

Populate, Decline or Grow?

Population Policy Discussion Paper for Regional/Rural Queensland



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Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIFS	Australian Institute of Family Studies
ALGA	Australian Local Government Association
BITRE	Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics
DAMA	Designated Area Migration Agreement
DIBP	Department of Immigration and Border Protection
DIDO	Drive-In-Drive-Out
DLGRMA	Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
FBT	Family Tax Benefit
FECCA	Federation of Ethnic Community Council of Australia
FIFO	Fly-In-Fly-Out
FNQ	Far North Queensland
LGA	Local Government Area
LGAQ	Local Government Association of Queensland
NOM	Net Overseas Migration
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
QLD	Queensland
RAI	Regional Australia Institute
RJSA	Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance
SDA	State Development Areas
SEQ	South East Queensland
SIP	State Infrastructure Plan
TFR	Total Fertility Rates
TRC	Tablelands Regional Council
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Executive Summary

Population concerns have been on the national agenda since the settlement of Australia. Australia's national development has had a distinctive pattern of settlement across the continent landscape, presenting a range of social, economic, infrastructure, and environmental challenges for the nation. Population growth has differential impacts for metropolitan and regional/rural, and for inland and coastal areas. Population change has been a core issue for the major cities in Australia: access to affordable housing, suitable employment, infrastructure, and services; managing growth and congestion within environmental constraints; and the political management of popular anxieties around urban diversity and consolidation (McQuirk & Argent 2011). For regional/rural areas, population issues have included outmigration of youth, declining population of inland areas and fast coastal growth, demographic change including ageing profiles, environmental and economic challenges, workforce and skills shortages, service and business viability linked with population size and growth management. Population change and dynamics is seen as presenting both challenges and opportunities for the nation, differing across regions and locations.

Population change occurs through two mechanisms. The first is the natural rate of population which is influenced by fertility rates, mortality and longevity. Australia and Queensland have a declining fertility rate and an ageing population. Immigration is a major lever to influence population change. Australia has a strong immigration and humanitarian programs, with temporary and permanent migration. However, the attraction of migrants to regional areas has posed unique push pull challenges.

Queensland does not have an explicit population policy. There are a wide range of current policies in place that are relevant to population considerations. The main thrust of current Queensland Government policies relates to economic and jobs growth. The question facing policy makers is whether a kind of 'muddling through' approach to policy (Rothmayr & Saint-Martin 2011), aimed mainly at adapting to population trends in relation to other policy portfolios is an adequate approach. The formulation and implementation of a population policy will involve the different arms of government across different portfolios, linkages across jurisdictions and engagement with key sectors of the community.

Consultations conducted across a wide range of stakeholders in Queensland identified a range of issues relating to population including population decline, unplanned population growth, infrastructure challenges, workforce shortages, attracting migration, environmental concerns, housing, youth outmigration, ageing populations, service viability, liveability and a range of social concerns. There was an overwhelming support to have population policy for Queensland. The benefits of a population policy were seen as guiding economic and regional development, planned growth, infrastructure provision, protection of the environment and sustainability and appropriate service delivery. An additional benefit of a population policy is that it can articulate a long term vision of development. A population policy for Queensland will enable improved approaches to growth management in both metropolitan and regional areas that mitigate negative impacts of growth.

In light of the consideration of complex factors that inform a population policy and its implications for regional Queensland a number of recommendations are made:

Recommendation 1: That the Queensland Government consider the development of a place-based State population strategy which sets a long term vision for Queensland. The policy should consider:

- Identified priority corridors (or regions) of population attraction and growth across the State
- Linkages of population with infrastructure, economic and service investments, aligning State Investment Plans with priority population locations

- Population attraction strategies into the priority areas
- Migrant attraction and settlement
- Mitigation of environmental impacts

Workforce considerations are critical to the future prosperity of Queensland. Future workforce trends, disruption and skills and labour shortages are an important part of a population policy. Addressing regional workforce and skills shortages entails a complex interplay of macro-economic trends, social and demographic change and local/regional influencing factors. It involves focused effort in identifying and addressing shortfalls for workers for a particular occupation and ensuring adequate supply of workers who are qualified, available and willing to work. Appropriate knowledge of industry needs at the granular level is critical. Joined up regional strategies for attracting and retaining people in the regions is needed.

Recommendation 2: Queensland Government develop a jobs and workforce strategy linked to an identified population strategy for metropolitan and regional areas, aligning jobs growth with population growth.

This would entail detailed knowledge of regional industry and workforce needs and integrated development of policy and strategy based on needs of each region. Strategies for retention of young people in the regional workforce, education and training options in the regions, school-work connectivity, understanding transitioning economies and disruptions to work, and understanding the nature of workforce and skills shortages are important considerations under this recommendation.

The long-term benefits of migration to the regions is acknowledged. There are significant benefits if skilled immigrants can be attracted to the regions and have the systems that are responsive to the economic and social conditions supported by improved policy processes (Productivity Commission 2016:41). In the context of regional labour markets, the concept of ‘matching’ the available supply of migrants and the workforce skill needs of regional Australia has long been recognised as a key element of effective population and labour market policy (LGAQ 2019). However, there is currently no systematic way for migrant workers to link up with rural employers, nor is there a systematic policy or integrated support mechanism to facilitate secondary migration away from metropolitan cities (RAI 2018:2). Queensland currently receives less share of permanent migration in the skilled migration category. Recognising new forms of temporary mobility and factors influencing contemporary forms of internal and international migration is essential to formulate effective policies for sustainable development (RAI 2015:9).

Recommendation 3: Queensland Government consider the development of a Regional Migration Settlement Plan with locally led migration strategies.

This Plan would need to be cognisant of economic, social and environmental potential of these areas to absorb any increase in population (Aust Gov 2017). It would also need to provide appropriate resources to support the development of ‘welcoming cities’ to enable appropriate settlement. It has been found that locally-led migration strategies have demonstrated their capacity to effectively overcome the barriers which are currently constraining the movement and settlement of migrants (RAI 2018).

Regions are dynamic and diverse with their unique patterns of development and change. In Australia, all three spheres of government are involved in rural/regional policy making. The system of governance influencing the policy landscape is ‘congested’ with a range of local, State and Australian government departments but also regional bodies, peak bodies and other relevant advocacy groups. The policy making takes place in a contested terrain of ideas, interests and power, woven in an intricate web of government, regional, industry and stakeholder relationships. While government agencies engage with population issues in the individual departments, no one agency has the wide scope of activity or brief to engage with totality

of population matters or have oversight of how the population issues permeate across programs of all agencies. The need for more strategic, coordinated and less fragmented policy design and intervention are critical to the development a population strategy (Smith 2016, Pate el al 2016).

Recommendation 4 The Queensland Government develop an integrated policy architecture and appropriate institutional and governance arrangements to enable multi-dimensional and cross sectoral coordination in relation to cross-cutting issues in population policy.

This coordination should consider interface and integration of population policies with other policy areas including education, economic, health, environment and multicultural affairs. Place based approaches to regional population policy development and implementation are fundamental. The best practice in rural/regional policy espouses a number of principles including strategic and coordinated policies with coherence, building on a region's strengths and assets, recognising the diversity of regional aspirations, building capabilities of leaders, managers and institutions, encouraging connectivity, cross sectoral and multidisciplinary, place based and devolved authority and resources (Eversole 2017, Productivity Commission 2017, OECD 2016, Smith 2016).

Introduction

Dynamic population change is fundamental to a nation's economic, environmental and social wellbeing. Rural population and depopulation have been a global regional development concern. For example, the British Royal Statistical Society in 1893 heard that "the alarming depopulation of our rural districts, has of late been the subject of many articles and even more speeches" (Longstaff, 1893:380). Population change is seen by government and communities as presenting both challenges and opportunities for the nation, differing across regions and locations (Australian Government 2011).

The estimated resident population (ERP) of Australia at 31 March 2019 was 25,287,400 people. Queensland makes up approximately 21% of the national population, with an ERP for Queensland for the same period of 5,076,500 people. Australia's population grew by 1.6% while the growth rate for Queensland was 1.8% (ABS 2019). Australia's population is projected to grow over the next 40 years, with an estimated average annual rate of growth in the population is 1.3 %. This growth rate would see Australia's population rise to 39.7 million by 2054-55 (Australian Government 2015:3). As noted by the Australian Government, however, "population projections are particularly sensitive to assumptions about the rate of net overseas migration" (Australian Government, 2015:3). Queensland's population is expected to grow to about 8 million by 2044 (Queensland Government 2014:6).

Population policy considerations have been a part of the Australia's national development, with policy responses dating back to the 1890s. Concerns over declining birth-rates sparked the appointment of a NSW Royal Commission on the decline of birth-rates in 1903. Post the Great Depression of the 1930s, a range of pro-natalist measures were recommended. The ability of a new nation to defend itself, after World War I, led to *The Empire Settlement Act 1922* and the encouragement of immigration. The post-World War II need for a bigger labour force for reconstruction and economic growth led to the architecture of mass, multicultural immigration program under the banner "populate or perish"; s a rallying catchcry to overcome domestic resistance to immigration (Jones 1997, Golebiowska et al 2016).

The different type of policies and approach to population have depended on the domestic and international context of time. The current policy landscape considerations are focused on more nuanced initiatives relating to environmental sustainability, economic growth and restructuring and social development. These

narratives, however, significantly differ in rural and urban contexts. At national level, population considerations underlie all of these policy deliberations, both explicitly and implicitly. Scholars have identified that population is often problematised, by politicians, policy makers, the media and others (Allen 2018). This is particularly in the face of declining fertility, workforce shortages, decline in regional/rural areas, levels of immigration and ageing demographic (Allen 2018, McDonald 2018). Allen (2018: 22) argues that the “current calls for a population policy reflect wider social concerns which have come to be conflated with population growth (especially due to immigration), including housing affordability, adequacy of public infrastructure, and environmental conservation”.

This policy paper explores the key factors relevant for a population policy for Queensland. The purpose of the paper is to explore the crucial considerations and contexts that inform the development of a population policy in Queensland. Drawing on contemporary debates and evidence about a population policy, the paper concludes with recommendations to address population issues in Queensland.

1. Key Population Considerations

Population considerations have typically focused on births (fertility), deaths and life expectancy, age composition and migration (Demeny 1975). Fertility and mortality rates determine the natural rate of increase of any population. Population levels are also influenced by overseas and interstate migration. This section presents the key considerations relevant population policy.

1.1 Total Fertility Rates (TFR) and the Sex Ratio

Australia’s TFR has progressively declined over time, particularly as many women have postponed childbearing. Fertility rates are linked to factors such as economic conditions, availability of part time jobs, flexible work arrangements, government and tax benefits (Lattimore & Pobke 2008: xii). In 1926, the average woman bore 2.85 children during her lifetime. By 2016, this had fallen to just 1.79 children (Source: ABS 2014, 2016). The total fertility rate (TFR) has declined to a point significantly below the required replacement levels needed to sustain the economy long term. The replacement rate is the number of births per woman needed to maintain the current population level.

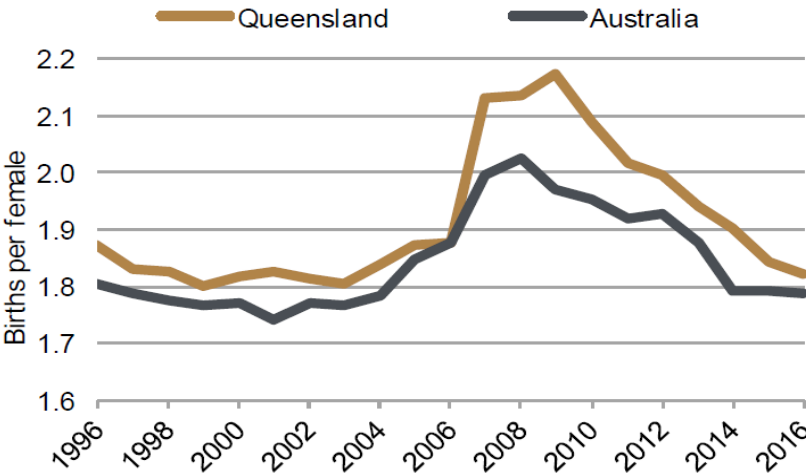


Figure 1: Trends in Total Fertility Rate, Australia and Queensland

Although the State’s fertility is higher than the national levels, the Queensland pattern of total fertility has also declined, following the national trend. Over the 20 year period, 1996-2016, the national TFR was 1.85 and the Queensland TFR being slightly higher at 1.92, both with a downward trajectory (Qld Government 2018:2). Australia has 5th highest TFR compared to other OECD countries e.g. UK and USA have 0.7% and Canada has 1.2% (OECD 2018). McDonald (2018:5) argues that the fertility rates reached in Australia is a good outcome compared to other developed nations. In the absence of migration, reduction of mortality and a fertility rate below the replacement level of around 2.06 births per woman leads inevitably to population ageing and population decline. He points out that this fertility rate is achieved through the support of range of policies and programs which provide support to families with children such as subsidised childcare, parental leave, social security payments related to children, and support for education. The fertility rates show variability across different demographic groups of women. For example, Indigenous women in Queensland have higher fertility rates at 2.6 compared to 1.92 for the rest of the State, although this rate has been declining over the last decade (ABS 2016).

The sex ratio is the number of males per 100 females in a population (ABS 2018b) is also an important consideration. At 30 June 2018, the sex ratio at birth is approximately 106 males per 100 females, that is greater number of males were born per 100 females. However, earlier male mortality, greater female longevity and immigration alters the sex ratio. The overall sex ration of the total population in Australia in June 2018 was 98.4 males per 100 females (ABS 2018b). The sex ratio of the Queensland population is changing. In 1996, the numbers of males and females in the population were almost identical, resulting in a ratio of 100 males per 100 females. By 2018, this had changed to around 98.01 males per 100 females (ABS 2018b). The Queensland Government identifies that differences in assumptions in life expectancy and migration rates may see this change further to between 93 and 95 males per 100 females by 2066. (Queensland Government 2018:2). These trends may have further impacts on TFR into the future due to factors such as migration, mortality and longevity rates.

1.2 Household Composition

The proportion of the population living in family households has been declining. In 2016, families made up 71% of Australia’s households; in 1986 it was 77%. Over this same period, the number of single-person households increased from 19% to 24%. (AIFS 2017). The average number of persons per household per is also declining with 4.5 people per household in 1911 falling to 2.6 in 2016.

Household Composition	2016%	2041 Projection %
Couple family with children	44	43
Couple family without children	38	39
Single parent family	16	16
Other families	2	2

Table 1: Household and Family Projections
 Source: ABS 2019b

Between 1996 and 2016, the proportion of Australians living in two parent families with children declined from 54% to 49%, and the ABS projects this to further decline to 48% by 2041. In contrast, the proportion of Australians living in coupled families without children increased over this period from 19% in 1996 to 21 % in 2016. Similar projections have been concluded by the Australian Institute

of Family Studies. They estimate that families without children will be approximately 41% by 2036 while families with children will be around 40% (AIFS 2019).

The Queensland household composition in 2016 was couples without children were 39.4 %, couple with children 42.5% and one-parent families was 16.5% (ABS 2016). For Indigenous households, 25.8% of families were one parent families; 15. % were couple with no children, 31,6% were couple family with children (ABS 2016).

1.3 Life Expectancy

Life expectancy at birth estimates represent the average number of years that a newborn could expect to live. Table 1 highlights the life expectancy over a 10 year period for Australia and Queensland.

	2004-2006		2014-2016		10 year change	
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Australia	78.7	83.5	80.4	84.6	1.7	1.1
Queensland	78.5	83.4	80.1	84.5	1.6	1.1

Table 2: Life Expectancy at Birth

Source: ABS, Life Expectancy at Birth, 2014-2016

Life expectancy has been increasing in Australia and Australia. The increased life expectancy is linked to a range of factors including medical advances, improved education, access to medical services, improved health literacies, changing lifestyles, and safer work environments. The Australian Government predicts that life expectancy will increase into the future, with life expectancy at birth is projected to be 95.1 years for men and 96.6 years for women in 2054-55 (Australian Government 2015: vii). The life expectancy for Indigenous Australians are much lower than non-Indigenous. In Australia, the life expectancy at birth of Indigenous men is 10.3 years less than non-Indigenous in 2015-2017. In Queensland, the life expectancy of Indigenous men is 7.8 years less than non-Indigenous (ANS 2017). In Australia, the life expectancy at birth Indigenous women is 9 years less than non- Indigenous in 2015-2017. In Queensland, the life expectancy of Indigenous women 6.7 years less than non-Indigenous (ABS 2017).

1.4 Ageing Population

Over the past century, Australia's population has been progressively ageing due to sustained low fertility and increasing life expectancy, and this trend is set to continue into the foreseeable future. The median age of the Australian population has increased by 2 years over the last two decades, from 35 years at 30 June 1998 to 37 years at 30 June 2018 (ABS 2018).

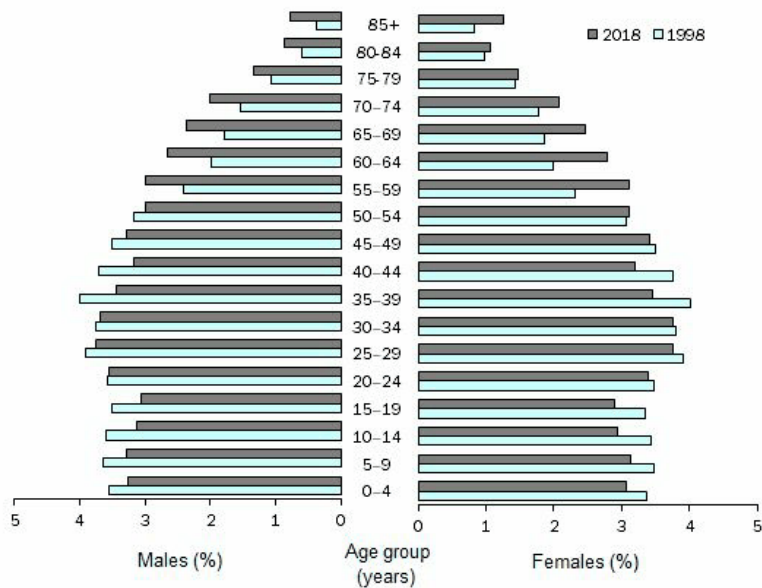


Figure 2: Ageing Population Characteristics, 30 June 2018

Source: ABS, 2018b

At June 2018, the median age of Queensland's population was 37.3 years. In the five years to June 2018, the median age of the population in Greater Brisbane increased from 35.0 to 35.4 years. The median age in the rest of Queensland was higher, increasing from 38.4 to 39.4 years over the same period. At 30 June 1998, 66.67% people in Australia were aged between 15 and 64 years - usually referred to as the 'working-age population'. This proportion increased to a high of 67.5% in 2009, before declining to 65.5% by 30 June 2018. Queensland's working age population was lower than the national with 64.8% being aged 15-64 years by 30 June 2018 (ABS2018b).

