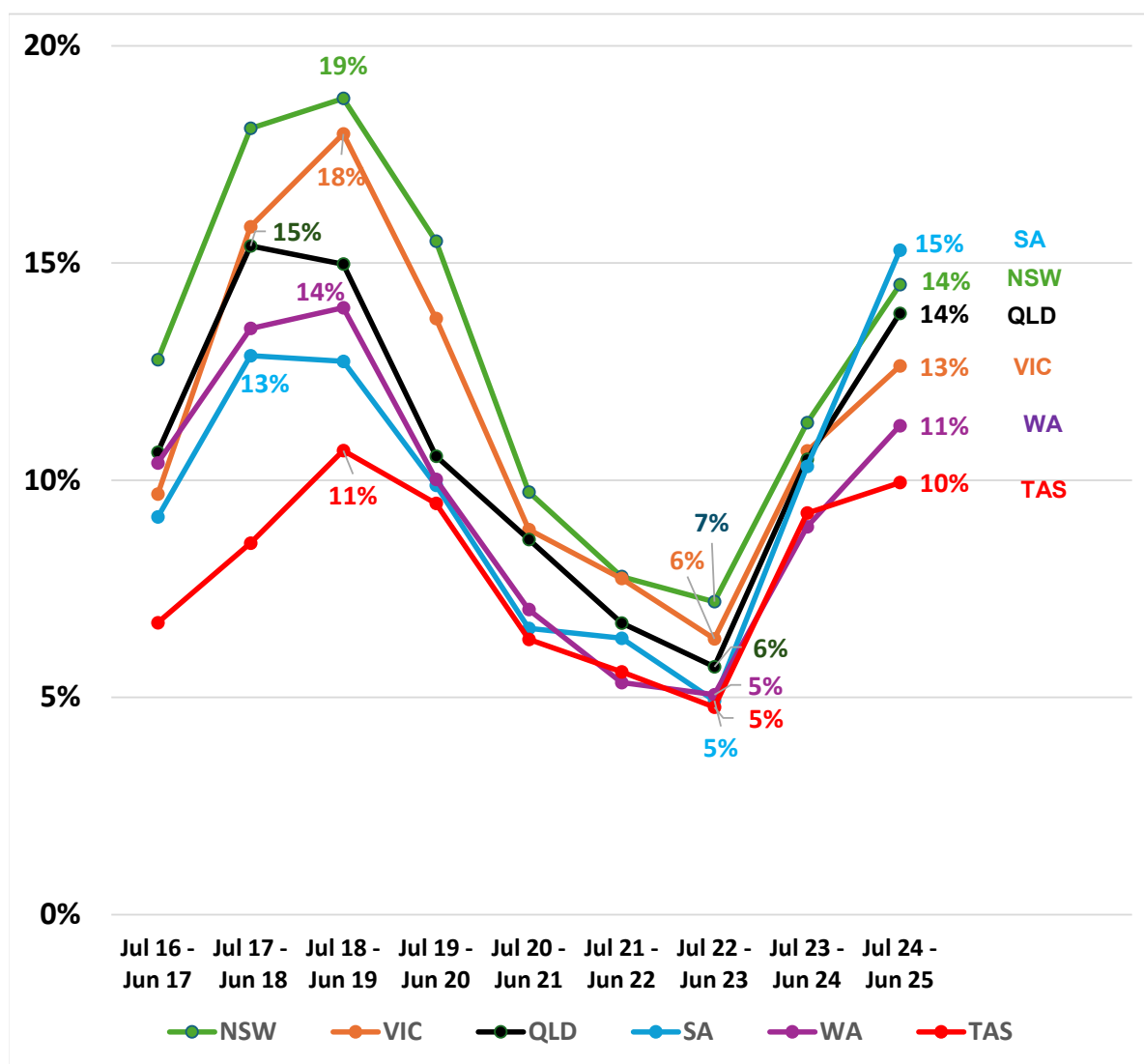
Managing immigration is most likely to be perceived as an important issue in South Australia, currently mentioned by 15% (up 10% points since 2023), slightly ahead of New South Wales at 14% (up 7% points) and Queensland, also 14% (up 8% points). Victoria follows at 13% (up 6% points).

