‘Dangling the carrot: Analysis and discussion of immigration to regional Australia’

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~ 2004 ~

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### Abbreviations

ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics  
AMEP – Australian Migrant English Program  
DIMIA – Department of Immigration, Multiculturalism and Indigenous Affairs  
DSE – Department of Sustainability and Environment  
DVC – Department for Victorian Communities  
JPSCSM – Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Skilled Migration  
LOTE – Languages other than English  
LGA – Local Government Area  
PNP – Provincial Nominee Program  
SsMM – State Specific Migration Mechanisms  
TCCI – Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
VOMA - Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs
1. Background

Australia’s current population is on the cusp of 20 million. Assuming current population trends continue *ceteris paribus*, the ABS projects that Australia’s population will grow to approximately 26.4 million by 2051 and then remain at a sustained level. This predicted growth of an additional 7 million people within 50 years is calculated according to continuing trends of an average net-intake of 100,000 immigrants per annum from 2005-06, the fertility rate sustained at a slightly decreased rate of 1.6% from 2011, a very gradually falling mortality rate (ABS 2003:1), and an inevitably ageing base population (McDonald 2002). This has increased from the ABS’s projection made in 2000. The primary difference between the two projections has been an increase of net-migrants from 80,000 to 100,000. The change in forecasts illustrates how volatile or unknown factors may impact on the population’s size and composition. It is a given that Australia’s population will increase within the next five decades, the fundamental question is where will Australia’s increased population reside?

*Figure 1 – Distribution of Australia’s population*

Castles et al states that Australia is one of the most sparsely populated, yet most highly urbanised countries in the world with 85% of Australia’s population residing on 3.3% of Australia’s land mass, 50 kilometres from the coastline (1997:37) as illustrated in Figure 1. Currently, 64% of the population lives within capital cities, where the ABS projects 75% of
Australia’s future population growth will occur (1999:2 & Ruddock 2000:17); Mason calculates that 40% of Australia’s population currently lives in Sydney and Melbourne (2003:107).

The concentrated settlement patterns of Australia’s population has developed into a politically contentious issue, expressly by residents and politicians in Sydney and the Shires of Noosa and Byron Bay. Noosa has placed a population cap on its Shire (see Noosa Council 2001) and Byron Bay is attempting to legislate the same on the grounds that population growth is increasing congestion and pollution (see Gibson & Connell 2003). Debate in Sydney has gone further to associate immigrants as the cause of congestion, pollution and amenity fatigue (Hewett 16th August 2003:19). NSW politicians being electorally sensitive have lobbied this mantra, led by Premier Bob Carr (see The Age 5th July 2003).

It could be noted that particular areas proposing population caps are those that primarily promote leisure and ‘lifestyle’ of their region; a population cap would only prove to develop enclaves for the extremely well financed to afford such lifestyles. Carr’s position is presumably underpinned by the growing pressure on the NSW State Government to cater to the needs of a growing metropolitan population exceeding 4 million. Sydney annually receives an average of over 40% of Australia’s new international immigrants (DIMIA 2000:8), 94% of whom settle within the Sydney basin (Withers & Powell 2003:23).

Sydney’s population debate overlooks the fact that an almost equal proportion of residents out-migrate from Sydney compared to what is received in new international immigrants each year (Bell 1995:48-52), as illustrated in Figure 2. The primary source of Sydney’s growth has actually been fertility - rather than immigration - though this source is now in decline. Sydney’s annual population growth averages at 1.68%, which, although is relatively strong, is comparably lower than other capitals and many regional cities (Withers & Powall 2003:60, ABS 1999).
The predicament is that Australia has a gradually rising population that is contextually high by Western standards, regions of Australia are becoming restrictive of settlement, other regions receive disproportionate cohorts of immigrants, and the population group most notably targeted by current Commonwealth Government settlement initiatives in Australia are skilled immigrants. Given Australia’s traditional value of liberal-democratic principles and constitutional requirements, can residents or policies, justly intervene in the settlement patterns of immigrants?

There are numerous cities and regions around Australia that openly invite, and arguably need, an increase in immigrants to their current population, to diversify economies and increase demand, among other factors. Certainly there would only be a proportion of regions capable, and have the infrastructure to feasibly support an influx of immigrants due to economic, social and cultural reasons. So how do Government and other parties encourage increased immigration to regional areas, particularly when the primary motivation of immigrant settlement is to locate closely to family/friends in culturally relevant areas where there are good opportunities of employment (Richardson, S. 2002:165)?
To contextualise this research, I will examine the composition and settlement patterns of immigrants, and the so-called predicament of regional population decline. As there is very little data specifically on attracting skilled immigrants to regional areas, the findings and subsequent recommendations of my report will be based on three case studies. I will conduct analysis of the Victorian region of Greater Shepparton that has consistently attracted and maintained settlement of immigrants, and the case of Tasmania, which consistently received comparatively small proportions of immigrants from concentrated origins. I will also conduct analysis of Canada because of comparable demographic trends and regional immigration policy in the attempt to determine if Australia could benefit from Canadian initiatives.