The age profiles of Indigenous communities differ from that of non-Indigenous populations. For example, in the 35.4% of Indigenous populations were in the age range 0-14, and 19.2% were aged 15-24 years compared to 18.9 and 12.8 for non-Indigenous populations. Those aged +65 years constituted 4.4 % in Indigenous populations compared to 15.6% in 2016 (ABS 2016).

Population projections predict the proportion of people aged 65-85 will significantly increase into the next few decades. Figure 2 highlights the increasing ageing population to 2050.

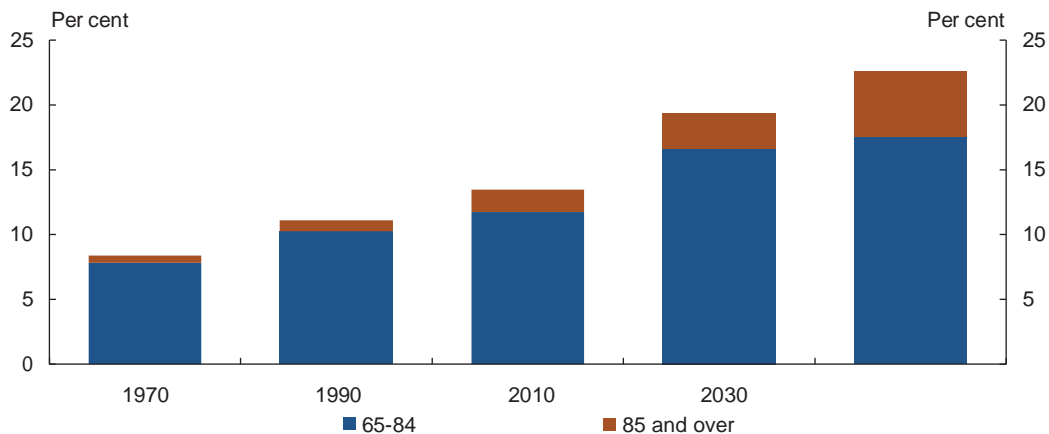


Figure 3: Proportion of Population Over 65 years
Source: Attorney General’s Department, 2010:1

It is estimated that between now and 2050:

- The number of older people (65-85) will more than double (from 13 % to 23%) by 2050
- People 85 years and over will quadruple
- The proportion of working age people in total population will decrease by 7% to 60% (Attorney General’s Department, 2010:4)
- The number of people aged 15 to 64 for every person aged 65 and over has fallen from 7.3 people in 1975 to 4.5 in 2015. By 2054-55, this is projected to nearly halve again to 2.7 people (Australian Government 2015:3).

Net overseas migration (NOM) is a measure that is utilised to moderate the speed and extent of population ageing. NOM is the difference between immigration and emigration (net number of people entering and departing Australia). Mc Donald (2018: 5) argues that although sustaining migration at the present level will not stop the population from ageing, when compared with zero migration, it substantially reduces population ageing. Migrants, on average, are younger than the resident population. With a NOM of 200,000 per annum, the number of people in the working ages of 20-64 years would be 6.8 million higher than if NOM was zero. NOM modifies population ageing because migration eligibility permits younger cohorts to enter the population. This increases the proportion of the population at childbearing age as well as labour force participation. In view of the mixed attitudes and public debates about immigration, the Productive Commission (2017) argues that the flow of immigrants at any point is important because of absorptive capacity. This includes the capacity of the market and non-market sectors to respond to the increased demand for goods and services created by immigration. It is critical that population levels do not put undue burden on the environment to the extent that it undermines the wellbeing of existing and future generations. Consideration has been given to the optimum level of NOM for best outcomes in relation to population ageing, sustainable environment and positive economic growth. Work commissioned by the Australian Government concluded that the optimal range would be 160,000 to 220,000 immigrants per annum (McDonald & Temple 2014). This will ensure mitigation impacts on ageing and stimulate economic development. The current and recent levels of immigrant intake levels have been within this range.

The percentage of Queensland’s population aged 65 years and over as at 30 June 2018 was 15.4%, an increase of 3.1 percentage points from 30 June 2008. There was variability across the State, e.g., the percentage of population aged 65 years and over ranged from 27.7% in Hinchinbrook Shire LGA to 2.7% in

Doomadgee Shire LGA. Queensland's 'aged dependency ratio' (ratio of those aged 65 years and over to the working ages of 15–64 years) increased from 18.1% 23.6% in the same 10 year period (Queensland Government, 2018a). The Queensland Government estimates that there will be increasing numbers of persons in all age groups, but a significant increase in both the number and proportion of people in older age groups is projected, with predictions of percentages of Queenslanders aged 65 years and older raising from 14.7% in 2016 to 23.8% by 2066 (Queensland Government 2018:2).

The Queensland Government identifies that a major challenge for government is to respond to the needs of an ageing population while managing the ageing of the workforce. More frequent and a greater number of users of the public health system, increased demand for existing services, and demand for new services as technologies and different models of care is projected to put large pressure on the State budget. Without a change in approach, the proportion of the Queensland Government's estimates that expenditure on health care is projected to rise from around 28% to over 40% of the Queensland Government budget by 2050 (Queensland Government 2016:24).

1.5 Overseas Migration

From the original white settlement of Australia, migration has been an important part of the nation's development. The post-war migration program created in the late 1940s in Australia had two main objectives to provide a labour force for an expanding post-World War 2 reconstruction and to increase the size of the Australian population, with particular concerns over defence. More than one quarter (28.2%) of Australia's resident population was born overseas and 45% had one parent born overseas at the time of the 2016 Census (ABS, 2016). Over the past 70 years, more than seven million permanent migrants settled in Australia, with more than two million of these coming in the last decade (CEDA 2019:13). Against the backdrop of lower birth rates and population ageing, immigration has become an increasingly important driver of population growth in Australia (CEDA 2019, Productivity Commission 2016). The Migration Council (2015:10) argues that with no migration, our population would stagnate at 24 million by 2050.

Migration to Australia occurs under two programs: The Migration Program and the Refugee and Humanitarian Program.

i) *The Migration Program* is set annually, with the total places available capped at a ceiling of 160,000 for 2019-20. The total program is broken down into the following streams:

- *Skill* – designed to improve the productive capacity of the economy and fill skill shortages in the labour market, including those in regional Australia. The majority of the places in the program are in the Skill stream (108,682 places in 2019-20).
- *Family* – is predominately made up of Partner visas, enabling Australians to reunite with family members from overseas, and provide them with pathways to citizenship (47,732 places in 2019-20).
- *Special Eligibility* – this covers visas for those in special circumstances. This can include permanent residents returning to Australia after a period away and is the smallest stream (236 places in 2019-20) (Department of Home Affairs, 2019).

The skilled component of the program is the largest with 69.2% of the program while the Family program makes up 30.5% of the migration program. The remaining small parts are made up of special eligibility and children visas.

Three new visa streams are due to be introduced:

1. *Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) visa*: 9,000 places. This is a provisional visa for people with a job offer with a regional employer.
2. *Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa*: 14,000 places. This is a provisional visa for people sponsored by a state or territory government or a relative living in a regional area.
3. *Global Talent Independent*: 5,000 places. For highly skilled people applying for migration to Australia – most likely will be granted either a distinguished talent or points tested visa, though details are not yet available.

ii) *The Refugee and Humanitarian Program* is part of international efforts to protect refugees, respond to global humanitarian need. It forms a smaller part of Australia's immigration with 18,750 places planned in 2019-2020.

The growth in the Australian population comprises two components:

- Natural increase—births minus deaths and
- Net Overseas Migration (NOM).

The relative contribution to population by natural increase and NOM components has changed over time. For example, in 1985 the natural increase represented 58.5% of Australia's population growth and NOM 41.5%. By 2015, natural increase represented only 45.7% of Australia's population growth, with NOM at 54.3% (Phillips & Simon Davies, 2016).

Overseas migration to and from Australia in year ending June 2018, resulted in a net increase to Australia's population of 237,200 people:

- There were 526,300 migrant arrivals which was an annual decrease for the first time since 2014
- There were 289,000 migrant departures which is the highest number on record
- 327,300 of the migrant arrivals were on temporary visas and 87,900 were on permanent visas. (ABS 2018).

The distribution of net migration across Australia shows the largest increases in Victoria and NSW with Queensland being third (12.1%) in 2017-2018. The following chart demonstrates the proportion of NOM across States and Territories.

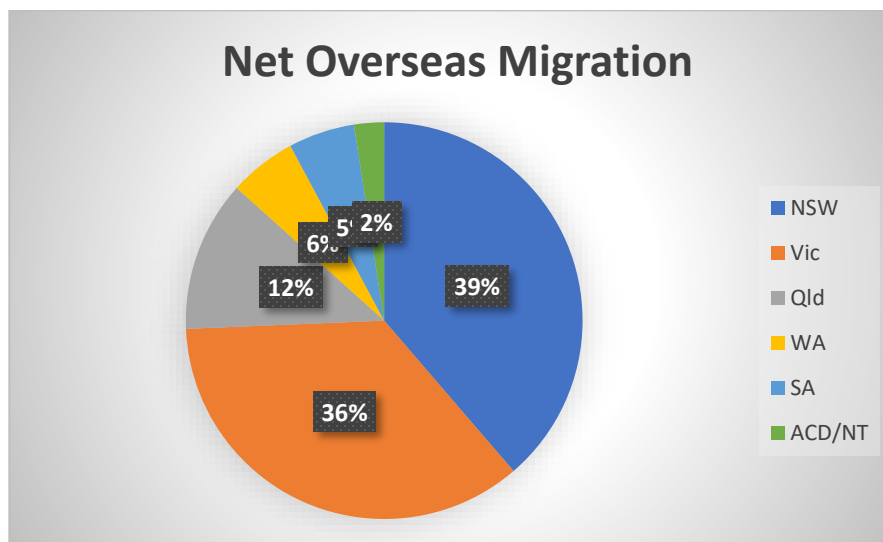


Figure 4: Net Overseas Migration to States and Territories
 Source: ABS, Net Overseas Migration, to 30 June 2018

The mix of immigrants is important. Younger and more skilled immigrants are best placed to make a positive economic contribution to Australia (Productivity Commission 2016:3). The Productivity Commission posits that “these types of immigrants provide a demographic dividend by increasing the proportion of people in the workforce, thus reducing the negative impacts associated with an ageing population. Skilled immigrants are also more likely to generate spill over benefits through enhanced productivity, innovation, and greater flexibility to move to other occupations in response to changing labour markets” (Productivity Commission 2016:3). Despite the benefits of migration, there are mixed views in Australian society about migration. CEDA (2019:15) sums the key issues

“There are community concerns about the scale of immigration and where migrants are choosing to settle, especially in our capital cities, because of access to education, critical services, employment and educational opportunities. Concerns centre on the strains on existing infrastructure, services and public amenity and social cohesion” (2019:14).

Additionally, there are concerns that immigrants have opportunities that give them advantages over domestic populations, especially in the area of employment due to higher skill levels. Such perceptions prevail despite contrary evidence. For example, a study conducted by Breunig, Deutscher and To (2017:1) concluded: “we find almost no evidence that immigration harms the labour market outcomes of those born in Australia”. On the contrary, CEDA (2019) has found that migrants’ presence in the labour market is associated with positive labour force participation outcomes for local workers.

Queensland’s net overseas migration (NOM) was 28,997 persons in 2017–18. Temporary visa holders (86.0%) represented the largest contribution to Queensland’s NOM in 2017–18, followed by permanent visa holders (25.0%), and New Zealand citizens (8.1%) (Queensland Government 2018b). The following table provides comparative NOM data for Queensland and Australia by visa type for 2017-2018.

Visa Type	Queensland (%)	Rest of Australia (%)
Permanent	25.0	28.5
Family	7.8	8.8
Skill	11.3	15.3
Humanitarian & Special Eligibility	6.4	4.9
Temporary	86.0	77.4
VET sector	— 0.9	2.1
Higher Education Sector	26.5	32.4
Student other	18.6	9.4
Temporary Skilled	5.0	4.8
Visitor	24.2	24.6
Working Holiday	19.6	10.4
Other temporary visa	—7.0	—6.3
New Zealand Citizen	8.1	2.2
Australian Citizen	—5.6	—6.0
Other	—13.4	—2.1

Table 3: NOM by Visa type, Queensland and Rest of Australia, 2017-18
Source: Qld Government, 2018b: 3

The age profile of NOM to Queensland was relatively young. In 2017–18, NOM to Queensland was greatest among 20–24 year olds, (27%), 17% by 25–29 year olds, closely followed by young people aged 15–19 years, who accounted for 16.4% of NOM. Only 6.2% of NOM to Queensland was for persons aged 40 years and over. The 55–59 years age group recorded more NOM departures than arrivals, with a NOM loss of 100 persons. Females accounted for more than half of NOM to Queensland (60.0%) in 2017–18, while NOM departures of males have remained consistently higher than females across the period 2004–05 to 2017–18 (Queensland Government 2018b).

As a result of migration, Queensland has become more culturally and linguistically diverse. At the time of the 2016 Census, 21.6% of Queensland’s resident population were born overseas. Queenslanders spoke more than 180 overseas languages, held more than 110 religious beliefs and came from 195 countries and major geographical locations. The cultural diversity of the State is increasing by 3.7% in the decade from 2006-2016, increase from 17.9% in 2006 (DLGRMA 2018:4). The top countries of birth indented were New Zealand, England, India, China, South Africa, Philippines, Scotland, Germany, Vietnam and South Korea (Queensland Government (Queensland Government 2018c). One in three Queenslanders had at least one parent born overseas (DLGRMA 2018:4).

1.6 Interstate Migration

Since the 2000s, Queensland has had high levels of interstate migration. During 2017-18, there were 392,700 people who moved interstate in Australia. NSW witnessed most departures from the state while Queensland had the highest net gain from interstate migration of 24,700 people (ABS 2018 a).

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT
2008-09	-18,667	1,523	14,702	-4,402	5,012	1,063	934	-309
2009-10	-9,458	3,314	6,172	-2,709	2,119	664	-661	427

2010-11	-13,496	3,534	6,795	-2,614	7,033	-47	-2,549	1,354
2011-12	-18,115	2,417	11,782	-3,220	8,609	-1,925	-691	1,145
2012-13	-14,645	6,420	8,874	-4,761	5,676	-1,286	-481	202
2013-14	-6,751	9,739	6,294	-3,890	-1,724	-435	-2,421	-812
2014-15	-6,776	11,079	6,861	-4,570	-4,278	127	-2,341	-103
2015-16	-11,539	17,639	11,986	-7,212	-10,010	760	-2,029	383
2016-17	-15,161	18,193	17,795	-6,778	-13,934	1,522	-2,867	1,230
2017-18	-21,672	14,316	24,698	-5,151	-11,300	2,382	-3,831	558
Annual average	-13,628	8,817	11,596	-4,531	-1,280	283	-1,694	408

Table 4: Net Interstate Migration — 2008-09 to 2017-18

Source: ABS, 2018a

Over the 10 years to June 2018, interstate migration contributed to population growth mainly for Queensland, with consecutive net gains on an average annual gain of 11,600 people (ABS 2-18a). Majority of the interstate movement of people to Queensland has settled in South East Queensland.

1.7 Economic and Workforce Considerations

Demographic change and the decline in natural rates of population has raised issues about the growth of the domestic labour force (McDonald 2017). Since the 1980s, a number of factors have driven major structural shifts in the economy, including government policies of deregulation, quick exposure to global markets, poor terms of trade and fluctuations in financial markets, withdrawal of industry protection and supports, technological change, environmental concerns and changing consumer demands/ perceptions (Productivity Commission 2017, Beer 2015, Wibrow & Circelli 2016). This has led to the rapid decline of low-skilled jobs and a commensurate high demand for jobs requiring tertiary education and training. Skill Level 1 (i.e. requiring higher level qualifications such as a bachelor’s degree) accounted for 40.2% of all advertised positions in May 2019 (Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business 2019). The trend towards increased share of Skill Level 1 occupations in employment has increased from 23 % in 1988 to 32 % in 2018 (Joyce 2019:7).

Labour and skills shortages can strongly impinge on the competitiveness, challenge the profitability, economic contribution, and sustainability of businesses and industries. Changes are being experience across Australia, including in Queensland. As noted by Jobs Queensland, “Queensland industries, enterprises, individuals and regions are all being affected by industry transition”, with varying “speed, magnitude and severity” across different industries (Jobs Queensland 2018: 7). A study into the adaptive capacity of regions showed a strong correlation between low levels adaptive capacity and remoteness (Productivity Commission 2017). Factors that contribute to adaptive capacity is linked to education, skills, levels of income, employment, health, access to infrastructure and services, and natural resources. Employer surveys across Australia indicate recruitment challenges, in both workforce shortages and skills gaps (Babacan et al 2019). Industries such as Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (60%); Manufacturing (47%); Construction (48%); and Health Care and Social Assistance (48%) all had a large proportion of employers with difficulty recruiting (Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business 2018). The reason for these difficulties was often finding people who met the technical requirements of the job and/or difficulties associated with the employer’s location. In 2018, employers in rural and regional Queensland had the most difficulty in the hiring of Technicians and Trades Workers (65%), Professionals (64%) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (55%) (Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business 2018). The ability to fill vacancies and the number of suitable applications vary across metropolitan and regional areas. Table 5 provides a comparison, across selected industry cluster groups or specific occupations, between metropolitan and regional areas in relation to proportion of vacancies filled, applicants per vacancy and the number of suitable applications per job in 2018.