Concerns about immigration are lower in Western Australia at 11% (up 6% points) and Tasmania at 10% (up 5% points), perhaps influenced by a less diverse immigrant profile in Western Australia and a lower level of migration in Tasmania.

The national trend itself follows a clear 'U-shaped path': high concern in 2018–19, a decline throughout the pandemic period as immigration to Australia rapidly declined, then a pronounced rebound from 2022–2023 as immigration increased.

Taken together, these results show that the rise in concerns since Covid is broad-based, with every State reporting higher levels than two years ago.

### Three Most Important Issues facing Australian Electors by State: % Mentioning 'Managing Immigration and Population Growth' as One of the Three Issues\*



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source. Base: Australian electors, aged 18+ between July 2016 to June 2025, average interviews per year (n=50,674), total: (n=456,069). \* 'Which three issues are the most important to you? (Mark the three most important issues)'.

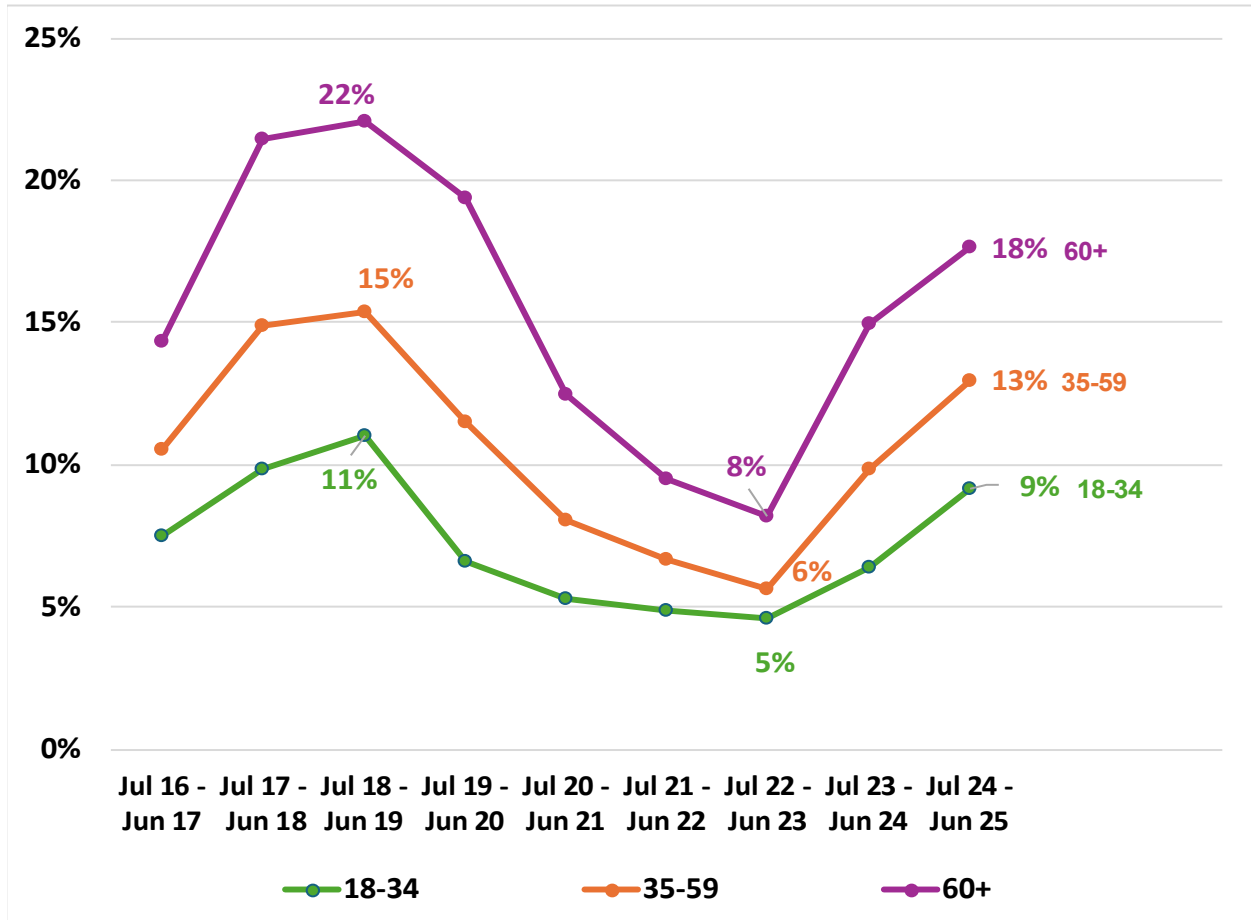
### Public concern on immigration varies by age