It should be noted that I will be concentrating on skilled immigration to regional areas, although there is arguably as much need for other categories of immigrants in regional areas. I am not in any way advocating massive population increase to remote areas, and have not encompassed the idea of growth polls. This report is a demographic analysis though there is just as much need for socio-economic and cultural evaluations of this conundrum. Furthermore, the notion of what is ‘regional’ is assumed to be ‘non-metropolitan’, though the actual definition is arbitrary. This predicament remains unaddressed and means capital cities, metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions are (unequally) competing against each for skilled immigrants (see JPSCSM 2001). This invariably undermines the Commonwealth Government’s attempt to attract, and more evenly distribute immigrant settlement throughout Australia.
2. Composition of Immigrant Population

McDonald has observed that Australia’s annual net-immigrant intake has averaged around 80,000 people per annum for the previous 50 years of which an average of 50,000 immigrants typically become permanent residents, the remaining being temporary immigrants (2002:9-11). McDonald and Kippen consider the first 80,000 net-migrants per annum create the most efficient contribution to expanding the economy and labour market, and mitigating the effects of Australia’s ageing population. If net-migration expands beyond this, the benefits of immigration condense (McDonald & Kippen 1999:11). These calculations are fundamental to the Commonwealth Government’s annual determination of Australia’s immigrant intake (DIMIA 2000).

A reasonable proportion of skilled immigrants are temporary residents, with the vast majority being long-term temporary migrants that are overwhelmingly comprised of students. Skilled immigrant categories have considerable financial autonomy to be long-term temporary immigrants (Richardson, S. 2002). This is illustrated by an average of only 8.0% of long-term temporary migrants applying for permanency per annum, predominantly aged between 30 and 50. Only 0.04% long-term temporary immigrants who apply for permanency identify as students, despite this cohort overwhelmingly constituting the majority of long-term temporary immigrants (McDonald 2002:15). The eventual loss of students who clearly compose the majority of long-term temporary immigrants is exemplary of policy gaps. McDonald anticipates greater future retention of this cohort, due to recent policy amendments regarding students and business immigrants (2000:15).

The composition of Australia’s total immigrant population reflects the basic demography of Australians, though overall are slightly younger, slightly more likely to reproduce than the local population, are more highly skilled and educated, are generally in better health than local Australians, and over 90% speak English very proficiently (Richardson, S. 2000:115). The ethnic composition of the immigrant population has changed in the previous 30 years from a decrease in the proportion of European immigrants and an increase in immigrants born in Asian countries (Khoo 2003:161).
3. Impact of Immigration

McDonald and Kippen suggest immigration can lessen the full impact of the ageing population, although purport that attempting to fully alleviate impacts of the ageing population via immigration would require an unrealistic engagement in massive immigration, that would have to be exponentially increased each year (1999). Ruddock asserts that increased productivity advanced by skilled immigration will mitigate the anticipated ageing and slowing of the labour force and increased demand for service provision (2000). Garnaut asserts that a more highly skilled and educated workforce determines higher labour force participation rates, lower unemployment, enhanced productivity and employment opportunities, and increased average income levels of lower-income Australians *vis a vis* enhanced government revenue increasing capacity of service distribution (2002:142-6). Garnaut suggests that such benefits potentially come at the cost of increased competition for skilled employment, though also suggests that this risk is offset by the local skilled population’s dominant ownership of assets (that increases in value per increased demand by immigrants).