Industry	Proportion of Vacancies Filled (%)		Average number of applicants per vacancy		Average number of suitable applications	
	Metropolitan	Regional	Metropolitan	Regional	Metropolitan	Regional
Construction	62	39	13.0	6.7	1.8	1.8
Health	71	54	5.5	-	2.0	-
Teachers	93	87	13.2	12.2	2.4	3.7
Nurses	80	54	11.2	4.8	2.8	1.5

Table 5: Metropolitan -Regional Vacancy Comparisons, 2018

Source: Dept of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business,
<https://docs.employment.gov.au/collections/queensland-occupational-cluster-reports>

Rural and regional industries, particularly inland areas have thin labour markets and cannot rely fully on local labour for their skills needs (Pryce, Babacan et al 2013). Notwithstanding the attractive remuneration packages that regional industries offer, they struggle to meet their human resources needs. Increasingly rural industries, particularly resource based and extractive industries, have used workers from city or coastal towns through in fly-in/fly-out FIFO/drive-in drive out (DIDO)work to meet human resource needs (Pryce, Babacan et al 2013). Research identifies that FIFO/DIDO workers are predominantly male, more likely to be partnered and with the dominant age group being 30 to 39 years of age (Joyce et al 2013, McLean, 2012). The occupational profiles of FIFO workers reflect industry needs. Managers and Professionals constitute 21%, Technicians and Trade Workers’ make up 42% and Machinery Operators and Labourers make up 38.6% (Pryce, Babacan et al 2013:4). In a study conducted in North Queensland FIFO workers identified concerns of the impact that FIFO arrangements had on their families, health and wellbeing and 27% expected to leave their position in the next 12 months, a much higher rate than the national average of 23.9% (Pryce, Babacan et al 2013:6). The impact of an employee leaving a role is greater on regional industries due to the difficulties of attraction and retention (Babacan et al 2019).

The FIFO/DIDO arrangements adds stimulus to regional local economies via incomes paid, employment of local workers where possible, and through supporting value chains regional/rural areas (Rolfe & Kinnear 2013, RAI 2015). The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia (2013), while recognising the benefits of FIFO/DIDO to individuals and families concluded that the practice is not delivering prosperity to regional communities and is damaging the social fabric of some regional communities and eroding liveability in those areas.

Rolfe & Kinnear (2013) identify the direct and indirect impacts of FIFO and DIDO arrangement on both population and economic growth in regional economies. The pressures include difficulties in counting the non-resident population, planning for, and investing in, the infrastructure required and the liveability aspects of the regions. The authors draw attention to a critical link between FIFO/DIDO arrangements and population growth. They argue that “non-residency also represents a distinct ‘opportunity cost’ for regions, because local population growth is a powerful business case for public and private investment in infrastructure and services. The dual effect of FIFO/DIDO is thus not only to introduce new demand for infrastructure and services, but also to deny regions the chance for baseline population growth, and with it, the likelihood of improving living standard” (Rolfe & Kinnear 2013:125).

Undertaking economic modelling, the authors demonstrate that with FIFO/DIDO arrangements, the population boost is decreased by 23 or 43% (Rolfe & Kinnear 2013). A number of policy implications arise from this critical finding including: the importance of accurate prediction of demographic and labour force growth for planning and policy development, addressing liveability aspects associated with loss of residents,

opportunity costs of lost regional population and economic growth if local labour forces were used. The conclusion drawn is that “switching to a greater focus on locally sourced labour will help to stem economic leakage and reduce the negative impacts and planning challenges that are often associated with enumerating and supporting FIFO and DIDO workers” (Rolfe & Kinnear 2013:134). The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia urged for a policy mix that will “ensure the FIFO/DIDO work practice doesn’t become the dominant practice, as it could lead to a hollowing of established regional towns, particularly those inland” (Parliament of Australia 2013: viii). The Regional Australia Institute (RAI: 2015) similarly identifies the long term impacts of temporary, FIFO/DIDO arrangements on infrastructure, leakage, and service viability in regional/remote communities.

Population, productivity and economic participation are three key elements of economic growth as identified by the Australian Treasury. In the 2015 Intergenerational Report (IGR), population growth is assumed to drive almost half of the projected economic growth (Australian Government 2015). A 1.5% productivity increase per annum has been assumed in the IGR. The Australian Government points out that if productivity does not grow at 1.5% per annum (as assumed in the IGR), the significance of population growth as a driver of economic growth will be larger than projected (Infrastructure Australia 2015).

The Australian Government identifies that the number of people seeking work, the number who are successful in finding employment and the average number of hours worked by individuals who have jobs are important influences on growth in GDP. (Australian Government 2015:16). Labour force participation rates are affected by changes in the age distribution of the population. The participation for all people aged 15 years and over is projected to fall from 64.6 % in 2014-15 to 62.4 % in 2054-55 (Australian Government 2015:16) due an ageing population. The ageing population is predicted to have significant impacts on the people of working age. In 2010, there was an estimated five people of working age for every person aged 65 and over. By 2050 only 2.7 people of working age are projected for every person aged 65 and over (Australian Government 2015, 2010). McDonald (2018:10) argues that Australia is facing a labour supply crunch in the next decade as the baby-boomers retires and the future cohorts entering the labour force at young ages are much smaller than the current young working population.

Development of industries in regional areas, along with the capacity of the regions to establish business and attract the next generation of workers, will play a role in defining the future prosperity of regional communities. Immigration is one of the sources of skilled and unskilled labour sources for Australia and will become increasingly important (Zhao et al 2018). As noted above, immigration intake in the range 160,000-220,000 was determined to be optimum for negating population ageing and having a positive impact on economic growth. In an analysis of the impact of migration and employment growth. :

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Without Migration</i>	<i>With Migration</i>
<55 years	-143,000	452,000
>55 years	268,000	286,000

Table 6: Change in Employment With and Without Migration, 2011-2016
 Source: McDonald, 2017:10

McDonald identifies the positive impact of migration on employment growth, across different age cohorts. The importance of immigration to economic growth in Australia is further reinforced through a range of studies. Economic modelling by the Migration Council of Australia concluded that by 2050, migration will have increased the rate of labour participation by 15.7 %, increase in the creation of employment by 45%,

enhance skills profile of the workforce, and increase per capita GDP (Migration Council of Australia 2015:15). Similarly, the Productivity Commission (2016:2) argued “Australia’s current immigration profile is projected to deliver a *demographic dividend* to Australia and higher economic output per person”. Development of industries in regional areas, along with the capacity of the regions to establish business and attract the next generation of workers, will play a role in defining the future prosperity of regional communities. The 1.9 million migrant taxpayers generated \$112.3 billion in total personal income in 2016-17 according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2019a). The median employee income of all migrant taxpayers in 2016-17 was \$49,438, which was slightly higher than the median employee income for all Australian taxpayers (\$49,412) while the income of skilled migrants was at a very high level at \$59,304 per annum. The Federation of Ethnic Communities Council noted that “These statistics released by the ABS today confirm just how strong a contribution migrants make to the Australian economy....The figures also dispel the pervasive myth that migrants are a drain on the economy and government services” (FECCA 2019).

Migrants entering Australia are most likely to hold a non-school qualification (79%). 62% of those in the Family Stream and 48% of the Humanitarian held a non-school qualification. In 2016, 69% of recently arrived migrants, aged between 25 and 44, were educated to a diploma level or higher compared to 42% of Australians of the same age (Australian Government 2019: 30). In 2016, the majority of skilled migrants aged 15 years and over were in the labour force (83%). This compared with almost two thirds (64%) of Family migrants and about half (48%) of Humanitarian migrants (ABS 2016).

Employer bodies frequently identify the importance of immigration for their labour needs. For example, the Australian Food and Grocery Council noted that access to overseas workers is also important for agribusinesses “Improved access to overseas workers where suitably qualified staff, or an insufficient number of locals, are not available is critical to the competitiveness of the agribusiness, food and grocery manufacturing sector in Australia” (cited in Productivity Commission 2015:447). In a study conducted by Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES), a horticultural employer stated that “they would not be able to meet their labour demand by relying on local Australian residents, and several said without access to seasonal workers and/or working holiday makers they would not be able to pick their crops” (cited in Zhao et al. 2018:22). Employers had positive views about migrant contributions to the workforce, even refugee contributions. In a survey of 3,365 employers in 2017 about their experiences and attitudes to hiring refugee job seekers, the Australian Government found that employers articulated the benefits to the workplace of refugees including bringing diversity to their business (41%), enthusiasm and work ethic (35%) and skills beneficial to their business (21%) (Dept of Jobs and Small Business 2017:2). The review into refugee settlement to Australia recommended that to improve the social and economic participation of refugees, the Commonwealth Government should invest in labour market integration strategies by trialling a range of specialist place-based employment services, linking in with employer groups (Shergold et al 2019:9).

The economic impact of migration flows through every aspect of the economy. It has profound positive impact not just on population growth, but also on labour participation and employment, on wages and incomes, on our national skills base and on net productivity.

Migration Council Australia, 2015:2

Evidence indicates that migrants face significant barriers in settlement in regional areas and the labour market (Collins & Krivokapic-Skoko 2012, Babacan 1999, 1997, Babacan et al 2019). These include elements of settlement such as access to housing, transport, labour market, and language skills. Settlement and integration into a community are two way processes between the immigrant and community and can take time (Babacan 1999). Social integration requires positive community relations effort and processes to build

community and friendship networks, cultural understanding and welcoming host environments. Attitudes towards migration influence how migrants and refugees settle in communities. In smaller rural and regional areas, the social dynamics have greater impacts. Feist et al (2015:39) argue the need to promote positive images of newly arrived migrants and refugees and highlight their contribution, particularly in an effort to stop discrimination. A key area of focus is around employment, with the need to dispel myths such as “migrants, take local jobs” and highlight the unmet labour and skills needs that migrants fill, showing jobs that locals will not do and their contribution to economic development in the area. There was a need to incorporate employment preparation, mentoring, work experience, skills assessment, recognition of prior learning, provision of workplace English, vocational and professional training, job placement, career development and assistance with setting up small businesses (Shergold 2019:9).

The RAI has identified the key issues of migrant settlement into rural areas as:

- The misalignment of rural migration ambitions and the current settlement and employment service systems;
- The capacity to better support rural communities and their labour needs through migration.
- The persistent information and perception problems about rural migration;
- The importance of linking migrants with rural communities and businesses, and fostering social connections; and
- The engagement of communities and securing of majority support (RAI 2018:7).

RAI concludes that migration is the key to the future of regional and rural growth. The report has found that locally led migration strategies have demonstrated their capacity to effectively overcome the barriers, which are currently constraining the movement and settlement of migrants. RAI advocates for support for more locally led efforts across rural Australia (2018:2).

1.8 Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

Australia and each State has a unique environment. The vulnerability of the Australian environment and the limits of growth are concerns raised by environmental scholars. The ‘ecological footprint’ or the impacts on the environment when measured against the carrying capacity of the planet are a major consideration in population debates. (Henry 2011:176). The negative environmental impacts arising out of population growth can be broadly categorised as:

- *Unsustainable use of natural resources*, many of which are finite and either non-renewable or slow to regenerate — these impacts are generally global in nature, because most natural resources are traded in world markets;
- *Impacts associated with greater levels of activity*, such as pollution and greenhouse gas emissions — these impacts can be local (such as some types of pollution) or global (for example, greenhouse gas emissions); and
- *Loss of biodiversity* — these impacts can be local or global (Productivity Commission 2011:272).

In a former study, the National Population Council (1991) identified the ‘carrying capacity’ of Australia to be 50 million people which was later revised to 35 million, based on assumptions about rain, soil, river management, climate and so on. The House of Representatives Standing Committee for Long Term Strategies was commissioned to examine Australia’s population ‘carrying capacity’ in 1994. The Committee took a broad view of the term ‘carrying capacity’ needs, to recognise that many factors besides the availability of food, water. The Committee suggested that the most useful definition would be “that combination of population, location and demographic characteristics which best serve Australia's national

interests, and which allow individuals in the society to live long, self-fulfilling lives” (Parliament of Australia 1994:23). The Standing Committee (1994) acknowledged that discussions about Australia's population 'carrying capacity' have long been concerned with the question of whether the limited quantities of Australia natural resources would limit the number of future Australians able to enjoy a high quality of life (p.39). The Committee argued that recognition that any quantitative estimate of 'carrying capacity' can only be made subject to a wide range of assumptions about how to measure quality of life and how such measures (e.g. population, location, technologies, and industries) respond to a variety of factors. The Committee concluded that “the complexity of these poorly-understood relationships means that even serious attempts at calculating 'carrying capacity or optimum population can be little more than 'guesstimates' ”(Parliament of Australia 1994:39-40).

The consultations on the Population strategy for the Australian Government in 2011, identified major concerns from the Australian public relating to environmental issues regarding population growth, including loss of biodiversity, land clearing, limits to water availability, impact of greenhouse gases and climate warming and food security (Australian Government 2011:11). Other risks include biosecurity and invasive species, land use change, and habitat fragmentation (Jackson et al. 2016). *The State of the Environment Report 2016* identifies that the key pressures on the Australian environment have increased over time as the drivers of population change and economic activity have increased the demand for food, fibre, minerals, land, transport and energy, and have increased our waste generation. The Report identifies that the environment can cope with individual pressures, but, when pressures overlap, their impacts can interact, thus amplifying the effects of low-level pressures (2016:21). A key area of focus is water resources. The scholarly literature identifies that there is a mismatch of population settlement and water resources in Australia (Productivity Commission 2011). Water policy and infrastructure are identified as both an opportunity and a threat. Benefits include agricultural returns, ecosystem services, and land restoration while the challenges relate to further natural resource depletion, farm abandonment and depopulation in regional areas (Rochford 2017).

Australia has one of the most urbanised populations in the world: 75 % of the population lives in a major city (Australian Government 2011:32). 90 % of people live in only 0.22 % of the country's land area (Jackson et al 2016:9). Urban growth is already driving land-use change, with expansion in peri-urban areas and the three largest capital cities experiencing the main population growth. In 2016-17 Melbourne had a growth rate of 2.7% and Sydney and Brisbane both of 2.0%, and in combination these three cities accounted for over 70% of Australia's population growth (Parr 2018:16). Infrastructure pressures, transport challenges and traffic congestion, housing affordability, liveability factors and environmental concerns are some of the key issues that emerge from urban concentration (Parr 2018, Jackson et al 2016). Research identifies that the majority of opinion considers that immigration unduly pressures provision of city infrastructure (Markus 2011).

Significant growth outside capital cities between 2011 and 2015 occurred along the coast of Australia, creating substantial pressure on coastal ecosystems. The challenge for policy is to create appropriate higher-density residential areas that can reduce the need to expand into greenfield sites and provide opportunities for more efficient energy use, as well as more efficient transport to enable a more sustainable population growth (Jackson et al 2016, Infrastructure Australia 2015).

The rapid urbanisation on the outer fringes of capital cities, impact of sea-change and tree change movement into some regional areas, changing population demographics and the depopulation of other parts of rural and regional Australia, have resulted in rapid changes to the profile and characteristics of communities

*Australian Heritage Council Submission No 364, 2010
(cited in Australian Government, 2011:14)*

The extent to which population increase leads to environmental change depends on a range of factors, such as: how many of us there are, where and how we live, the amount we consume, the technologies we use to provide our energy, food, materials and transport, and how we manage the waste we produce (Jackson et al 2016:9). For this reason, the simple consideration of population size is not a reliable indicator of impact. Congestion in cities, however, has put a focus on diverting population growth, particularly migration to regional areas. It has been suggested that population strategies should increase the share of growth of next tier cities by population size e.g. Adelaide, Canberra, Darwin, Hobart, Toowoomba, Townsville (Searle 2018). The Productivity Commission (2011:158) argues that implications of regional development for moving towards sustainability are unclear and points to the potential impacts of population growth on fragile regional environments. “Certainly, to the extent that pressures on metropolitan environments are reduced by diverting population growth elsewhere, there are environmental dividends. On the other hand, many regional environments are also fragile and subject to deterioration if population densities increase” (Productivity Commission: 2011:158).

Better matching in the distribution of people and the distribution of natural resources is a major policy consideration. Klocker & Head (2013) argue that the debates about population, immigration and the environment are juxtaposed and often the discussion is focused on numerical capacity to carry rather than a holistic consideration of culture, lifestyle and other factors. These discourses position immigrants as “environmental liability... and opportunities to explore the diverse environmental capacities they bring with them have thus been sidelined” (Klocker & Head 2013:42). The authors posit that attentiveness to cultural diversity reveals tensions arising from differences in environmental values, attitudes and practices; at the same time as it offers opportunities to progress environmental debates by providing evidence of diverse sustainabilities. They argue that cultural environmental concerns offer an important framework for opening Australian environmental debates and policy to difference.

Another important consideration is that economic growth, trade and employment from environmental considerations have been driven by short term political imperatives. This has resulted in a ‘decoupling’ of economic considerations from environmental factors. Jackson et al (2016) point out how inadequate consideration of environmental factors in governance and business decisions can have significant social and economic costs in the long term. The answer to the question of whether sustainable population and economic growth is possible without detrimental environmental impact is complex. Jackson et al (2016:12) state that “If managed well, drivers such as population change and economic activity can offer benefits for sustainable development, particularly through technological and institutional innovation, and changes in human behaviour”.

1.9 Liveability

Liveability is a term that has emerged in recent times. It refers to both tangible and intangible aspects of a quality of life, with locales supporting the health, wellbeing and the quality of life of people who live and work in them. The Department of Infrastructure and Transport (2012:203) provides a summary of liveability as:

The physical characteristics that contribute to the liveability of places include land use, built form, quality and conservation of public spaces and natural environments, efficiency of transport networks, accessibility to work, education, health and community services and social and recreational opportunities. Less tangible to liveability is broader societal and cultural characteristics of places and communities. The cultural characteristics of cities and towns reflect both historical and contemporary ways of living, the values and meaning attached to places, objects, activities and events, the application of technologies and the interaction with the natural environment in which cities are located. The social aspects of cities include social capital and social cohesion that contribute to a sense of trust and inclusion. While the physical, social and cultural characteristics of

cities are what define and distinguish them, there is a growing consensus about indicators of positive social outcomes that can be used to measure liveability.

In rural/regional areas amenity relates to two aspects of a locale: (1) the relative attractiveness of the general environment in which it is set and (2) more specifically, the qualities or facilities of the locale itself (Argent et al 2014:306).

Liveability emerges as a strong consideration in people's decision to move or migrate (Taylor & Carson 2017, ALGA 2019, Argent et al 2014). The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) argues that the critical factors are:

- Access to secure and affordable water, energy and communications services;
- Access to a range of community services and infrastructure that supports health, education, recreation and social interaction and well-being.
- A range of housing options, which is affordable and in adequate supply.
- Transport accessibility, both within the community (including effective and adequate public transport options) and connected to other centres via strategically linked routes.
- Pleasant environments, including parks, gardens, footpaths and bikeways as well as built infrastructure that is appropriate for the climatic conditions; and
- A range of education and employment pathways to cater to different age groups and skill groups, that considers also culturally-diverse and non-English speaking populations (ALGA 2019:4).