While there has been an increase in the perceived importance of immigration as an issue across all age groups since the pandemic, concern varies substantially by age, with older people being significantly more likely to raise immigration as an issue.

Among those aged 60 or over, 18% (up 10% points since 2023) perceive managing immigration as an important issue, significantly ahead of 35–59-year-olds at 13% (up 7% points) and those aged 18-34 at 9% (up 4% points).

Not only are those aged 35 or over more concerned about immigration than those aged under 35, but since 2023 the proportional increase in concern among those aged 35 or over has been greater.

### Three Most Important Issues facing Australian Electors by Age: % Mentioning 'Managing Immigration and Population Growth' as One of the Three Issues\*



**Source:** Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia). **Base:** Australian electors, aged 18+ between July 2016 to June 2025, average interviews per year (n=50,674), total: (n=456,069). \*Which three issues are the most important to you? (Mark the three most important issues).'

#### Roy Morgan CEO Michele Levine says:

*"New Roy Morgan research shows almost one-in-seven Australian electors (13%) believe that 'managing immigration and population growth' is an important issue – a figure that has more than doubled since 2023.*

*"In the absence of large-scale immigration, the perception of immigration as an important issue declined sharply during the pandemic, only being mentioned by 6% of Australian electors in 2022-2023.*

*"However, as migration to Australia rose swiftly in 2022 after Australia's borders re-opened, overtaking pre-pandemic levels by the end of the year, the perceived importance of 'managing immigration' surged and is now at its highest level since before the pandemic.*



*“The State-by-State results reveal differences, but the same clear upward trend over the last couple of years. South Australians (15%) are the most likely to perceive managing immigration as an important issue ahead of NSW (14%), Queensland (14%) and Victoria (13%). Concerns about immigration are lower in Western Australia (11%) and Tasmania (10%), perhaps influenced by a less diverse immigrant profile in Western Australia and a lower level of migration to Tasmania.*

*“Concern about immigrations is strongly correlated to age with older Australian electors aged 60 or over far more likely to perceive managing migration as an important issue (mentioned by 18%), than those aged 35-59 (13%) or those aged under 35 (9%).”*

**For comments or more information about Roy Morgan’s data please contact Andrew Calvert-Jones or Julian McCrann for more details.**

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### **Reports available for sale:**

The latest Roy Morgan data is available on the [Roy Morgan Online Store](#). It provides demographic breakdowns for Age, Sex, State, Region (Capital Cities/ Country), Generations, Lifecycle, Socio-Economic Scale, Work Status, Occupation, Home Ownership, Voting Intention, Roy Morgan Value Segments, Helix Personas, Media Consumption, and more

[Government & Societal Attitudes: 'Crime is a growing problem in my community' - Profile](#)

### **Related Research:**

[January 23, 2025 - Top 10 Issues Shaping the 2025 Federal Election: Cost of Living and Crime on the Rise, Climate Change Fades](#)

Roy Morgan tracks the issues of most importance to Australian electors, including the issue ‘*Reducing crime and maintaining law and order.*’

### **About Roy Morgan**

Roy Morgan is Australia’s largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 80 years’ experience collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

### **Margin of Error**

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2