Skilled immigrants initially find it harder to obtain employment of equivalent distinction, or pay, as that in their country of origin, which is exacerbated in times of economic uncertainty (Richardson, S. 2002:189). However, skilled immigrants have greater propensity to have positive multiplier effects on the economy than local Australians; in the sense that age at point of arrival is largely between 15 and 44 when government provided services are highly utilised pre-18. Data widely acknowledges that skilled immigrants make minimal use of government provided services or welfare compared to the local-born population, have the ability and willingness to invest, contribute significant human capital, boost demand, and generally earn relatively high wages and therefore contribute significantly to revenue, and bring a plethora of skills and experience that diversifies economies, increases innovation and entrepreneurial activity (Richardson, C. 2002:126). Skilled immigrants also immediately stimulate the economy through purchasing consumer, capital, and other business goods and investments (McDonald 2002). Richardson also notes that other immigrant categories have multiplier effects on the economy, albeit at a lower rate.
It is ironic then that immigration debates in Sydney have largely not encompassed immigrants higher unemployment rates in times of economic uncertainty, increased competition for employment, competition to own or invest in assets, or even the propensity to contribute more significantly to revenue than Australians! Rather, debate has often involved Sydney’s disproportionately high immigration levels (40%+ per annum) associated with congestion, pollution and insufficient amenities (Hewett 16th August 2003:19). There is undeniably an economy of scale relationship between population growth, congestion and pollution. However, debate has portrayed immigrants as disproportionately consuming natural resources and utilising infrastructure far more than the local Australian population.

Mason suggests amenity ‘fatigue’ is due to infrastructural development inadequately matching population growth (2003); effectively, a diseconomy of scales between population and infrastructure. Withers and Powall suggest that problems of pollution and congestion should involve the broader community, as research suggests that immigrants’ lifestyles generally encompass a lower rate of energy consumption and waste than the local population (2003:62).

4. Settlement Patterns

Castles et al state that the primary determinants integral to the whereabouts and motivations of immigrant settlement, irrespective of immigrant category, is the location of family and friends and employment opportunities (1997). Khoo substantiates immigrants have a tendency to settle in areas where others of the same ethnicity are established (2003:172). Professor Sue Richardson’s research found that 95% of immigrants settled in areas they intended to live in before arriving in Australia, and the vast majority remained settled in that same location two years post-arrival (2002:171). It would then seem that there is considerable opportunity to influence immigrant settlement before arrival. While Skilled immigrants consult a broad spectrum of resources on settlement in Australia before arrival, the primary source of information – as utilised by all immigrant categories - is informally provided by family and friends currently or previously established in Australia (Richardson, S. 2002:170-2).

Professor Richardson suggests immigrants’ ‘settlement patterns to some extent counter, rather than aggravate, internal population flows’ (2002:199). Australian States and Territories do not receive immigrants according to the proportion of their percentage of the national population
(Hugo 1999). Just as Australian’s population distribution is dispersed unevenly, so are immigrant settlement patterns; they are disproportionately orientated towards major cities and several regional cities primarily in NSW, Victoria and WA. Hugo suggests that immigrant settlement patterns are more concentrated than local Australian settlement trendsiv (1999:11). This is exemplified by metropolitan Melbourne and Sydney experiencing settlement rates three times that of regional or rural Victoria and New South Wales, as displayed in Figure 3.

*Figure 3 – Percentage born overseas by region of birth: States and Territories, 2001*
5. Australia’s Regional Skilled Immigration Policies

Australia’s population has consistently been growing at a rate slightly exceeding 1.0% per annum (ABS 2003:2), although this is not consistent across the nation. As areas such as Sydney are enduring problems associated with population growth, other regions are alternatively experiencing problems due to population decline. Regional and rural Australia is commonly portrayed to be in aggregate decline, which Gerritsen states is ‘for the most part exaggerated pessimism’ (2003). Some regional and rural areas are in fact booming, as are some urban areas declining (Mackenzie 1994).

Since 1971, rural population growth has in fact stabilised at 14% (Hugo 2003:189). The ABS records the total regional population growth between 1995 and 2000 being slightly less than metropolitan growth, at 0.9% compared to 1.3%, respectively (2001(a):1). Immigrants have consistently contributed to Australia’s regional and rural population growth, though is relatively underrepresented in local regional populations. Withers and Powall (2003:58), Hugo (1999 & 2003), and Ruddock (2000:17) assert that the location of where immigrants live is as important as the number of net-migrants to Australia; the settlement patterns of immigrants will underpin the future of Australia’s growth. This is transposed to immigration policy by attempting the dispersal of skilled immigrant settlement.

As Australia values liberal-democratic principles constitutionally and attitudinally, it is unfeasible to enforce where people live. Considering the primary motivations of immigrant settlement outlined by Castles et. al. in ‘4. Settlement Patterns’, in addition to the JPSCSM finding that 80% of SsMM participants rated job opportunities as primary to their decision of settlement location (2001:118), there is potential to capitalise on these factors to encourage greater dispersal of skilled immigrant settlement. The DIMIA has attempted to do so by means of SsMM programs.