The Australian Government Department of Infrastructure and Transport (2012:203) identifies that enhancing liveability occurs through promoting better planning, city design and affordable and equitable access to resources and opportunities including recreational, cultural and community facilities. Four broad objectives are identified – to: (i) facilitate the supply of appropriate mixed income housing; (ii) support affordable living choices; (iii) improve accessibility of movement around cities and reduce dependence on private motor vehicles; and (iv) support community wellbeing. While all levels of government have a critical role to play in enhancing liveability, the particular role of local government to influence and achieve is liveability is fundamental. Councils play a critical role in building local identity, community wellbeing and social cohesion” as well as contributing to national productivity. (ALGA 2019:8). Many Councils in Queensland have included liveability in their strategic plans. ALGA identifies the strong contribution of local governments to liveability through their provision of community infrastructure and services, including land use planning, play a significant role in ensuring the liveability, sustainability and wellbeing of our communities (ALGA 2019).

2. Queensland Regional Population

2.1 Regional Population Change

From a population of approximately 5 million, Queensland is expected to grow to 7 million by 2036 and reach 10 million by 2061 (Queensland Government 2018). While the Queensland population has been growing, this growth has not been evenly distributed across the State. There has been much debate on the rapid population growth taking place in South East Queensland (SEQ) and concerns in relation to a decline in liveability, congestion and environmental impacts.

The following table provides an overview of the population distribution across selected areas of regional/rural Queensland and the percentage change from 2008-2018.

LGA	Total Population	Change in Population 2008-2018	% change 2008- 2018
Aurukun (S)	1382	130	10%
Balonne (S)	4334	-452	-9%
Banana (S)	14291	-589	-4%
Barcaldine (R)	2852	-470	-14%
Barcoo (S)	267	-104	-28%
Blackall-Tambo (R)	1863	-261	-12%
Boulia (S)	425	-18	-4%
Brisbane (C)	1231605	198,133	19%
Bulloo (S)	330	-49	-13%
Bundaberg (R)	95302	6,703	8%
Burdekin (S)	17077	-576	-3%
Burke (S)	352	-190	-35%
Cairns (R)	165525	24,122	17%
Carpentaria (S)	1974	-150	-7%
Cassowary Coast (R)	29689	950	3%
Central Highlands (R) (Qld)	28645	555	2%
Charters Towers (R)	11850	-246	-2%
Cherbourg (S)	1315	109	9%
Cloncurry (S)	3091	-217	-7%
Cook (S)	4445	658	17%
Croydon (S)	288	-9	-3%
Diamantina (S)	292	-3	-1%
Doomadgee (S)	1507	272	22%
Douglas (S)	12257	1,262	11%
Etheridge (S)	804	-111	-12%
Flinders (S) (Qld)	1499	-338	-18%
Fraser Coast (R)	105463	13,445	15%
Gladstone (R)	62979	7,554	14%
Gold Coast (C)	606774	125,205	26%
Goondiwindi (R)	10728	123	1%
Gympie (R)	51586	6,886	15%
Hinchinbrook (S)	10805	-1,021	-9%
Hope Vale (S)	1081	184	21%
Ipswich (C)	213638	59,210	38%
Isaac (R)	20934	-698	-3%
Kowanyama (S)	977	-102	-9%
Livingstone (S)	37638	6,231	20%
Lockhart River (S)	782	227	41%
Lockyer Valley (R)	41011	8,037	24%
Logan (C)	326615	55,987	21%
Longreach (R)	3530	-663	-16%
Mackay (R)	116539	7,895	7%
McKinlay (S)	814	-180	-18%
Mapoon (S)	325	63	24%
Maranoa (R)	12791	-161	-1%
Mareeba (S)	22517	2,780	14%
Moreton Bay (R)	459585	102,086	29%
Mornington (S)	1218	98	9%
Mount Isa (C)	18878	-2,503	-12%
Murweh (S)	4318	-350	-7%
Napranum (S)	1048	158	18%
Noosa (S)	55369	5,769	12%
North Burnett (R)	10628	293	3%
Northern Peninsula Area (R)	3069	835	37%
Palm Island (S)	2637	372	16%
Paroo (S)	1586	-335	-17%

Pormpuraaw (S)	833	171	26%
Quilpie (S)	790	-202	-20%
Redland (C)	156863	20,092	15%
Richmond (S)	806	-89	-10%
Rockhampton (R)	81067	4,795	6%
Scenic Rim (R)	42583	7,005	20%
Somerset (R)	25887	5,521	27%
South Burnett (R)	32555	1,972	6%
Southern Downs (R)	35601	2,150	6%
Sunshine Coast (R)	319922	69,122	28%
Tablelands (R)	25541	1,656	7%
Toowoomba (R)	167657	17,517	12%
Torres (S)	3848	391	11%
Torres Strait Island (R)	4994	388	8%
Townsville (C)	194072	25,569	15%
Weipa (T)	4240	4,232	14%
Western Downs (R)	34467	3,713	12%
Whitsunday (R)	35050	-215	-16%
Winton (S)	1157	89	10%
Woorabinda (S)	1005	-13	-4%
Wujal Wujal (S)	306	317	13%
Yarrabah (S)	2848		19%

Table 7: LGA Population Profiles

Source: ABS, LGAQ 2019

Between 2008 and 2018, 29 of Queensland's 77 (approximately 38%) local government areas experienced a decline in their local population. Fifteen regional councils experienced a decline of 10% or more; that is approximately one in five Queensland councils losing one in ten locals (ABS 2016 b, LGAQ 2019). In comparison areas such as the Fraser Coast, Cairns, Gladstone, Mackay and Townsville all have growth rates in excess of 3% per annum (LGAQ 2019). During this period, Queensland saw a net movement of over 10,000 people out of the regions (LGAQ 2019:9), with both inland and coastal areas experience net loss of teenagers and young adults. RAI consider this to be a characteristic with young people moving to capital cities to seek the 'bright lights' of to further their education or access a wider job market (RAI 2015:105).

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) argues that the impact such changes is of major importance, particularly in smaller communities. Population decline is a concern for a number of councils with Paroo Shire Mayor stating they "need people to survive" (Western Times 2019). An increasing challenge will be attracting and retaining an appropriate mix of skilled workers in rural towns (Korff., 2017). Large rural towns are sustaining their populations, while populations in smaller towns are decreasing suggesting that the ability to source and recruit people in remote regions will likely decrease in the near future (KPMG, 2018). However, rural communities that are able to provide a level of infrastructure such as telecommunications, health, education and childcare are likely to contribute to attracting skilled people to the industry (RJSA 2019). Currently, skill shortages exist in some regional Australian industries such as agriculture, manufacturing and food/meat processing. Addressing skill shortages in regional industries can contribute strongly to the successful development of regional Australia (RJSA 2019). A number of local governments have undertaken measures to address population attraction, as will be outlined in the section on policy considerations.

The ALGA points to the pervading view that the population of regional Australia is in decline, that regions struggle to attract

"This scope of movement becomes very evident in small communities with fewer people buying local goods and services, and fewer children attending the local school. These types of movements also mean lower rates of revenue and a reduced workforce for councils, both of which limit local government's capacity to provide services for people in the remaining community" LGAQ 2019:9

and retain permanent residents, and that there is a need for prescriptive incentives to encourage international migrants to move to and stay in regional areas (ALGA 2019). However, the Association identifies the diversity of local government areas across Australia, with many areas that are experiencing population growth and overseas-born residents being a significant, and in some cases, the only contributor to that growth (ALGA 2019:4). The movement of young people out of rural/regional areas is gender based with greater numbers of young women wanting to or actually relocating from their rural homes, in comparison to young men (Argent & Walmsley 2008:). The loss of young people is greatly impacts on rural and regional areas growth and development of young achievers and future leaders (Gabriel 2002). Taylor et al (2011) note that decline in regions are typically portrayed as the loss of young adults, ageing population and the inability of particular sub-populations (e.g. retirees, women,) to address economic and social challenges. In addition, discussions on ageing problematises ageing population in rural areas, as a burden on the public purse and a population deficit. It is possible to replace groups of people who are leaving the region in one age range with older adult groups who can still provide stimulus to the economy. This multifaceted approach to an ageing population, rather than a deficit approach, needs to be taken (Ryser & Halseth 2013). Carson et al (2016:382) caution against the “demography of disadvantage” as this means that “policy-making is directed by assumptions of negativity, making decline more obvious whilst also taking attention away from other demographic resilience processes such as adaptation and transformation”.

Regional population dynamics vary with spatial location and disadvantage. The evidence identifies that life expectancy shows considerable variation based on remoteness. The life expectancy for Indigenous men and women were significantly lower for males and females in Remote and Very Remote areas (65.9 and 69.6) than for those who lived in Major Cities (72.1 and 76.5 respectively) in 2015-2017. The difference between life expectancy estimates for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and the non-Indigenous populations was also more marked in these remote and very remote areas (13.8 years for males and 14.0 years for females) than in Major Cities (8.6 years and 7.2 years respectively) (ABS 2017). Life expectancy of Indigenous Australians reduced further based on disadvantage as measured by the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage which showed that “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the most disadvantaged areas a higher proportion of whom were living in remote Australia, have the lowest life expectancy (68.2 years for males and 72.8 years for females. This represented 41% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females, a third of whom lived in Remote and Very Remote areas” (ABS 2017).

2.2 Migration to the Regions

Migration to the regions also shows variability. The largest NOM is in temporary visas. 28.8% of all temporary entrants to Queensland were located outside of South East Queensland with 5.3% in Cairns, 4.7% in Central Queensland, 4.6% in Townsville, 3.8% in Mackay-Whitsunday, 3.4% Wide Bay, 2.6% in Darling Downs-Maranoa, 2.4% Queensland Outback, and Toowoomba 2% (Queensland Government, 2018b:10). Refugee and humanitarian settlement to the regions was limited with 73.5% being located in three local government areas of Toowoomba, Logan and Brisbane for the 2017-18 intake. Other small regional settlement of refugees included Townsville 8.4%, Cairns 6.1% and 6.7% for the rest of Queensland (Queensland Government 2018b:9). At the time of the 2016 Census, 21.6% of Queenslanders identified as being born overseas, slightly lower than Australian rate of 28.2% (Queensland Government 2018c, ABS 2016). Table 8 identifies the geographical distribution of overseas populations across selected LGAs in Queensland at the time of the 2016 Census.

LGA	Overseas Born (%)	LGA	Overseas Born (%)
Balonne	6	Gladstone	14.5
Banana	8.2	Goondiwindi	5.9
Barcaldine	5.7	Gympie	10.8
Brisbane	30.6	Livingstone	10.1
Bundaberg	12.0	Mackay	11.7
Burdekin	8.3	Mareeba	16.6
Cairns	21.5	Mt Isa	16.1
Carpentaria	7.3	Rockhampton	9.4
Cassowary Coast	13.9	Scenic Rim	14.3
Charters Towers	5.6	Southern Downs	10.4
Cloncurry	8.7	Tablelands	10.6
Cook	13.6	Toowoomba	11.7
Douglas	20.1	Townsville	13.7
Etheridge	7.8	Weipa	10.2
Flinders	4.6	Western Downs	7.1
Fraser Coast	14.0	Whitsunday	15.4

Table 8: Overseas Born Population in Selected LGAs, 2016

Source: Queensland Government, 2018c:14-15

Table 8 demonstrates the cultural and linguistic diversity of Queensland with migration and patterns of settlement over the years. Please see Appendix 1 for a Queensland map of the overseas born population.

The benefits of regional migration have been identified by a number of scholars. Hugo demonstrates that migrants, including temporary migrants and refugees, contribute to community, ethnic diversity and an often more highly educated populace. These trends can offset youth outmigration, but he cautions that lack of multicultural services and racism can mitigate their social sustainability (Hugo 2014). Immigrant communities have played a central role in the development of Australia's agricultural sector especially in horticulture – filling labour shortages, introducing new agricultural commodities and practices, improving productivity, innovation and knowledge transfer (Collins, Krivokapic-Skoko, & Monani, 2016). A recent report on migrant employment in regional Australia confirmed that employers, industry peak bodies, government departments and other key stakeholders viewed that there are significant social and economic benefits of having permanent migrants in regional industries (Samad et al, 2018). It is argued that official statistics are likely to underestimate the contribution of some temporary migrants e.g. agricultural workers such as Working Holiday Makers, skilled workers on 457 Visas and seasonal workers such as Pacific Island Seasonal Workers (Binks et al. 2018). A recent report on refugees identified that many rural and regional communities acknowledge the valuable contributions made by refugee families and that more should be done to make refugee's more aware of the benefits or being outside the major metropolitan areas (Shergold et al. 2019:7). The report recommends that towns or cities able to exhibit strong levels of support from local, state or territory governments, civil society organisations, educational institutions and local businesses should be given greater opportunity to welcome refugees. This could be achieved both by the Commonwealth Government selecting more regional locations for the initial settlement of larger numbers

New skilled immigrants generally filling labour shortages and adding to the productivity of the regional and rural economy and re-energizing regional and rural towns.

(Colins et al 2016: xii)

of refugees and by allowing communities to undertake their own refugee sponsorship (Shergold et al 2019:7).

Despite a history of successful settlement of migrants and refugees in regional areas, numerous challenges have been identified for newly arrived migrants and refugees including language proficiency, social isolation, overseas skills/qualification recognition, not having the right skills for the job, dismissal of overseas work experience by employers, lack of knowledge about regional areas, lack of communication between employers and migrants and the lack of facilities and infrastructure (transport, access to quality education, network and communication infrastructure) and lack of culturally appropriate services (RJSA 2019, Samad et al 2018, Collins et al 2016, Babacan 1999,1997). Wood et al (2019) in a recent survey of recent migrants living in regional areas and identified three key themes which were considered most influential in the decision on whether migrants would settle in a community:

- Sense of self and self-worth;
- Belonging in a new community; and
- Work, health and wellness.

Employment and volunteering had crucial impacts, including positive health outcomes, community involvement and cultural integration, and development of valuable work and life skills (Wood et al 2019: 13)

2.3 Population Attraction to the Regions

Attraction of population to the regions is based on many factors. In a study conducted for the Northern Territory Government, Taylor and Carson (2018) identified a number of push-pull factors that enable people to move or migrate interstate. The most important factor was the availability and quality of work, with people migrating based on actual and perceived better employment opportunities in some sectors, including higher salary opportunities, and the ability to apply specialist skills and education. The second reason was family and lifestyle consideration. A very important finding of this research is that the decision to relocate to another state/country is often connected to stages of the lifecycle. As noted by Taylor and Carson (2018:7) “while work is the main driver in younger and middle ages, after the age of 55 the primary drivers are retirement, family or social reasons and cost of living”. This links with the liveability factors outlined in earlier sections of this paper such as affordable housing, infrastructure and amenities are critical.

2.4 Loss of Social Capital and Services

Social capital is the glue that holds communities together. The different forms of social capital exist and develop in complex ways in regional and rural communities. As we saw above, a sense of belonging and connection is an important consideration for population retention, growth and regional development. Alston (2004: 300) argues that the effects of globalisation, changes in the fortunes of agriculture and the pursuit of neoliberal policies by successive Australian governments have resulted in major social changes, creating shifts in population, particularly from inland towns to regional ‘sponge cities’, to capital cities and to coastal towns and changes to social capital. Scholars identify the impact of neoliberal and market based approaches has had detrimental impacts on rural communities. While traditional regional policies have aimed at tempering uneven development and promoting spatial equity, the free market approaches promoted economically efficiency (Tonts 2004, Pusey 2017). In regional areas this approach contributed to uneven outcomes in terms of social disadvantage and economic upheaval and rural services have been lost (Alston 2004,). The loss of institutional capital and institutional thickness in rural towns (Cocklin 2003, Copus et al 2000) results in the loss of public, private and non-government sectors which provide vital services and

loss of employment and training opportunities of the broader community. The impacts of the neoliberal policy frameworks have resulted in population changes, with different sections of the population moving from towns to access vital health services while younger populations are moving in search of employment, training and education opportunities.

3. Stakeholder Consultations and Feedback

Consultations were held with 23 key informants with policy makers, industry bodies, regional development agencies and other relevant organisations. Purposive sampling methodology was used to select individuals/agencies to inform this policy paper. The key criteria used for the selection of informants¹ for consultation included:

- Cross-industry and diverse stakeholders.
- Informants with perspectives at different levels e.g. peak industry, rural and regional bodies, local organisations.
- Policy informants in relevant portfolios with emphasis on Queensland but also Federal and local governments.
- In different geographical locations in rural Queensland.

This section presents a summary of the main issues raised by informants in relating to rural/regional Queensland population issues.

3.1 Queensland Population Impacts

Key stakeholders across Queensland identified population as an important issue for policy. Many identified that addressing population growth, distribution and impact was vital for the future of regional development, for transforming economies and wellbeing of communities. A range of issues were identified in relation to population including:

- Support population growth, especially in regional areas of decline;
- Perceptions of unplanned population growth with growth in coastal areas and decline inland;
- Distribution of population growth, concern about growth of South East Queensland;
- Mismatch between areas of employment growth and population growth;
- Ageing population;
- Young people leaving rural/regional areas, particularly young women leaving rural areas (implications for future families, birth rates and community connectivity); and
- Lack of supportive environments for women and birthing (e.g. access to ante-natal services).

¹ Also referred to as participants

Communities in rural and regional areas have to fight for every asset and they often lose and get tired of fighting

(Regional peak body)

We are losing our 18-44 year olds. They leave when they are 18 and do not come back until they are much older, if at all. Some meet their partners when they are away which tends to keep them away.