5.1 SsMM Programs (See www.immi.gov.au/migration/employers)

SsMM allows State and Local Governments greater opportunity to influence the profile of immigrants settling within their jurisdictions through offering incentives/concessions to attract skilled immigrant groups according to State Government selectivity (JPSCSM 2001). The
programs assume employer awareness, and thus assume a greater ability to attract skilled and business immigrants to their region to overcome skill deficits not filled by the local labour force.

SsMM grants permanency and the award of bonus points for settling in regional Australia. Figure 4 and 5 display utilisation of these programs is highly skewed towards particular programs and States and Territories. While SsMM has succeeded in diversifying immigrant settlement beyond Sydney, settlement patterns are again disproportionate, with almost 50% of SsMM participants locating in Victoria and a further 20% in South Australia (JPSCSM 2001). It is also likely that there are inconsistent pull-factors to select regions to attract skilled immigrants within States.

5.1.1 Skilled – Australian Sponsored Scheme (SASS - formerly SAL)

The SASS is the most highly utilised SsMM, it is not points based, and skills must be evaluated according to equivalent Australian standards. Australian citizens can nominate to sponsor skilled immigrants who live in regional Australia for a minimum of one year, have functional English and are aged under-45. Applicants must not receive welfare benefits during settlement in the regional area that the sponsorship application concerns.

5.1.2 Skilled Designated Area Sponsored Scheme

An extension of SASS, where families living in designated regions may sponsor an immigrant, although the nominee is not obligated to settle in that same area.
5.1.3 Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS)
RSMS is also a highly popular SsMM. This program enables employers to sponsor skilled immigrants, providing skills shortages cannot be filled by the local labour market. The immigrant must be aged under-45, have good English skills and a higher education qualification recognised in Australia. RSMS guarantees employment and permanency through a 2-year sponsorship, subject to Australian labour standards.

According to the JPSCSM (2001), very few applicants under this scheme are denied. There is also a clause in RSMS that exceptions to age, skills and language ability may be made if the employer (and DIMIA) see fit.

5.1.4 State/Territory Nominated Independent Scheme (STNI)
State/Territory Government may facilitate sponsorship of skilled immigrants to live within their jurisdiction. The immigrant must hold qualifications equivalent to Australian standards where there are identifiable skill shortages specific to the region, providing the shortages cannot be addressed by the local labour force.

STNI provides permanency, assuming residency in the designated region for 2 years, though does not guarantee employment as with RSMS.

5.1.5 Regional Established Business in Australia (REBA)
REBA allows temporary business immigrants to apply for permanency. The immigrant must display business success in Australia over a 2-year period, considers their current financial position, and gives bonus points for business establishment in particular areas.

5.1.6 Skills Matching Database (SMD)
SMD is a database listing prospective skilled immigrants aged under-45 with good English, skills equivalent to Australian standards, willing to locate to a region of Australia for a minimum of 2 years. SMD may be accessed by employers interested in sponsorship. There are almost 7,000 people currently entered in SMD, though the regularity of updating SMD has been problematic (Shepparton Working Group on Skilled Migration, 9 December 2003).
5.1.7 Skilled Independent Regional program (SIR)
Commonly referred to as the two-staged visa to be incepted on 1 July 2004. More sufficient details regarding the program will be revealed publicly then.

6. Settlement of Immigrants to Regional Australia
Overseas-born Australians have continually settled in rural and regional Australia. Inter-Census records display a relative decrease in immigrant settlement to regional Australia from 1947, irrespective of strategic settlement dispersal policies (Hugo 1999:17). It could be speculated that the incentives and concessions offered in SsMM, or previous programs, have not been appropriate (or extensive) enough. For example, Birrell and O’Connor express concern that employment opportunities in regional areas do not adequately match skilled immigrants qualifications, particularly in contrast to more diverse opportunities in major cities (2000:52).

Hugo contends that policy would be better directed at influencing economic growth more broadly in regional areas, as opposed to attempting to directly intervene in immigrants’ settlement patterns (1999). Castles et al suggests that despite identifying the motivations for immigrant settlement patterns, there is little understanding of the factors involved in settlement decisions, moreover, it is arguable such influences are too strong to be effected by existent policy (1997:39), as reflected in Mason’s musing:

‘One asks oneself what people have in mind when they talk about creating incentives to get the masses to move to the regions.’ (2003:104)

Nevertheless, both current Commonwealth Government and Opposition immigration policy attempts to influence the dispersal of skilled immigrants. Although it is not within the scope of this research, it is questionable whether regional immigration programs are socially and culturally relevant to skilled immigrants, as the sole means of community integration assumed by these programs are English proficiency and gaining employment. JPSCSM (2001:3) and Beswick (2003) advocate that monitoring of immigrants during and beyond programs is poor,
and if otherwise, could greatly advantage settlement and the quality of immigration policy. The fact that the average annual intake of the highly popular RSMS program only contributes to 2.0% of the intake of total skilled immigrants (JPSCSM 2001:27) may be testament to the concerns expressed above.

However, criticism of menial attraction should be done so cautiously, as SsMM has endured consistent growth since inception, as displayed in Figure 6. Even the small intake of skilled immigrants has positive multiplier effects on regions otherwise not experienced, as outlined in ‘3. Impact of Immigration’. It should be reiterated that immigrants who are not of skilled categories also have multiplier effects on regional economies, albeit not as strong an effect as skilled immigrants. Benefits of immigrant settlement to regional Australia are undeniable, as evidenced in the City of Greater Shepparton and Tasmania.

*Figure 6—State-Specific and Regional Migration Visas 1997 - 2003*

![State-Specific and Regional Migration Visas 1997-2003](DIMIA_July_2003:2)
7. Case Study of the City of Greater Shepparton

Greater Shepparton has a population of more than 55,000 and is enduring strong average growth of 1.2% per annum. The composition of Greater Shepparton’s population is younger than the Victorian and Australian average, with a relatively large proportion of people aged under-18, and in the reproductive demographic aged between 18 and 35 (DSE 2001:104). The high fertility rate is characteristic of rural and regional Victoria compared to metropolitan areas (DSE 2002:16), though regional Victoria also typically has a high proportion of the population aged over 50 that Greater Shepparton is largely not experiencing. It could be suggested that Greater Shepparton’s relatively high intake of immigration has influenced the age structure of Greater Shepparton’s population as illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7 – Birthplace by Age: Selected Birthplace Groups, 2001 Census

![Greater Shepparton LGA](image)

Figure 7 is broadly indicative of Greater Shepparton’s ethnic composition. Iraqi immigrants are a relatively new ethnic group settling in Shepparton, the Albanian community recently celebrated its 75th anniversary of its first immigrants to Shepparton, and Italian, English, Scottish, Greek and Dutch immigrants have been consistent source countries for many generations, though are currently enduring a small net decrease due to mortality exceeding
incoming-immigration. For a regional city, several hours commute from the closest capital city; Greater Shepparton is uniquely ethnically diverse.

A total of 84.3% of Shepparton’s population identify as being Australian-born, which is marginally below the rural Victorian average of 85.0% (DSE 2001). This figure misrepresents Shepparton’s actual ethnic composition and relative diversity because it discounts first, second, and greater, generational immigrants whose ethnic diversity invaluably contributes to Shepparton’s ethnic composition. This is exemplified by the Italian community only registering as comprising 2.3% of Shepparton’s total population (ABS (b) 2001), yet the Italian community is Shepparton’s dominant ethnic group, having experienced extensive generational settlement, that have contributed at length to the development and expansion of the region.

The diversity of Shepparton’s actual ethnicity is perhaps better gauged by LOTE spoken at home. Those who speak English comprise 85.6% of Greater Shepparton’s population, which is well below the rural Victorian average of 90.9% (DSE 2001). The primary LOTE have been identified as Italian, Turkish, Greek, Macedonian and Arabic, the latter having increased by 2,284.2% over the 1996-2001 Inter-Census period (ABS 2001 b:Table 4.5.4)!!1996-2001 Inter-Census data also records significant increases in South Africans and Albanians, and a moderate increase in Indians, Chinese, Fijians, New Zealander’s, Turks and Filipinos to the City of Greater Shepparton (ABS (b) 2001:Table 4.5.2). ABS data reveals that Greater Shepparton ranks 27th out of 88 Victorian LGA’s for its high proportion of residents speaking a LOTE (ABS (b) 2001:Chart 2.11). More importantly, all of the LGA’s ranked as having higher proportions of LOTE than Greater Shepparton are within one hour’s proximity from the Melbourne CBD.

It is fair to say that Greater Shepparton has a disproportionately ethnically diverse composition for its geographic location, spanning a wide range of communities, not exclusive to a concentrated selection of origins. This is not adequately conveyed by statistical data. Because Shepparton is a regional area, there is little analysis or data produced to indicate why Shepparton attracts and maintains such an ethnically diverse population or the initiatives used to provide ease or maintenance of integration.
The recent Shepparton Working Group on Skilled Migration, hosted by the DVC, involving VOMA, Greater Shepparton Council, the Mayor of Greater Shepparton, Anne McCamish, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier on Multicultural Affairs, MP Kaye Darveniza, the Shepparton Ethnic Council, and other interested parties discussed the reasons for Shepparton’s success in attracting immigrants and the barriers it faces as a region.