(Regional economic development agency)

There is a mismatch between where jobs growth and population growth are in rural and regional Australia

(Regional research agency)

It was difficult to attract investment in infrastructure in smaller population areas or areas in decline. It is a dilemma for us as we cannot attract population without investment in catalytic infrastructure in the first instance

(Regional Organisation of Councils)

We, as government, need to better understand the impacts of population dynamics at the regional level to ensure appropriate policy measures are in place

(Policy maker)

3.2 Population Impacts

Participants identified a range of population impacts in rural/regional Queensland. These include:

- Decline in rural population impacts on the economy and community, particularly “tough on businesses in town”, especially in industries such as retail, banking, agriculture and farming;
- Workforce considerations, particularly shortage of skills and supply of labour, for lack of professional, skilled and labouring jobs. Some identified seasonal labour needs in agriculture while others pointed to the difficulty of filling vacancies;
- Decreases in population across regional Queensland leading to a decline in key industries and services in those areas, including construction, schools, hospitals, age care, banks and retail. In turn these changes making regional and rural living less attractive to young people and affect the sustainability of the community;
- Service provision (particularly health services) and viability (e.g. closure of one school);
- Infrastructure: Appropriate infrastructure suitable to sustain population size e.g. roads/transport, energy, housing, water, sewerage, digital connectivity, schools and others. A dilemma was identified in relation to justifying the return on investment for infrastructure funding, particularly for high value investments in areas of smaller populations;
- Social issues: A range of social issues identified, greater social disadvantage with rurality and remoteness. Issues identified include housing (affordability, type of housing, social housing), youth unemployment, Indigenous disadvantage, mental health, health, education and access to relevant services;
- Environment: Concerns in relation to the environmental footprint, particularly in relation to water, land degradation/clearing and environmental footprint and bio-diversity loss;
- Migration: Industry and business supportive to address workforce needs, regional bodies and local government supportive in relation to impeding population decline and maintaining community vibrancy and resilience. Concerns about attracting the right type of skills levels to the needs of industry, ensuring employment opportunities for newly arrived migrants and some noted that there may be issues of ‘cultural fit’ to the culture of the communities. Some identified that the reliance on immigration left industries vulnerable, particularly in the area of meat processing and horticulture. A minority of participants identified that young skilled migration reduced opportunities for the local population. Several respondents pointed to the difficulty of attracting migrants to their region due to lack of employment opportunities, higher cost of living, lack of services, amenities and called for government to provide stronger incentives. Overall, participants believed that there was a need for proactive and inter-sectoral efforts;
- Liveability and amenity factors impacting on population increase and decline. Examples include small children in boarding schools, lack of health and aged care services. One participant noted that “there is not the equality of service delivery in rural areas as there is urban”. The spiralling effect of liveability and amenities were causing people to leave regional areas

3.3 Policy Considerations

Numerous issues were identified for further policy consideration. The population issues were seen by all participants as being linked to social, economic, environmental and development matters in rural and regional Queensland. Participants identified the existing range of policies which relate to population issues but argued that these were not developed in a planned -coordinated manner. Policy was perceived to be driven from Canberra and Brisbane without direct connectivity to the regional dynamics of places. Policies

developed, in general, were seen as being too high level and general without application on the ground and there was a need to ensure place based approaches were driven from the regions.

The need for greater integration and planning in relation to economic and workforce development and population strategy was identified. The continued attraction of population to urban areas and less percentage of migration to rural/regional, especially in outer regional and remote areas, raised policy concerns about the future of industries, future workforce skills and supply and viability of towns and communities. Skill shortages in regional areas also had implications for capitalising on opportunities; economic prosperity and innovation were all noted as areas of concern for policy. Many were critical of FIFO and DIDO arrangements as a workforce solution. Some participants gave examples of transitioning regional economies that require new skills needed but there is little workforce and population planning to match skills with future industry and economic development opportunities. The regional migration visas were welcome by many participants, however, there was concern about the definition of 'region' being expanded and towns and regions having to compete to attract people with areas such as the Gold Coast now being part of the definition of regional. Some believed that small towns and employers "would not stand a chance" of attracting the much needed population and skills to their town. A few believed that this would attract people to the regional centres just outside of the capital cities and have a skewed outcome. Some noted that there was lack of connectivity with economic and social development at the regional level and migrant settlement and identified that policies need to be more proactive in understanding regional economic and workforce dynamics and approaches in migrant settlement in a more planned and evidence based manner. Local policy makers identified the need for 'bottom up' approach to identifying regional needs and initiatives to attract migrants based on the needs of individual regions.

Participants identified the need for a specific regional/rural population focus in policy. As one participant noted "strong regional policies attract residents to live in regional towns and centres" (Industry peak body participant). The key features of such a policy/strategy that were included require greater evidence about economic corridors, infrastructure planning, integrated land use planning, appropriate amenities and services and environmental considerations. The need for proactive as opposed to reactive approaches to avoid congestion, ensure environmental sustainability and equitable (between urban-rural) services were voiced as critical. Additionally, building social capital, cultural, sporting and community services was seen as a key factor in population attraction. Some commented on the need for greater multicultural programs to ensure inclusive and welcoming communities in regional/rural Queensland. To maximise the benefits of migrant settlement in regional areas, there is a need for infrastructure such as communication networks, transportation and government services as well as empowering local communities to manage migrant settlement in their locality.

Lack of equitable public investment for the regions was also raised. Budgetary considerations, ensuring that the cost benefit analysis of investment is not slanted towards highly populated areas, recognition of full cost pricing of 'doing business in rural areas' and the need for the recognition of non-contestable and thin markets in rural areas as well as the need for fuller appraisal of indirect benefits of investment were identified as major considerations for policy and decision making. A number of participants identified that investment in regional infrastructure has not kept up to date with the current population needs in the region and a population strategy would need to identify critical infrastructure issues. Service parity particularly in areas such as health, human/social services and cultural development is required for policy focus.

There was a variety of policy issues in relation to the environmental sustainability and population policy. Many participants identified the need for more effective planning in relation to natural resources such as water. The new opportunities through technologies needed to be identified in relation to population and sustainability. Market failures were seen to demonstrate the role for government and policy making in relation to the environment and population. The increased impact of drought and disaster risk planning and management was identified as key factors to be considered in environmental issues. Finally, while a

small proportion of participants objected to future population growth based on environmental factors, majority identified that it was not only an issue of what proportion of growth but rather the distribution, management and integration of population policy with other areas of policy.

Participants commented on the fragmented nature of government relationships across the jurisdictions and the lack of integrated approaches to policy and other issues. For example, the majority (over 70%) of participants were not aware of the recent Australian Government population strategy and were not engaged in any policy consultations. Discussions with participants revealed that many Local Government and some State Government agencies (i.e. agencies outside of the intergovernmental relations) were not aware or engaged with the recent national population strategy. A local government representative stated, “local government can do a lot to attract and more importantly retain populations moving to the regions. Yet we are often left out of discussions by the Federal and State Governments” (Mayor in rural Shire). Similarly, many of the industry and regional economic development organisations were not involved in population discussions. There was a strong call for both proactive and integrated approaches to population development in regional/rural Queensland. Additionally, participants commented that population policies required long term thinking and policy making. This was contrary to our three year federal political cycles which encouraged short-term decision making.

A number of participants commented on the polarizing nature of population debates and the need to have more positive and bi-partisan approaches. Key areas of community polarisation included immigration and the environment where the polarized views were particularly driven by politicians. The overall impact was the stifling of debate and the positioning of no compromise position. An additional factor was the vocal voices of people who do not live in the regions influencing government about policy matters relating to the regions. Participants acknowledged the need for positive messaging about regions as liveable places. The need for a strategic approach to population was identified as competition across regions/towns to attract people and divisions due to polarization were likely to undermine policy efforts and lead to distorted development.

Many participants identified the need for bottom up, place-based approach to population to ensure the aspirations of the regions are met via population policy considerations, e.g. match with workforce and industry needs and building communities. Some identified the need to tap into local energy, leadership and engaging in influencing.

3.4 Need for a Queensland Population Policy

Majority of the participants (over 85%) identified the need for a specific population policy for Queensland. They believed that the development of a population strategy for Queensland will set out a vision for the major regions of Queensland, provide an evidence base for decision making, identify environmental constraints, encourage innovation and connect economic and workforce development. One participant stated the population policy considerations need to “go beyond just mapping/forecasting demographics and need to include: causes and consequences of population change; establish medium term goals for population size and growth; examine distribution trends and opportunities to modify them; and identify possible levers to achieve the changes required” (Regional development practitioner).

Other key points that were emphasized for a Queensland population policy were:

- Ensuring a vision with an explicit statement regarding regions for development and to look beyond South East Queensland;
- Take a place-based approach for population and migration to capture the dynamics and needs of each region in line with the State Policy, ensuring it is bottom up and is connected to transition, change and unique characteristic of each regional location;

- Coordinated: three tiers of government, regional bodies and major industries;
- Integrated across policy areas such as infrastructure, education, health and economic development.
- Consideration of a population strategy across Northern Australia landscape as northern Qld can otherwise miss out on potential opportunities;
- Identify the range of policy levers e.g. payroll tax concessions, support for industries to move to the regions, move beyond modest grants for innovation, attract small -medium enterprises through relocation support, tax concessions to regional areas, decentralisation of government services, incentives to resettle in regions;
- Explicit and assisted pathways of settlement for immigrants into the regions;
- The need to address key infrastructure and service issues: roads, transport, housing, digital infrastructure, services; and
- Mitigation of key environmental impacts.

The feedback from demonstrates that population is an important issue for policy and has identified the complexity of key issues to be considered.

4. Population Policy Considerations

4.1 Nature of Population Policy

The development of contemporary population policy is a complex area of governance requiring consideration of a myriad range of factors. This also require a definition of population policy:

“... it may be defined as measures to achieve a particular population target or goal; a particular national total; a particular distribution; a particular structure or composition; a particular growth rate. This approach assumes that population variables (e.g. nuptiality, fertility, migration) can be manipulated through policy measures to achieve goals which society at large, or its government on its behalf, believes desirable and attainable “(Borrie 1975:297).

Allen (2018:30) argues that population policy is: “a whole-of-government approach, reflecting population-related interdependencies across government departments, is required to achieve an effective response to the complex social issues of population”. The National Population Council and the Australian Population and Immigration Council saw population growth and policy as a process for achieving other desirable objectives including:

- National independence and security;
- Economic growth and full employment to help achieve and acceptable standard of living for all.
- Good relations with other countries;
- Meeting our international obligations;
- Equality of opportunity for all persons without discrimination;
- A nationally cohesive and democratic society; and
- Preservation and improvement of the environment (National Population Council 1991:1).

The Productivity Commission (2011) argues that governments have a choice of ‘proactive’ or ‘reactive’ policies. In the context of population, proactive policies are those seeking to influence the rate, composition, and geographical distribution of population growth. Examples of proactive policy are the immigration program and regional development policies that attempt to draw population away from large cities, are another example. ‘Reactive’ policies are designed to address the impacts of given population growth, rather than address that growth directly. For instance, investing in infrastructure to respond to the additional

demands of population growth. Although recommending that policymakers should adopt the mix of proactive and reactive policies that maximises net benefits to the community, the Commission identifies that choices can be constrained if some policies are infeasible, too costly or there is domestic resistance (Productivity Commission 2011:250).

The ability of governments to influence population via policy is a debated topic area. For example, it is suggested that natural increase is much more difficult to influence through policy. For example, it is argued that the effects of targeted policies adopted in Australia to increase fertility, such as the Baby Bonus, is likely to have been modest (Lattimore and Pobke 2008). Others argue that the Australian fertility rates have remained high relative to other OECD countries due to government supportive policies (McDonald 2018). Given the modest or slower impact of policy on natural increases in population, the main population policy lever is immigration policy, as government is able to establish planning levels, have different migration visa categories, allow permanent and temporary populations and attract them to particular regions. They can also control the characteristics of who enters through immigration eligibility criteria (Productivity Commission 2010a). Other policy discussions centre on incentives and subsidies. The Productivity Commission (2019:10) argues that “the intended effect of place-based policies, such as the zone tax offset, the fringe benefits tax, remote area concessions, is to boost employment, population, and output in the target regions”. The Commission points out that the extent to which they actually achieve this goal will depend on such factors as the size of the incentives relative to incomes and living costs, public knowledge of the incentives, and the degree to which employers are able to capture the benefits of the tax concessions. The Productivity Commission is currently conducting an inquiry into remote area tax concessions and payments with the final report to be available in 2020. Participants in the stakeholder consultations also noted the success of programs by the health, education and police departments to attract staff to rural and regional areas via incentives and suggested these incentives should be expanded to other areas.

While the debate continues on what are the most effective population policy levers, there is agreement about the need for coordination in the implementation of policy. As policy impacts on many portfolio areas of government, coordination of effort is difficult. However, if coordination does not happen, it results in fragmentation, siloing and competing measures. Therefore, “a framework for the implementation of a whole-of-government population policy requires appropriate administrative structures enabling flexibility, coherence, and communication across siloed government departments” (Allen 2018:30). Establishing ‘supportive architecture’ is critical to maximise whole-of-government approach and ‘establishing coherence between institutional and operational level action’ is critical to success of policies (Carey et al 2016 183-184).

4.2 Population Targets

There has been calls for the Australian Government (and indeed more regional areas) to set population targets (Australian Government 2011). It has been argued that population targets can be beneficial because they signal action and useful in setting expectations with stakeholders (Taylor & Carson 2018). Respective Australian Governments have stayed away from setting population targets or goals in policy. This is because there is still no way of defining an appropriate and nationally acceptable goal and what is ‘optimum’ or ‘desirable’ is complex and contested. Also, setting targets may detract from the importance of sustainability and community well-being in the population discussion.

As noted by the National Population Council (1991:1) “even if a goal is accepted, the demographic and political consequences of measures applied to reach the goal are likely to prove very uncertain and very unpredictable”. The Australian Government notes that the pressure to provide such a target is often based on a belief that there must be a measurable, finite limit to the capacity of the country to provide resources for its population. There has been a reluctance to set population targets as aspects of population growth,

such as changes in fertility rates, longevity, or emigration, cannot be accurately predicted nor directly controlled into the future. Government cannot always influence NOM, e.g. Australians departing or returning or the number of migrations from New Zealand. Moreover, the Australian Government has identified the constraining nature of a population target. One key area in which adoption of a population target would be in limiting the use of the migration program as a policy lever to address emerging skills gaps and labour shortages (Australian Government 2011) .

5. Existing Government Policy Frameworks

The contemporary policy landscape in Australia is ‘congested space’ with numerous policies, strategies and initiatives (Babacan & Dale 2019 a). This section outlines the relevant government policies and initiatives across three tiers of government relating to population policy.

5.1 Australian Government

5.1.1. Key Inquiries and Commissioned Studies

Over the decades, numerous policies, reviews, inquiries have been undertaken relevant to population. The following table outlines of the key documents over the years:

1975	<i>The National Population Inquiry</i>	National Population Council
1978	<i>Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants</i>	Senate, Australian Government
1989	<i>National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia</i>	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
1991	<i>Population Issues and Australia's Future</i>	National Population Council
1994	<i>Australia's Population 'Carrying Capacity',</i>	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Long Term Strategies
2003	<i>Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants</i>	Department of Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
2005	<i>Economic Impacts of Migration and Population Growth</i>	Productivity Commission
2004	<i>Review of Skilled Migration</i>	House of Representatives Committees Joint Standing Committee on Migration
2009	<i>Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave</i>	Productivity Commission
2010	<i>Caring for Older Australians</i>	Productivity Commission
2011	<i>National Urban Policy</i>	Department of Infrastructure & Transport
2011	<i>Sustainable Population? Key Policy Issues</i>	Productivity Commission
2011	<i>Australia's Urban Water Sector</i>	Productivity Commission
2011	<i>Caring for Older Australians</i>	Productivity Commission
2013	<i>Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation</i>	Productivity Commission
2014	<i>Geographic Labour Mobility</i>	Productivity Commission
2015	<i>Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia</i>	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
2016	<i>Migrant Intake into Australia</i>	Productivity Commission
2017	<i>Transitioning Regional Economies</i>	Productivity Commission
2017	<i>Regions 2030</i>	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development

2017	<i>Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education</i>	Department of Education
2018	<i>National Water Reform</i>	Productivity Commission
2018	<i>Regional Development and Decentralisation</i>	The Select Committee on Regional Development and Decentralisation
2018	<i>Expert Review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training System</i>	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
2019	<i>Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Strategies in Regional Australia</i>	Joint Standing Committee on Migration
2019	<i>Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas</i>	Senate Select Committee Inquiry
2019	<i>Effectiveness of the Australian Government's Northern Australia Agenda</i>	Senate Select Committee Inquiry
2019	<i>Inquiry into Regional Australia</i>	Select Committee on Regional Australia
2019	<i>Population Roundtable</i>	Treasury
2019	<i>Remote Area Tax Concessions and Payments</i>	Productivity Commission
2019	<i>The Review of Senior Secondary Pathways into Work, Further Education and Training</i>	Education Ministers Council
2019	<i>The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety</i>	Royal Commission, Australian Government
2019	<i>Planning for Australia's Future Population</i>	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

Table 9: List of Government Inquires, Reviews and Commissioned Work

Table 9 demonstrates the importance of population and the volume of work that the Australian Government has undertaken over the years.

5.1.2 Australian Government Population Policies

Population planning and policies have been part of various policies since Federation. In recent times, the Labor Government adopted the policy titled *Sustainable Australia – Sustainable Communities Strategy* in 2011. The Strategy had three pillars and a number of focus areas as summarized in the figure below:

Economic Prosperity

Building skills base and enhancing labour force participation; & planning infrastructure for connected communities

Liveable Communities

Liveable urban communities; meeting housing needs; social inclusion and service delivery reform; embracing diversity; closing the gap for Indigenous Australians, addressing health needs; and support for ageing population.

Environmental Sustainability

Resilient landscapes and communities; climate change and carbon emissions; water for liveable communities and industries; securing food production

Figure 5: Summary of Sustainable Australia-Sustainable Communities Strategy

Source: Australian Government 2011.

A number of measures were identified under enhancing urban liveability, promoting regional development and measuring and reporting sustainability, and digital economy (Australian Government 2011: 68-80). Making regional areas more attractive places to live, investments in regional infrastructure, attraction of skilled migrants to regional areas feature in a central manner in the Strategy.

The **current population policy**, *Planning for Australia's Future Population*, was launched by the Prime Minister on September 2019. The key thrust of the program is tackling the impact of increasing population in congested cities and backing smaller cities and regions looking for greater growth. The policy was developed following a forum led by the Treasurer. The Inter-governmental working party from State/Territory governments' were also involved. The key areas of focus and initiatives in the policy are:

- ➔ **Migration:** Reducing the migration cap by 15% and incentivising more new migrants to settle outside the big cities where there are jobs and services. The key initiatives are reducing the migration ceiling from 190,000 to 160,000 places; introducing two new regional visas for skilled workers requiring them to live and work in regional Australia for three years before being able to access permanent residence. 23,000 places will be set aside for these regional visas; introducing new tertiary scholarships to attract Australian and international students to study in regional Australia (\$15,000 scholarships will be available to more than 1000 domestic and international students each year) and giving international students studying at regional universities access to an additional year in Australia on a post-study work visa.
- ➔ **Congestion:** Addressing congestion on our roads and trains by better connecting regional centres with fast rail; investing \$75 billion in road, rail and air infrastructure across the country; and investing more in congestion-busting infrastructure through the \$1 billion Urban Congestion Fund.
- ➔ **Coordination:** Planning for the future by working more closely with state and territory governments to match infrastructure with local population need. Key areas of focus are population management as a fixture of future COAG discussions with the adoption of a bottom-up approach and continuing

to deliver new City Deals and Regional Deals to ensure three levels of government working together (Australian Government 2019c).