Local organizations attributed Shepparton’s long-standing attraction of immigrants to the high availability of paid work in agriculture. Although this work is predominantly seasonal, Shepparton has an extensive harvest season of 5 months, can process the raw product within the region, employs the second largest amount of seasonal workers in Victoria of 12,000 people, and output is of extremely high value made feasible by intensive irrigation. Such agricultural output is only matched in Victoria by Mildura/Swan Hill, Baw Baw and Hepburn LGA’s (DSE 2002:25-30).

Essentially, employment in this industry pays well, does not require high levels of skills or English proficiency, has involved the generational labour of immigrants, and is of relatively high availability. Although it may seem that such employment has little to do with attracting skilled immigrants, the point is that Greater Shepparton has significant opportunity for immigrants to establish themselves financially, to later specialise, whilst validating their community worth as ‘productive citizens’ in the interim. Lifetime resident, long-serving Councillor, and former Mayor of the Greater Shepparton Council, Bruce McNeill, made the observation when interviewed that new immigrants generally commence employment in the seasonal agricultural industry and over time expand into niche or indirect agricultural industries, or even establish new industries (2003).

The vast majority of immigrants to the City of Greater Shepparton are family immigrants. The intended focus of the Working Group was increasing skilled immigration, though discussion largely revolved around the strength of services and their role - if not in attracting immigrants – in maintaining and easing immigrant settlement. A plethora of services are offered to immigrants in Greater Shepparton from free child care during the AMEP at Goulburn Ovens
TAFE, to free bus transport for Iraqi women who otherwise do not have transport by an Iraqi woman bus driver (Mitzos 2003).

The Shepparton Ethnic Council is the first contact point for all immigrants (as all migration agents are based at these services), and its role is to direct immigrants to appropriate services according to their needs. After interviewing the President of the Shepparton Ethnic Council, Centre Manager of Multicultural Education at Goulbourn Ovens TAFE, and Victorian Multicultural Commissioner, Vicki Mitzos, it seems that a vast proportion of services offered are actually *government provided programs*. This is not to underrate the importance of services provided, implemented and created by the Ethnic and Local Council. Rather, it is to make a point that Shepparton is largely delivering federal programs and achieving relatively great results. Likewise, these programs are actually being utilised by immigrants because they are being directed to them by the Shepparton Ethnic Council. Whilst this may appear to be stating the obvious, the reality is that immigration programs and services remain *highly under-utilised*, as perhaps evidenced with SsMM.

The Working Group paid testament to the quality and importance of services but paradoxically were hardly aware of SsMM, let alone the *process* or *option* of government or business sponsoring immigrants. Moreover, no business representatives or economic development officers from the Local Council were present despite the conference being held during business hours. I do not state this to make Shepparton an example. Rather, this situation is typical and representative of the fundamental flaw in regional skilled immigration policy: there is little awareness, let alone utilisation, of SsMM by interested parties. Some participants in the Working Group have since argued that this point is invalid, as the overwhelming participation of service providers in the Working Group skewed the interests expressed on the day. However, I suggest that this actually draws greater precedence to the situation: service providers who work closely with Government and immigrants *should* be *acutely* aware of the *option* and *process* of sponsorship, rather than ignorant.

This has potential to be redeemed by Greater Shepparton’s long-standing and ‘effervescent’ ethnic diversity that suggests a high degree of tolerance, which is attractive to immigrants from
unestablished ethnic groups (McNeill 2003). McNeill expressed concern for distinctly divergent ethnic groups – typically new waves of immigrants - if culture from the country of origin is culturally restrictive of ‘productive’ interaction, though suggests differences are generationally overcome (2003). The Working Group asserted that Greater Shepparton is in a strong position to persist with this challenge because of its already established and celebrated diversity. Ziquer acknowledged the acceptance and celebration of other cultures as central to integration. This is epitomised by Shepparton’s Albanian community sharing its traditional celebrations of the ‘old country’ with other community members of non-Albanian background, and likewise celebrating Australia’s national days of significance (2003).

Shepparton is in a unique position given that it has consistently attracted immigrants for numerous generations. This has not been strategic, it has simply occurred and services and local policy made reactively. Rather than then bureaucratically dismissing the case of Shepparton as an insufficient model (because of being reactive rather than strategic), it is important to embrace what this case study reveals about immigrant attraction and gaps in immigration policy:

1) High employment availability;

2) Ensuring access and immigrant awareness of services; and fundamentally,

3) Potential sponsoring parties having a greater awareness of available government programs and what they offer – so that they may be utilised!
8. Case Study of Tasmania

Examining two regional areas has the potential to dichotomise one as successful and the other not, insinuating the latter should implement initiatives of the former. The reality is that Greater Shepparton and Tasmania are demographically, geographically, economically, industrially, socially, and culturally different; divergent outcomes are not indicative of comparable weakness. Their differences are apparent even in the variance in categories and sources of immigrants they attract\(^viii\), as illustrated in Figures 8 and 9. What is important is that the two case studies highlight strengths, weaknesses and relevancy of policy, and that there is variance between regional areas.

\[\text{Figure 8 – Shepparton Migration Streams} \quad \text{Figure 9 – Tasmania Migration Streams}\]

(All Settlers, settlement period for both graphs: 1 Dec 2000 – 30 Nov 2003)

Tasmania has a population of approximately 457,000 and is experiencing net-loss in its primary reproductive and productive population aged between 20 and 34, and net-gain in retirees aged over 55\(^ix\). Hence, Tasmania’s population will soon overtake South Australia’s as the proportionally ‘oldest’ State in Australia (Jackson & Felmingham 2002), such that Jackson and Kippen liken Tasmania’s demographic composition to an apple-core (2001).

Out-migration, in-migration and immigration is experienced disproportionately around the State, with the majority of internal migration and immigration directed towards Greater Hobart or North-Eastern Tasmania, as illustrated in Figure 10 (Bell, 1995:98). Despite the age in data, such patterns remain relatively unchanged (see Tasmanian Dept. Treasury and Finance 2003).
Immigrants to Tasmania are primarily from highly concentrated sources; the overwhelming majority from the United Kingdom, followed by Holland and New Zealand.

*Figure 10 – Net migration flows, statistical divisions, Tasmania, 1986-1991*  

![Net migration flows, statistical divisions, Tasmania, 1986-1991](image)

(Bell 1995:98)

The TCCI claims that immigration poses the best opportunity of population growth for Tasmania, which will result in economic growth, (2000:7). The TCCI seemingly does not consider the converse; that strong economic growth is arguably required for attraction of immigrants and other forms of population growth. Jackson and Kippen suggest the apparent apple-core effect could be ameliorated by only a moderate increase in immigration, *ceteris paribus* (2001:29). Although immigration and migration trends have changed in recent years, they also purport that the likelihood of increased immigration is unlikely as Tasmania has an unfortunate history of net-migration loss rather than gain.

Tasmania’s recipience of immigrants is a minor form of population growth relative to natural increase and interstate migration, as evidenced in Figure 11, though is nonetheless an invaluable social, cultural and economic component of Tasmania’s population. The TCCI states ‘there is no particular reason that Tasmania’s immigration growth rates are incapable of equalling the national average’ (2000:5). The reality is Tasmania receives an approximate intake of 1% of Australia’s total international immigrant population intake per annum, disproportionate to its 2.7% share of the Australian population (Hugo 1999:33). This is exemplified where Greater Hobart has a population double that of Shepparton yet numerically attracts an almost equal amount of immigrants (399 and 367 respectively. See ‘Top 50
Therefore Hobart relatively attracts less immigrants than Shepparton. Such a comparison is made for contextual reasons, as dichotomising two different regions is unhelpful.

Considering the motivating factors influencing immigrant settlement as established by Professor Richardson, conditions are not favourable to attract immigrants to Hobart: Tasmania’s unemployment rates are consistently above the national average at 8.6% compared to the national average of 5.7%, job vacancy rates are low at 1.6% compared to the national average of 13.07% (ABS 2004:10-18), the labour market base is relatively limited in diversity, and established immigrant communities are varied but small which reduces the importance of chain migration\textsuperscript{xii} as a driver for new arrivals (Beswick 2003). Tasmania’s ability to compete against other regions for immigrants is then forseeably compromised; high unemployment and low job availability means less opportunity for immigrants as the skills of the local population must be addressed firstly, and the limited labour market base determines that there will only be work for particular skilled immigrants, assuming that they consider Tasmania as a settlement option. These features diffuse the primary principles of SsMM.