- ➔ *Regional Distribution*: The Policy's major focus is on population development in regional Australia including the focus on skills in the region, attracting people to the regions, investing in connectivity of the regions.

Regional Investment Focus

- Regional Deals.
 - Decentralisation agenda.
 - Designated Area Migration Agreements.
 - Regional provisional visas.
 - Destination Australia Scholarships.
 - Extending the Temporary Graduate visa for regional students.
 - \$4.5 billion Roads of Strategic Importance.
 - Fast rail to connect Australia's regions to the cities (Australian Government 2019c)
-
- ➔ *Population Centre*: Establishing a *Centre for Population* is also a measure in the current policy. The need for the Centre was to ensure that there is a central, consistent and expert perspective on population growth. The Centre located within Treasury was launched in July 2019 and will employ approximately 20 people. It is anticipated that the Centre will assist in collaboration on population planning across Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local governments. The Centre will provide data and policy analysis to support the following broader objectives:
 1. To support Australia's economic growth.;
 2. To ensure the liveability of our cities and ongoing strength of our regions;
 3. To achieve a more optimal settlement pattern in Australia; and
 4. To ensure Australia remains united and together as a people.

The priority area of work is listed as the development of a National Population and Planning Framework, improving regional analysis, better data and forecasting and research (Centre for Population 2019).

5.1.3 Immigration Policy

The Migration Program is 160,000 places for the 2019-2020 year. Skilled migration is the largest component of the Migration Program with 108,682 places in 2019-20, i.e. 69.5% of the program (Department of Home Affairs 2019b). The other components are family and special eligibility. The Refugee and Humanitarian program is separate to the Migration Program with 18,750 places allocated in 2018-19 (Department of Home Affairs 2019c).

Migration to the regions can be permanent or temporary. The following classes of visa categories are available: for regional areas

- Working Holiday Visas.
- Temporary Skill Shortage visa (subclass 482) – a temporary, skilled visa.
- Temporary Activity visa (subclass 408) – a temporary visa for specialist work.

- Regional Skilled (Provisional) (subclass 489) - a temporary, regional skilled visa.
- Temporary Work (short stay specialist) visa (subclass 400) – a short-term visa for specialist work.
- Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186) – a permanent, skilled visa.
- Seasonal Worker Programme (subclass 403) – a temporary visa for seasonal work.
- Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (subclass 187) – a permanent skilled visa.
- Pacific Labour Scheme (subclass 403) – a temporary visa for low and semi-skilled, non-seasonal work (Department of Home Affairs 2019d).

A new skilled regional provisional visa was announced as part of the 2019-2020 Budget for skilled migrants, and dependent family members, who want to live and work in Australia. There will be two new skilled regional provisional visas introduced in November 2019:

- Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) visa: for people sponsored by an employer in regional Australia.
- Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa: for people who are nominated by a State or Territory government or sponsored by an eligible family member to live and work in regional Australia.

Holders of the new skilled regional provisional visas will need to live and work in regional Australia. Visas have a validity period of up to five years. Holders of the new skilled regional provisional visas will be able to apply for a Permanent Residence visa. The Permanent Residence (Skilled Regional) Visa will commence in November 2022. To be eligible for permanent residence, holders of the new skilled regional provisional visas will need to demonstrate they have lived and worked in regional Australia for a period of three years before they are eligible for permanent residence. This new visa will replace the existing regional visa provision (Australian Government 2019a).

The benefits of these visas for regional Australia are articulated by the Australian Government. The benefits include employers having greater access to a wider range of occupational skills, priority visa processing arrangements for employer sponsored applications to address workforce shortages and additional points for regional nomination or sponsorship provide an extra incentive for potential migrants to consider settling in regional Australia. (Department of Home Affairs 2019d). There are also additional options for international students who graduate from a regional institution. This initiative provides for an additional Temporary Graduate visa with an extra year of post-study work rights and to live in a regional area.

Skilled migration nominations are assessed against three occupation lists in demand including

- The Short-Term Skilled Occupation List;
- The Medium and Long-Term Strategic Skills List; and
- The Regional Occupation List (Department of Home Affairs 2019).

The list provides occupations in demand under the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) code and specifies the skill level of jobs, qualifications and/or experience needed to work in occupations. There are 673 occupations listed at March 2019 of which 77 are listed under the Regional Occupational List. The list of occupations in the regions is presented in Appendix 4. These occupations are consistent with skills needs in regional areas, including agricultural occupations, trade occupations and professional occupations (Department of Home Affairs 2019a).

The Pacific Labour Program offers two categories of visa to selected countries from the Pacific Islands and East Timor: a Seasonal Worker Program for nine months and Pacific Labour Stream which enables stay up to three years (Department of Home Affairs 2019 e). The Australian Government introduced \$2.9 million over

two years from 2018-19 to implement a 12-month pilot program (the Pilot) to improve small farmers' access to workers through the existing *Seasonal Worker Programme* (SWP). The Pilot will simplify SWP requirements to make it easier and quicker for labour hire approved employers under the SWP to recruit and move seasonal workers between smaller farms. The Pilot will be implemented in up to three regions (Australian Government 2019a:151).

5.1.4 Other Policies and Initiatives

Population policies cut across many government portfolio areas. The total efforts across relevant agencies respond to specific population trends or key issues relevant to population. This section highlights some initiatives in the Australian Government relevant to population policy considerations:

- *National Women's Health Strategy 2020-2030*: Five priority areas are identified to focus on maternal and women's health including sexual and reproductive health; healthy ageing; chronic conditions and preventive health; mental health; health impacts of violence against women and girls. The Strategy aims for an increase access to information, diagnosis, treatment and services for sexual and reproductive health; enhance and support health promotion and service delivery for preconception, perinatal and maternal health (Department of Health 2018). Please refer to Appendix 2 for details of the Strategy.
- *Newborn Upfront Payment* is a lump sum payment of \$560 per child when a child is born or comes into a parent's care and *Newborn Supplement* is an ongoing payment for up to 13 weeks. Both payments are not taxable. These types of payments target the fertility rate through direct cash payments to incentivise families to have children.
- *Parental Leave Scheme* gives eligible working mothers the financial payment to stay at home with their newborn baby or adopted child for 18 weeks at the rate of the national minimum wage. *Dad and Partner Pay* provides eligible working dads or partners with up to two weeks' pay at the rate of the national minimum wage.
- *Family Tax Benefit* (FTB) is a payment that helps eligible families with the cost of raising children. It is made up of two parts: FTB Part A – is paid per-child and the amount paid is based on the family's circumstances. FTB Part B – is paid per-family and gives extra help to single parents and some couple families with one main income. FTB can be paid either fortnightly or as a lump sum at the end of the financial year.
- *Regional Jobs and Investment Packages* is a \$222.3 mil investment introduced by the Australian Government in 2018 that is intended to create jobs and drive economic growth in 10 regions by diversifying regional economies, stimulating long term growth, delivering sustainable employment and enabling entry to new markets and sectors. Three pilot regions were selected in Queensland: Bowen Basin, Tropical North Queensland and Wide Bay Burnett.
- *Career Transition Assistance* (2018-2020). Career Transition Assistance is one of the key measures in the Australian Government's \$110 million Mature Age Employment package announced in the 2017-18 Federal Budget. The Program is based on findings by the Department Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business. . The findings from the research was that employers believed mature age job seekers needed to ensure their skills are up-to-date and there is also the need to improve their basic computer

and technology skills. The Program will be rolled out nationally following pilots in five sites and will focus on tailored career assistance to understand and capitalise on job opportunities and to develop functional digital literacy and confidence in using different types of technology.

- *National Labour Hire Registration Scheme*- The Federal Government will provide \$26.8 million over four years from 2019-20 (and \$6.2 million per year ongoing), including \$1.0 million over four years in capital funding, to establish a National Labour Hire Registration Scheme (the Scheme) to protect vulnerable workers, including migrant workers. The Scheme will make it mandatory for labour hire operators in high-risk sectors, such as horticulture, cleaning, meat processing and security sectors, to register with the Australian Government as a labour hire operator. The Scheme will provide visibility of businesses operating in the labour supply industry, introduce a pre-entry requirement to those operating as a labour hire business, help to reduce worker exploitation, and drive behavioural change in the industry. The cost of administering the Scheme will be recovered from the registered labour hire operators through prescribed annual fees and charges.
- *Building Better Regions Fund* is a \$641.6 million program that provides grants for projects in regional areas. The purpose of the fund is to invest in projects that create jobs, drive economic growth and build stronger communities in the region. The program is funded under two streams, one that supports new or the upgrade of infrastructure and the other is for community building activities.
- *The Regional Growth Fund* is a \$10million investment that will run over four years from 2018-19 to 2021-22. The objectives of the Program are to provide funding for major transformational projects that support long term economic growth and create jobs in regions, including those undergoing structural adjustment. Through this Program, it is expected that investment will be leveraged from the private sector, not-for-profit organisations and other levels of government in the region.
- *Youth Employment Package* is a suite of activities that aim to give young seekers employability skills and work experience to get a job. Youth Jobs PaTH is a \$840 million program that enable employers to hire young people through three stages: Prepare, Trial and Hire or for young people to engage in entrepreneurship and self-employment. *The Youth Employment Strategy*, as part of this package and is a \$331 million program that helps young people at risk of long term unemployment.
- *Skilling Australians Fund*-a national partnerships agreement between Commonwealth and States to provide funding to support increase skills outcomes for industry. It funds a range of VET programs and additional places for traineeships and apprenticeships. In 2017-18, \$187 million was provided nationally with Queensland receiving \$39.4 million.
- *National Partnership Agreements and Specific Purpose Payment* define the objectives, outcomes, outputs and performance indicators, and clarify the roles and responsibilities that guide the Commonwealth and the States in the delivery of services in key sectors including education, health, transport and housing.
 - National Healthcare Agreement.
 - National Health Reform Agreement.
 - National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development.
 - National Disability Agreement.
 - National Indigenous Reform Agreement.
 - National Partnership Agreement on Land Transport Infrastructure Projects.
 - National Housing and Homelessness Agreement.

- The National School Reform Agreement.

5.2 Queensland Government

While population issues are critical to policy in Queensland, there has been no explicit Queensland State Population Policy. In 2010 the LGAQ commissioned a Public Inquiry into the Need for a State Population Policy and argued in various public submission the need for a State population policy. The Queensland Government has a wide range of policy and programs that are relevant to population policy. This section provides highlights of relevant Queensland Government policies.:

5.2.1 Queensland Government Policy Frameworks

Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities: This is one of Queensland Government's key document signature policy documents. This is an overarching document with six pillars which focus all Queensland Government efforts:

- Create Jobs in a Strong Economy;
- Give All Our Children a Great Start;
- Keep Queenslanders Healthy;
- Keep Communities Safe;
- Protect the Great Barrier Reef; and
- Be a Responsive Government.

Advancing Queensland Priorities does not make mention of population specifically. However, a range of initiatives relating to work, industry attraction, education and training and regional development has been implemented.

The Queensland Plan: An overarching Plan which was developed following extensive consultation and engagement with over 80,000 people across the State. The Plan has nine foundation areas are:

1. Education
2. Community/making connections
3. Regions
4. Economy
5. Health and Wellbeing
6. Environment
7. People
8. Infrastructure
9. Governance (Queensland Government 2014).

Our regions also face challenges in the 21st century, particularly in maintaining a critical mass of population in the face of a worldwide trend of migration to large metropolitan cities. Success in reversing this trend will bring its own challenges of balancing population growth with quality of life in regional centres.

Seeking to double Queensland's regional population in 30 years....

The Queensland Plan, Queensland Government 2014: 13, 35)

The Plan recognises population issues and sets a target for regional population growth. Key areas in the Plan which focus on population are:

- *Vision:* Our state will be well planned with the right infrastructure in the right places, to support a population that has grown across every region (p.ii).
- *Regions:* We recognise the challenge population growth brings and will find ways to manage it.

Target No 8 sets a target for population growth for regional areas: Double the regional population outside South East Queensland within 30 years (p.4, 13).

- *People: Goal No 24:* Impacts of population growth are managed (p.5)
- *Education:* We will need more learning places and different ways to learn, as our population grows (p.19).
- *Infrastructure:* Goal No 8: Our infrastructure fits our changing population and demographics (p.5). Population growth and lifestyle changes are increasing demand for infrastructure and services at a time when much of our infrastructure is ageing and unable to cope with the pressure. We are using more electricity and water than ever before, we are travelling more, and more of us are connecting to the internet (p.5)
- *Environment:* Goal No 23: The Queensland environment faces increasing pressures from a growing population and thriving economy. At the same time, a healthy environment is integral to a strong economy and liveable society. As our population grows, we plan new developments that protect our environment (p.60)

The Plan also notes that “regional population growth is a fundamental indicator of the economic health of regions and their competitiveness as places to live, work and invest in. It provides a key measure for planning and development and is a proxy indicator for liveability” (Queensland Plan 2014:37). The Plan recognises factors to attract population to the regions. For example, housing affordability is identified as a key indicator of the liveability of regional centres; affordable housing is seen as central to being able to attract increased populations to regions and part of the critical infrastructure of local economies (p.38)

The *State Infrastructure Plan* (SIP) outlines the Queensland Government’s strategic direction for planning and prioritising the investment and delivery of infrastructure that supports growth, enables economic development and creates jobs. SIP recognises the role of population growth: “Accommodating future population and economic growth provides a challenge and an opportunity for all levels of government. Similarly, planning for and providing infrastructure to support a growing population, or as a catalyst for economic development, is a shared responsibility across all levels of government” (Queensland Government 2016:6). SIP maps out the need for future service demand based on expected population growth for South East Queensland (SEQ) and Regional Queensland as demonstrated in the figure below.

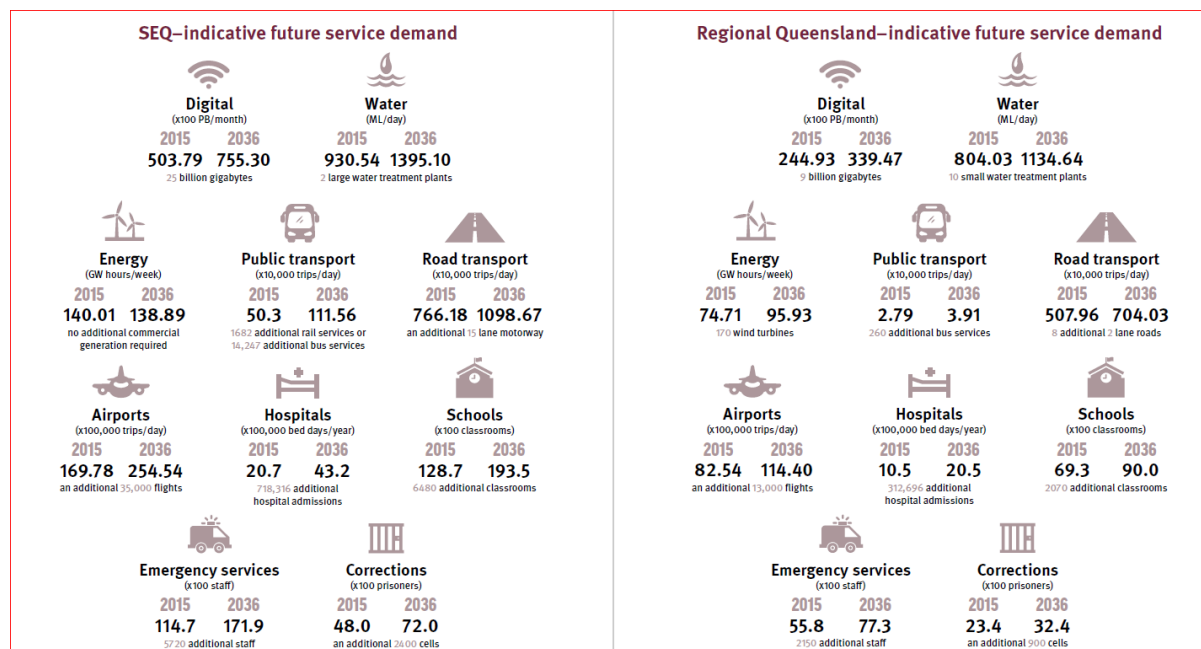


Figure 6: Indicative Future Service Demand
 Source: Queensland Government SIP, 2016:16-17.

Figure 6 shows that population growth to the year 2036 will be 7,095,179 people in Queensland (Queensland Government 2016:15). The increase in population is expected to be accompanied by an increased demand for essential services such as education, water, energy, transport, digital connectivity and health and human services, transport. The Queensland Government points out that these figures are intended to be “illustrative only and the examples of additional infrastructure/services required are representative of the additional demand, rather than a suggested solution” (Queensland Government 2016:15).

In 2019, the Queensland Government released *The Framework for Place-Based Approaches*, which outlines the importance of community, industry and all levels of government working closely together to improve community wellbeing via place-based approaches. This Framework is an important recognition of Queensland Governments move towards community-driven, locally and place-based solutions to complex social problems (Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors 2019).

SIP has an allocation of \$49.5 billion infrastructure program and \$12.9 billion in this Budget. Around 60% of the 2019-2020 funding is provided to projects outside of Greater Brisbane including *Building our Regions, Works for Queensland, North West Mineral Province, Port of Townsville and Townsville Stadium, Local Fare Scheme, support for drought and flood impacted rural industries*. The planning and prioritisation of infrastructure projects are informed by State Infrastructure Plan (in 2 parts A & B), Corridor Plans, State strategic infrastructure documents, regional plans, and local government plans. A diagram of the complex planning and coordination process is presented in Appendix 3. The SIP has identified expected population growth for each region.

Queensland Government’s Multicultural Policy promotes an inclusive, harmonious and united community for Queensland. The Policy focuses on three priorities for culturally diverse communities and Queensland as a whole:

- Achieving culturally responsive government.
- Supporting inclusive, harmonious and united communities.

- Improving economic opportunities (DLGRMA 2018).

5.2.2. Queensland Government Initiatives

Under the policy frameworks outlined in the section above, the Queensland Government has numerous programs and services in place relevant to population change. Some of these include:

- *Backing Queensland Jobs* -is a program of activities to stimulate the economy and support the business ecosystem. A range of budget initiatives are included to support small to medium size businesses including payroll tax rebates, work cover premium discount and apprenticeship payroll rebate. Rural Queensland small businesses are recognised with measures for payroll tax rebates in rural and regional areas. The 2019-20 Queensland budget identifies that 60% of the \$12.9 billion allocated for infrastructure projects in this Budget under SIP for projects outside of Greater Brisbane, supporting 25,500 jobs. Major infrastructure projects are identified in Townsville, Mackay, North West Minerals Province and Far North Queensland.
- *Advancing Queensland Initiative* is a program aimed at innovation and knowledge creations for entrepreneurship, research, commercialisation, new business development. The funding increased from \$185 million 2015 to \$755 million in 2019. The purpose mentions creations of jobs for the present and future although no specific reference is made to rural Queensland, numerous projects have been funded in rural and regional Queensland.
- *Building our Regions* is a \$445 million targeted regional infrastructure program for local government projects. The program provides funding for critical infrastructure that meet the specific needs of regional communities and supports economic development, including generating jobs, in regional areas of the Queensland.
- *Works for Queensland* is a \$600 million program that supports regional Councils to undertake job-creating, maintenance and minor infrastructure projects. \$200 million was allocated to 65 Councils for 2016–17, \$200 million for 2017–19, and \$200 million has been approved to extend the W4Q program until 2020–21.
- *Jobs and Regional Growth Fund*. The \$175 million program aims to help stimulate private sector investment and creating jobs across the State. The Fund focuses on rural and regional areas to facilitate private sector projects that create employment and economic growth opportunities in regional areas. Financial assistance ranging from \$100,000 to over \$10 million is available, assessed on a case by case basis and requires a co-contribution.
- The *Regional Skills Investment Strategy* (RSIS) is a \$9 million initiative funded over four years (2019-2022) that supports selected regional communities to identify current and emerging jobs in key industries and ensure there is a supply of skilled local people to meet this demand. 18 regions have been identified. RSIS will bridge the gap between existing training opportunities provided through the Queensland Government's Annual VET Investment Plan and current workforce skill needs in targeted regions.
- A range of health, education and community services strategies in the area of children and youth services, health services, women, disability and seniors services. Many of the initiatives have a regional aspect. The State Budget documents identify *Service Delivery Statements* for relevant portfolios. *Enhancing Regional Hospital Program* is providing major upgrades to two hospitals

(Roma and Gladstone) and other upgrades to Atherton and Mareeba as part of regional health infrastructure.

- Environmental protection and waste management programs including \$12.5 million to improve amenities and visitor facilities under the *Revitalising National Parks* initiative, \$330 million, five-year allocation to protect the Great Barrier Reef, \$250 million to CleanCo for renewable energy generation, waste and recycling measure, biosecurity funding. (Queensland Government 2019a).
- *State Development Areas* (SDAs) are clearly defined areas of land established by the Coordinator-General to promote economic development in Queensland. There are 12 sites across Queensland, please refer to Appendix 4 for the detail of the sites. These areas concentration of industrial and economic activity which are proximity to railways, ports and major road networks. SDAs documents do not link the development to population.
- Range of industry attraction, economic development and industry support programs that promote economic development and job creation. Key industry priority areas are aerospace, advanced manufacturing, biofutures, biomedical, defence and mining, technology and services sectors. *The Advance Queensland Industry Attraction Fund* is a \$150 mil financial incentive to attract investment to Queensland.
- A *Designated Area Migration Agreement* (DAMA) is a formal agreement between the Australian Government and a regional, state or territory authority. It provides access to more overseas workers than the standard skilled migration program. A DAMA is a two-tier framework covering a defined regional area. The first tier is an overarching five-year deed of agreement with the region's representative. The second tier comprises individual labour agreements with employers under the settings of the head agreement for that region (Department of Home Affairs 2019g). There is only one DAMA in Queensland, for Far North Queensland (FNQ), based with the Cairns Chamber of Commerce.
- *Region specific initiatives*: The Queensland Government has a focus on the development of specific regional areas. These include *Advancing North Queensland* and *Strategic Blueprint for Queensland's North West Minerals Province*. These initiatives have specific focus on economic development and outlay infrastructure investment.

The section above highlights there are numerous policy, service delivery and specific initiatives within Queensland Government agencies that are relevant to population considerations. Many of the departments are trying to address population change in their portfolio areas. The key frameworks do not adequately provide an overarching structure or direction for managing population change in Queensland.

5.3 Population Strategies Other State/Territory Governments

Other States and Territories in Australia face similar population issues and policy deliberations. This section sets out the policy discussion from other jurisdictions.

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government has adopted the *Population Growth Strategy* in 2015 with a set target to grow the population to 650,000 people by 2050. It aims to drive economic growth, create jobs and improve the

standard of living for all Tasmanians. The Strategy outlines the Tasmanian Government's approach to growing our population in a balanced and sustainable way over the long term (Tasmanian Government 2015:1). It identifies 50 actions in three key areas:

- *Job creation and workforce development*: to facilitate job creation and identify current and future employment opportunities to inform investment in education and training, and migration attraction strategies. It aims to develop a model for future employment opportunities.
- *Migration*: actively pursue and facilitate overseas and interstate migration to Tasmania and encourage Tasmanians living elsewhere to come home. Specific migrant settlement programs and promoting diversity and multiculturalism.
- *Liveability*: build and promote Tasmania's liveability and foster a culture which is vibrant, inclusive, respectful and supportive.

The actions in the Strategy build on the Tasmanian Government's existing investment in initiatives to grow jobs and the economy (Tasmanian Government 2015).

Northern Territory (NT)

The Northern Territory *Population Growth Strategy 2018-2028* provides the framework for attracting people to the Territory and encouraging those already there to stay for the long term. The goal and target of the Strategy is to return the population growth rate to the historical long-run average of 1.4 per cent, from the recent low growth path of 0.6 per cent (NT Government 2018:4). The key focus of action is:

- Telling the modern Territory story.
- Attracting investment and creating jobs.
- Attracting and retaining migrants.
- Enhancing liveability.
- Understanding the drivers of population change.

The Strategy places emphasis on not only attracting but retaining of international and interstate migrants to NT. Citing research conducted by Charles Darwin University, it includes strategies to make people feel welcome and connected to the Territory within their first year or two of arrival in order to improve retention rates (cited in NT Government 2018:17).. The research also identifies that the tipping point for the retention of migrants is a stay of five years. NT Government offers financial incentives to people who migrate to the Northern Territory from interstate or overseas who are on the High Priority occupations listed on the Northern Territory Skilled Occupation Priority List. The following financial incentives have been made available from November 2018:

Type of Incentive	Details
<i>New Territory Relocation Bonus</i>	Cash payment to meet relocation and transition costs of up to: Singles = \$3000, Couples = \$6000, Families = \$7000
<i>Local Spending Benefit</i>	One payment of \$1250 after 6 months of living in the NT. This may be used for a range of local spending
<i>5-Year Retention Bonus</i>	Cash payment to eligible applicants after five years continuous residence, to be spent locally, for purposes that benefit a long-term resident: Singles = \$3000, Couples = \$6000, Families = \$7000

Table 10: Population Retention Incentives
Source: NT Government, 2018:17

The NT Government will invest \$50.4 million over two years to implement the Strategy, this is in addition to existing activities to implement targeted population growth initiatives. The NT Government estimates that if they grow at a long-term sustainable growth rate of 1.4 per cent, they will create more than 21,000 Territory jobs and add \$10.4 billion to the Territory economy over the decade from 2016-17 (NT Government 2018:11).

South Australia

The Economic and Finance Committee of the Parliament of South Australia held an inquiry into the economic contribution of migration to South Australia in August 2018. The key areas of focus are:

- The impact of migration and population growth to South Australia's productivity and economic performance.
- South Australia's long term population growth relative to other States in Australia over the past thirty years.
- Current programs in place to attract new migrants to South Australia, in both the private and public sector.
- Adequacy of available data on visa grants, migrant arrivals, and post-arrival settlement outcomes across all streams of permanent migrants, and opportunities for better integration of State and Commonwealth data-bases.
- The practical measures that could be implemented to attract and retain skilled migrants to South Australia, with particular regard to regional workforce shortages.
- Future opportunities to support population growth in South Australia (SA Parliament 2018).

The hearings are continuing into 2019 and a final report has not yet been released.

New South Wales (NSW)

In December 2018, the NSW Premier appointed an expert panel to develop a population policy for NSW. This is based on concerns over current high rates of population growth due to the success of NSW attracting a far greater share of total immigrants, putting more pressure on the State's infrastructure and resources. The Panel had not completed their work at the time of this report.

5.4 Local Government in Queensland

In the submission to the Treasurer's Forum on population, the ALGA pointed that it is essential for local governments have an active role in population planning and management working alongside the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments (ALGA 2019), identifying that local governments are about communities and places. The LGAQ (2010) commissioned a Public Inquiry on the Need for a State Population Policy in 2010. The Inquiry's recommendation was that

“The Queensland Government should develop a State population policy as mechanism to explain its vision on the way in which Queensland will grow in an environmentally, economically and socially sustainable manner “(LGAQ 2010:10).

The rationale for the need for a State population policy was that it would allow the Government to:

- Respond to community concerns
- Demonstrate how growth is to be managed (in scale, character and location)
- Respond to population ageing issues including encouragement of ongoing workforce participation
- Assess multiplier effects from new investment, across the State, and impacts from alternative policy options;
- Explore measures that can potentially regionalise growth from both direct and indirect demand for labour and hence for population;
- Identify actions that governments can and will take to support regionalisation as well as more sustainable development;
- Address matters such as the scale and character of labour market demand created by new investment across the State;
- Explore sources of labour supply to meet that demand, including the likely sources of migrant workers and the arrangements by which they are engaged;
- Input to a State Migration Plan to complement Federal initiatives; and
- Establish a framework for assessing progress to more sustainable, affordable and efficient growth outcomes. (LGAQ 2010:6).

There is a breadth of concern across local government areas in relation to population including rapid increase, slow increase, rapid decline and ageing population. Many have tried to address these concerns in relation to liveability, service levels, infrastructure, amenities and economic development. While cognisant of population projections, many of these do not target population management. There are several local governments that have identified population in their strategy documents as outlined below:

Cairns City Council: *Cairns Vision 2050* identifies population as a key area to address in developing Cairns into Australia's northern terminus. Among the challenges is dealing with significant population growth and identifying the most appropriate spatial pattern. Population considerations include security of future affordable energy supply, sufficient water supply and meeting health needs.

The Vision posits that a policy which supports population growth and migration to regional cities such as Cairns can be part of a solution which not only relieves the pressure on our nation's major capitals, but also supports continued economic development in Australia's regions. Cairns has an unique competitive advantages when it comes to attracting and retaining migrants including: an existing diverse and multicultural community and population, strong connectivity and accessibility by virtue of the city's well established international airport, low unemployment and a strong private and public investment pipeline, and a superior quality of life and liveability.

The document identifies the need for review of population and migration policy which should consider:

- Specific requirements for skilled migrants to settle in regional areas for fixed periods.
- Implementation of a Designated Area Migration Agreement for the Cairns Region.
- A widening of the list of occupations available for skilled migration to regional areas.
- Incentives and policy to encourage domestic relocation to regional areas.
- Government decentralisation. Support for the infrastructure and regional economic development initiatives needed to underpin regional employment and migration (both domestic and international) (Cairns Regional Council 2019).

Tablelands Regional Council: has adopted a *Population Attraction Strategy 2018-2022* arising from slow population growth rate, ageing population, outmigration of young people and attraction of a skilled workforce. The key focus areas are

- ♣ Attracting Families.
- ♣ Attracting Retirees.
- ♣ Attracting Migrants.

Key considerations include employment, liveability, infrastructure, economic development, temporary migrants (tourism), attracting researchers, weekenders and temporary workers. The key action for population growth are:

- Setting population growth targets.
- Identifying investments required.
- Managing risks.
- Developing appropriate linkages and partnerships including with other local governments (even Northern Australia), Federal and State Governments, industry and business groups, service agencies and others.
- Undertaking research.

Planning considerations are identified as:

- Available land/housing stock for sale.
- Available approved land for future sale.
- Infrastructure planning.

The Council notes the need to link with relevant Council strategies (e.g. health, community, economic development, assets). (TRC 2018).

Other Relevant Council Policies: A desk based search of numerous local government websites in Queensland did not reveal any other population policies by local government. Our research has identified that local governments have in place, as part of other policies, strategic directions and program initiatives relevant to population such as developing communities, building economies, land use planning, natural resources management, infrastructure planning, community facilities, and addressing demographic change. The Central Highlands Regional Council has taken a unique approach and has adopted the *Liveability Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2020*, with emphasis on liveability. The Strategy identifies a liveability profile for the local government area and focuses on population, employment socio economic status, cultural diversity education, income, infrastructure and migration. A number of key strategic directions for action are identified including urban design, natural environment and open space, vibrant spaces, connecting infrastructure, community facilities, and, investment and employment (Central Highlands Regional Council 2019).

6. Discussion and Recommendations

Australia's national development has had a distinctive pattern of settlement across the continent landscape. It presents a range of social, economic, infrastructural, and environmental challenges for the nation. These challenges will be intensified by population growth and decline dynamics across regions and generations. Future growth is likely to have differential impacts for metropolitan and regional/rural, and for inland and coastal areas. Population change has been a core issue for the major cities in Australia, creating concerns about access to affordable housing, suitable employment, infrastructure, and services; managing growth within environmental constraints; and the political management of popular anxieties around urban diversity

and consolidation (McQuirk & Argent 2011). For regional/rural areas issues have included outmigration of youth, declining population of inlands and fast coastal growth, demographic change including ageing profiles, environmental and economic challenges and growth management (McDonald 2018, RAI 2015). This paper has demonstrated the complex nature of issues facing population management and the need for appropriate collaborative place based policy and governance frameworks in the face of complex demographic, economic and environmental change.

The implications of population change are wide-ranging and long-lasting, impacting on growth and distribution. It impacts on planning in many areas such as housing, roads, health and social services, education, environment and all aspect of culture and lifestyle (Parr 2018:12). Queensland is the most decentralised State in Australia. (Queensland Government 2019b). Although the population patterns are similar to the national patterns, the distribution of population across the State is uneven. While South East Queensland is growing fast, regional Queensland shows uneven variability in population.

Queensland does not have an explicit population policy. There are a wide range of policies in place that are relevant to population considerations, but the main thrust of current Queensland Government policies relates to economic and jobs growth. The question facing policy consideration is whether a kind of 'muddling through' (Rothmayr A C., & Saint-Martin 2011) approach, aimed mainly at adapting to population trends in relation to other policy portfolios is adequate. It is identified that a lack of population policy is likely to distort the impacts of policies in other areas and result in uneven and unplanned development (Jones 1997, Parr 2018).

The key stakeholder consultation identified an overwhelming support for a population policy for Queensland. Key bodies such as the LGAQ have advocated for the introduction of a population policy for Queensland. The LGAQ Inquiry articulates the benefit of a population policy, as an overarching framework guiding Queensland policies for:

- Economic development;
- Regional development;
- Infrastructure provision;
- Environmental protection and improvement;
- Sustainable management of natural resources;
- Housing provision, technology, affordability and appropriateness; and
- Land assembly for comprehensive urban development (LGAQ 2010:7).

The main benefit of a population policy is that it can articulate a long term vision of development. A population policy for Queensland will enable improved approaches to growth management in both metropolitan and regional areas that mitigate negative impacts of growth. It will also provide a focus on the longer term and move away from short term decision making linked with political cycle. As outlined by the Queensland population inquiry "the population policy should be specific in a 15 year planning horizon with more general coverage of the issues in a 30 year period" (LGAQ 2010:7).

Recommendation 1: *That the Queensland Government consider the development of a placed-based State population strategy which sets a long term vision for Queensland.* The policy should consider:

- Identified priority corridors (or regions) of population attraction and growth across the State;
- Linkages of population with infrastructure, economic and service investments, aligning State Investment Plans with priority population locations;
- Population attraction strategies into the priority areas;
- Migrant attraction and settlement; and
- Mitigation of environmental impacts.

The policy needs to consider which areas to grow and how to modify some of the distributional trends; and what programmatic changes that would be required to achieve policy outcomes. There is a need to identify specific incentives for industry and individuals to invest in and move to priority regional areas. A place based approach works best as identified by the Productivity Commission (2017). *Some key principles that may work include:*

- Taking a coordinated, strategic approach led by the regional community;
- Building on a region's relative strengths (comparative advantage);
- Investing in the capacity of people in regional communities and the region's connections with other regions and markets; and
- Promoting sustainability, so that projects and programs are viable (Productivity Commission 2017: 121).

In the development of a population policy consideration needs to be given to vulnerability stages across the life stages particularly going from school to university; transitioning from not being part of a family to having children; progressing from early-career through mid-career into late-career; and transitioning from work to retirement (Taylor and Carson 2018:8)

Workforce considerations are critical to the future prosperity of Queensland. Typically, individual regions attract a label as either 'growth' or 'decline', and that label helps determine how they are treated in continuing academic research and in regional development policy (Carson et al 2016:381). Future workforce trends, skill disruption, and labour shortages are an important part of a population policy. Addressing regional workforce and skills shortages entails a complex interplay of macro-economic trends, social and demographic change and local/regional influencing factors. It requires focused effort in identifying and addressing shortfalls for demand for workers, for particular occupations and ensuring adequate supply of workers who are qualified, available and willing to work. Appropriate knowledge of industry needs at the granular level is critical. Joined up regional strategies for attracting and retaining people in the regions is needed. Malecki (2004) argues that competition for workers involves more than marketing the region itself, but rather needs enhancement of services and amenities that attract and retain workers. To achieve this in rural settings requires collaborative approaches across key stakeholders. There is a leadership role for government, industry and service providers to work together to develop appropriate place based strategies that enable workers to come and stay.

Recommendation 2: *Queensland Government develop a jobs and workforce strategy linked to an identified population strategy for metropolitan and regional areas, aligning jobs growth with population growth.*

This would entail detailed knowledge of regional industry and workforce needs and integrated development of policy and strategy based on needs of each region. As well as strategies for retention of young people in the regional workforce, education and training options in the regions, school-work connectivity, understanding transitioning economies and disruptions to works, and understanding the nature of workforce and skills shortages is fundamental.

The long-term benefits of migration to the regions is acknowledged. There are significant benefits if skilled immigrants can be attracted and have systems that are responsive to the economic and social conditions of improved policy processes (Productivity Commission 2016:41). In the context of regional labour markets, the concept of 'matching' the available supply of migrants and the workforce skill needs of regional Australia has long been recognised as a key element of effective population and labour market policy (LGAQ 2019). However, there is currently no systematic way for migrant workers to link up with rural employers, nor is there a systematic policy or integrated support mechanism to facilitate secondary migration away from metropolitan cities (RAI 2018:2). Queensland currently receives less of the permanent migration in the

skilled migration category. Recognising new forms of temporary mobility and factors influencing contemporary forms of internal and international migration is essential to formulate effective policies for sustainable development (RAI 2015:9).

Recommendation 3: *Queensland Government consider the development of a Regional Migration Settlement Plan with locally led workforce development and migration strategies.*

This Plan would need to be cognisant of economic, social and environmental potential of these areas to absorb any increase in population (Aust Gov 2017). It would also need to provide appropriate resources to support the development of ‘welcoming cities’ to enable appropriate settlement. It has been found that locally-led migration strategies have demonstrated their capacity to effectively overcome the barriers which are currently constraining the movement and settlement of migrants (RAI 2018).

Regions are dynamic and diverse with their unique patterns of development and change. In Australia, all three spheres of government are involved in rural/regional policy making. The system of governance influencing the policy landscape is ‘congested’ with a range of local, State and Australian government departments but also regional bodies, peak bodies and other relevant advocacy groups. The policy making takes place in a contested terrain of ideas, interests and power, woven in an intricate web of government, regional, industry and stakeholder relationships. Policy decision making is increasingly complex and responds to a wide range of factors such as global economics, technological change, environmental change and demands from regional communities for greater participation in decision making and accountability from governments (Babacan and Dale 2019a). The way regional/rural issues are positioned in policy making in Australia has been organic, fragmented, sometimes conflicted. In many cases, rural/regional policies have emerged as an ‘after-thought’ of other policies. Rural/regional policies have been developed through vacillating shifts from models of collaborative (devolved) to Federalist (centric) governance and policy mechanisms. Australia has a quite centralised and hierarchal system of governance, with increasingly centrist approaches by Commonwealth and State governments. This, however, is surrounded by an informal network of governance processes has grown to what Everingham (2009) calls ‘congested governance,’ resulting in ‘multiplicity of players having diffused responsibilities and blurred spatial, functional and sectoral boundaries’, with little formal decision-making power and a multi-scale informal and permeable systems of governance. There has been a lack of strategic focus on building integrated regional governance systems and processes. The future of successful rural/regional governance lies in the strengthening of integrated regional governance with greater decision making powers at the regional level, adaptive and flexible governance processes, flexibility in program delivery for regional parties, vertical and horizontal accountability and effective regional leadership (Eversole 217, Babacan and Dale 2019a).

Rural regional policy implementation and governance often involves many policy sectors, the issues are inter-related, and the scales are overlapping. The need for more strategic, coordinated and less fragmented policy design and intervention are critical to the development of rural/regional areas (Smith 2016, Pate et al 2016). New styles of collaborative, nurturing and catalysing leadership, with capacity to bring diverse stakeholders together, influence policy and bring about social and system change is critical (Hoppe and Reinelt 2010, Buultjens et al. 2012). The current population strategy at the national level followed a roundtable by the Treasurer in 2019. Our consultations revealed that many policy makers were not aware and not involved. The local government submissions to various relevant inquiries continuously point out the important role that local government plays in the delivery of population strategies (LGAQ 2019, ALGA 2019).

Recommendation 4: *The Queensland Government develop an integrated policy architecture and appropriate institutional and governance arrangements to enable multi-dimensional and cross sectoral coordination in relation to cross-cutting issues in population policy.*

The current policy and program landscape is characterised by complexity- woven in an intricate web of government, regional, industry and stakeholder relationships which are made more complex by different roles and authorities hold across the various jurisdictional arrangements. This has resulted in policy and program challenges including:

- Poor or inconsistent definitions being used to underpin policy making
- Fragmentation, duplication, and conflicting approaches
- Lack of clarity of policy objectives in relation workforce development
- Lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities
- Lack of common geographic regions
- Lack of an evidence base and research
- Lack of evaluation and knowledge of policy impacts (Babacan et al 2019)

Overcoming fragmentation and integrated approaches are critical to population policy. Coordination across government and key sectors is necessary in order to assess and anticipate population trends, manage population growth and develop policy on a consistent basis. There is a need for integrated population policy architecture which enables cross jurisdictional and multi-sectoral (e.g. regional bodies, education and service providers, key employers, other stakeholder) joined up approaches. This coordination should consider integration of population policies with other State policies including education, economic, health, environment and other relevant policies. This is critical as no single agency has sufficiently wide scope of activity to oversee population policy and understand the extent to which population issues permeate across programs of agencies (Jones 1997).

Place based approaches to regional population policy development and implementation are fundamental. The best practice in rural/regional policy espouses a number of principles including strategic and coordinated policies with coherence, building on a region's strengths and assets, recognising the diversity of regional aspirations, building capabilities of leaders, managers and institutions, encouraging connectivity, cross sectoral and multidisciplinary, place based and devolved authority and resources (Eversole 2017, Productivity Commission 2017, OECD 2016, Smith 2016).

Conclusion

Population dynamics, the size, growth, composition and distribution, are going to be crucial to the prosperity and wellbeing of Queensland now and for future generations. How we manage population growth and development is an important policy consideration.

The need for of multi-dimensional, multi-scalar, cross institutional and diverse stakeholder rural/regional policy and governance which take a more adaptive and integrative approach is being articulated strongly by scholars and practitioners (Brown& Bellamy 2010, Pape et al 2016). It is fundamentally critical to take a collaborative approach to policy development and ensuring strong regional participation in the development and implementation of a population policy for Queensland.

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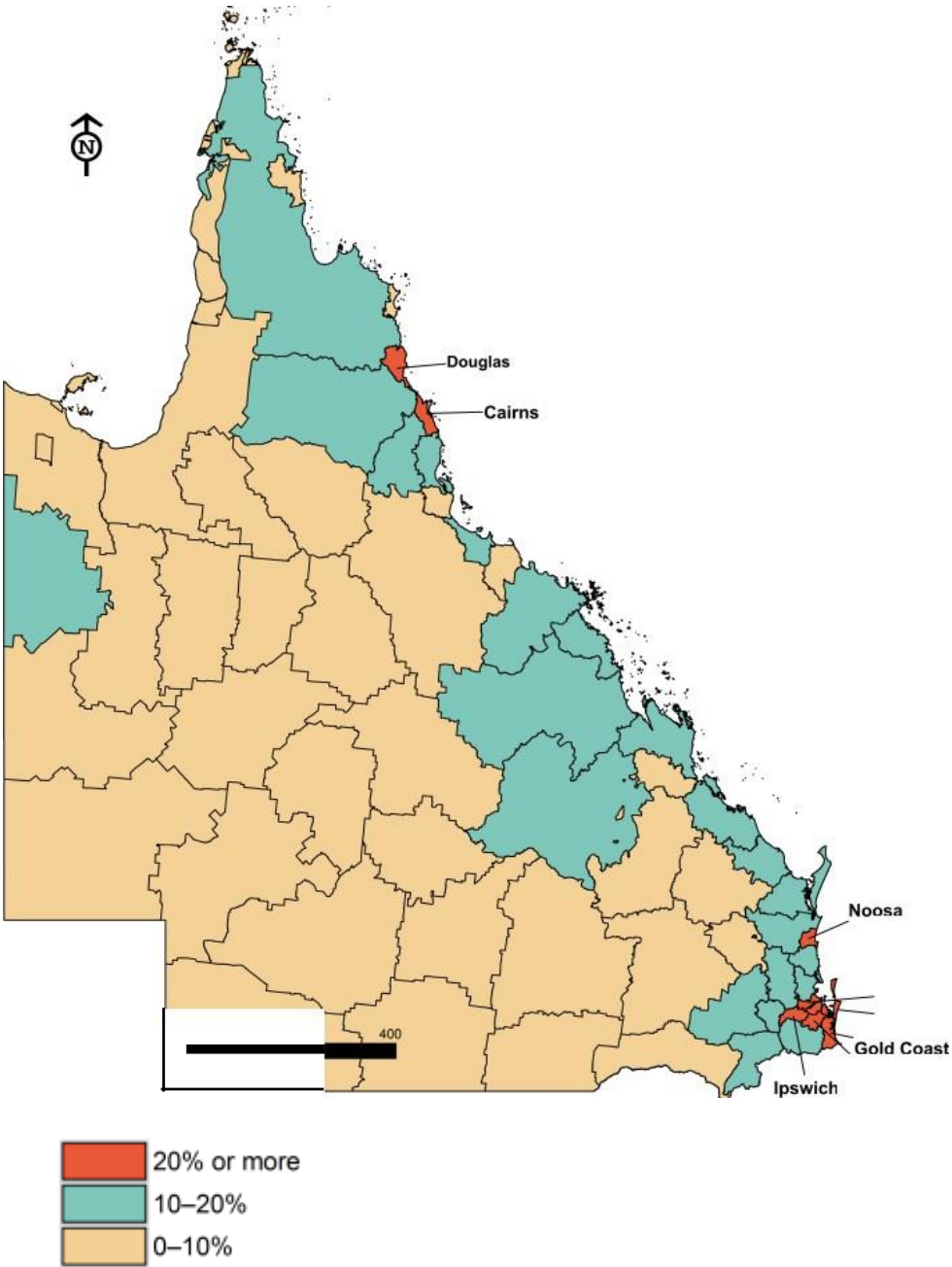
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Overseas Population, LGAs, 2011



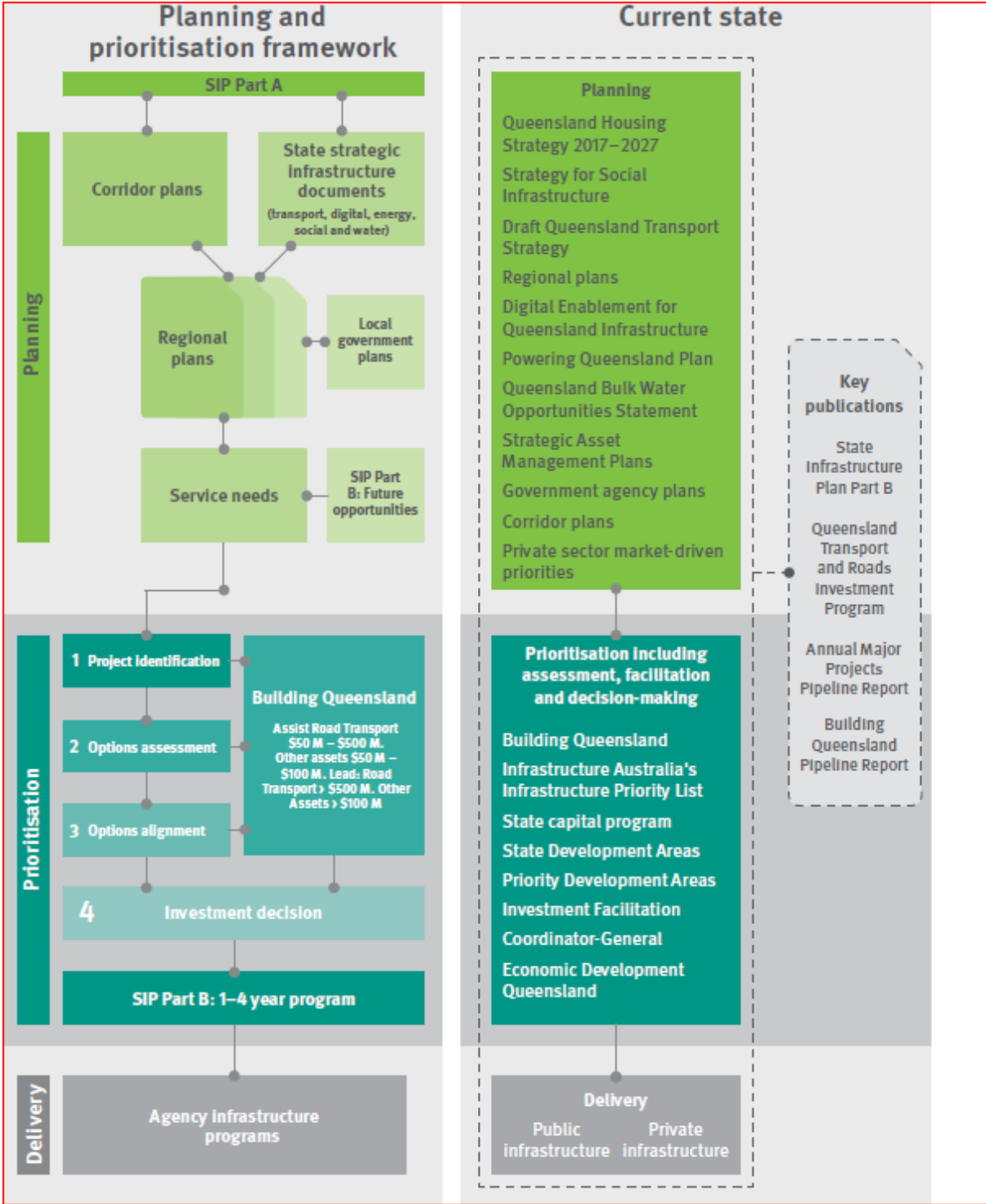
Source: Queensland Government (2018) *Diversity Figures*, June 2018, Multicultural Affairs and Queensland Treasury, Brisbane, p. 10, available at <https://www.dlgrma.qld.gov.au/resources/multicultural/communities/diversity-figures-report.pdf>

Appendix 2: National Women’s Health Strategy 2020-2030

Priority areas				
Maternal, sexual and reproductive health	Healthy ageing	Chronic conditions and preventive health	Mental health	Health impacts of violence against women and girls
<p>Increase access to sexual and reproductive health care information, diagnosis, treatment and services</p> <p>Increase health promotion activity to enhance and support preconception and perinatal health</p> <p>Support enhanced access to maternal and perinatal health care services</p>	<p>Adopt a life course approach to healthy ageing for women</p> <p>Address key risk factors that reduce quality of life for women as they age</p> <p>Better manage the needs of a diverse ageing population</p>	<p>Increase awareness and primary prevention of chronic conditions, symptoms and risk factors for women and girls, and embed a life course approach in policy and practice</p> <p>Invest in targeted prevention, early detection and intervention of chronic conditions affecting women and girls</p> <p>Tailor health services to meet the needs of all women and girls</p> <p>Reduce the prevalence and impact of endometriosis and associated chronic pelvic pain</p>	<p>Enhance gender-specific mental health education, awareness and primary prevention</p> <p>Focus on early intervention, diagnosis, integration and access to mental health care services</p> <p>Invest in service delivery for priority populations</p> <p>Adopt a multi-faceted approach to support women and girls with eating disorders</p> <p>Raise awareness and embed practices to reduce stigma and discrimination associated with mental ill-health</p>	<p>Raise awareness of the health impacts of violence against women and girls</p> <p>Address health and related impacts of family and sexual violence</p> <p>Co-design and deliver safe and accessible services for women experiencing family, intimate partner and/or sexual violence</p>
Investing in research		Strengthening partnerships		Achieving progress

Source: Department of Health, 2018:7

Appendix 3: Queensland Planning and Prioritisation Framework



Source: Queensland Government, 2019b:5

Appendix 4: State Development Areas



Source: Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning, 2019:3

Appendix 5: Identified Barriers to Managing, Attracting and Retaining People by Scale

	Barriers to managing population growth	Barriers to attracting and retaining people
Capital Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undersupply of appropriate housing Inadequate essential infrastructure Lack of capacity & investment in transport systems Lack of focus on future requirements such as job skills, services etc Lack of population mobility Lack of State-wide economic strategy Lack of strategy, planning & funding for infrastructure Poor urban and regional planning Planning not supported by infrastructure No control on migrant numbers or location Demographic balance and workforce capabilities Inadequate healthcare High proportion of people not working age (SA) Low population growth – migrants, international students, birth rates (SA) Migrant preference for large cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High population growth outstripping capacity (NSW) Limited affordable housing for service industries Low wages and limited career (Tas) Lack of job opportunities Pressure on health system & poor health system Traffic congestion Competition with East Coast (WA) Restrictive visa system Separation from families (NT) Competition with other cities and regions SA State Government charging skilled migrants school fees Poor or no settlement services High cost of living, air transport
Regional Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of diverse lifestyle opportunities Population centralisation – Perth dominance Lack of State-wide economic strategy Cannot influence where migrants settle Public service jobs not encouraged (Tas). Lack of employment opportunities Lack of tertiary and career opportunities Lack of planning and funding for infrastructure and transport Lack of adequate essential infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited opportunities – employment & career, services, cultural diversity, isolation, education Migrant preferences for large cities related to perceived opportunities Lower status of universities Relative lack of opportunity for young people Limited information for migrants Access to specialist health care Dominance of Capital and interstate Lower wages Climate (too hot or cold – SA) and adverse/harsh weather (SA, NT, Tas) Lack of services & infrastructure

	<p>Low population growth Lack of demographic balance & workforce capabilities Inadequate health care and workforce capabilities</p>	<p>Low liveability, quality of life Lack of family proximity and support (NT) Transport accessibility High costs – housing, living, transport Native title slowing down development (NT) Lack of employer supported cross cultural training (NT)</p>
Rural	<p>Managing population decline Inadequate essential services Lack of diverse lifestyle opportunities Lifestyle expectations not met Lack of employment or dominance of one industry Cannot influence where migrants live Loss of young people Lack of State wide economic strategy Shift in economy from labour to capital Lack of education and career opportunities Lack of telecom connectivity Inadequate healthcare & education Dominance of Capital & coastal communities (East Coast) High % of pop not of working age Low population growth Adverse weather Lifestyle Lack of planning & funding for a range of infrastructure & transport</p>	<p>Access to health services Dominance of Capital Access to government services Limited commercial choice/diversity Attraction of regional centre Lack of job opportunities Lack of education opportunities Low standard and high cost of health Climate (adverse) Poor or no settlement services Poor access – transport and high costs of travel Restrictive visa system Retirees drift to coast & regional centres Seasonal nature of employment Water supply Loss of young people Poor telecommunications</p>
Remote	<p>Dominance of Capital Lack of education opportunities Lack of planning and funding for range of infrastructure & transport Low population growth Adverse weather Lifestyle Tyranny of distance and preference for east coast Inadequate healthcare and education services Low accessibility</p>	<p>Access to health services Poor job opportunities Isolation (& from family) Limited choices/diversity Poor accessibility and high costs of travel Distance from a major centre Lack of education opportunities Low levels of literacy and numeracy, cultural competency (NT) Poor or no settlement services Adverse weather & harsh conditions High costs of housing, living, training, telecom. Insufficient oppourt for sport and rec and arts and culture Climate</p>

Source: ALGA 2019:22-23