Anthony McHugh, Department of Economic Development’s Business and Skilled Migration Officer, Stuart Beswick\textsuperscript{xiii}, Policy Officer of Multicultural Tasmania for the Department of
Premier and Cabinet, and Jackson all suggested when interviewed that the intangible notion of lifestyle bears influence on settlement of immigrants. Jackson states only ‘immigrants desiring a particular lifestyle will settle in Tasmania’ (2003). An approximate total of 17,000 immigrants utilised SsMM programs between 1996 and 2001 (Withers & Powall 2003:22), contrasted with net-migration of 80,000 per annum of which the State of Tasmania only receives a couple of hundred immigrants in total each year, approximately half of which are skilled.

Withers and Powall (2003) found Tasmania to be an exemplary case of maximising the SsMM to attract business immigrants and evaluated overseas seminars as successful and internet resources as well maintained. Beswick (2003) suggests Hobart’s relatively small size and centralised location of key service provision agencies can allow for a more effective decision-making process and coordination of services and cooperation between services and agencies, allowing comparatively more personalised services, for example, assistance with consultation, local business network establishment, and itinerary planning (McHugh 2003).

Beswick (2003) identified the lack of monitoring of immigrant settlement problematic because it remains unknown as to whether immigrants’ needs are adequately being met, and whether community integration is achieved. This is an issue reiterated by the JPSCSM (2001), Hugo (1999), McDonald (2003) and Gerritsen (2003), but particularly felt in Tasmania because stakeholders acknowledge that loss of immigrants - due to pursuing economic opportunities - to other mainland States is very apparent. Monitoring could lead to better policy to potentially address this trend and could be done so in conjunction with capitalising on Tasmania’s tangible sense of community. However, to utilise this resource more effectively, more resources would have to be dedicated - as this resource is arguably already stretched – and that would be subject to State Government (possibly in partnership with the Commonwealth) determining whether this is of an increased priority.

The case of Tasmania illustrates that there are limitations to influencing skilled immigrants’ attraction and retention by policy, or that limited policy impacts on the attraction of immigrants to regions. Considering that ‘the times Tasmania has experienced growth is not
when people have flooded to these shores but when people have stopped leaving!” (Jackson 27th September 2003) in conjunction with Figure 11, it is dubious that skilled immigration to Tasmania will ever alleviate the apple-core phenomenon of the ageing population, or to driving economic demand as the TCCI would hope.

The case of Hobart demonstrates that maintaining economic growth retains the local population and as confidence levels increase and opportunities diversify, then greater attraction of immigrants is determined (see Tasmanian Dept. Treasury and Finance 2003). Although skilled immigration does have multiplier effects on regional economies of scale, given Tasmania’s typical immigrant numbers received per annum and Tasmania’s immediate demographic concerns, other apparent population trends arguably require more immediate attention than skilled immigration.

9. Skilled Immigration to Provincial Canada

Canada’s demography is very similar to Australia’s, though is experiencing a concentration of demographic patterns relative to Australia’s; at 31.7 million Canada’s population is over 10 million larger than Australia’s, net-migration is over 150,000 per annum, and population projections to 2026 estimate a consistent increase of approximately 1 million people per annum (Statistics Canada 2002). Just as Australia’s population settlement is concentrated on the Eastern Seaboard, the majority of Canada’s population is primarily concentrated up to 200km from the United States border, and it is asserted that regional areas are experiencing aggregate depopulation (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2003). Immigrant settlement patterns are similarly more concentrated than the local population - though arguably more so than in Australia - with 60% of immigrants settling in Ontario (50% within the city of Toronto), a further 15% in British Colombia and 15% in Quebec, predominantly in the cities of Vancouver and Montreal. (House of Commons 2002). Canada’s ageing population is slightly higher than Australia’s, natural increase is decreasing at a slightly more rapid rate, and immigration is the main source of population growth, such that immigration accounted for more than 50% of Canada’s growth between 1996 and 2001 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2003). It could be suggested that Canada’s Government has put a greater priority, and therefore resources, into immigration programs, and initiatives are then arguably of a comparably higher level.
Canada’s immigrant ethnic composition is very similar to Australia’s (Khoo 2003:173). The Government Response to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration: The Provincial Nominee Program claims that overwhelming application for family residency has unintentionally developed a situation of crowding-out skilled immigrants (2003). Large skilled emigration to the United States labour market has caused much anxiety over labour shortages and skill deficits. For example, two thirds of Canadian executives report difficulties in recruiting skilled workers (Compass Inc. cited in Regina Leader Post 1st June 2003). Significant bonus points were previously offered to off-shore skilled applicants to settle in provincial Canada suffering from depopulation, though Hugo evaluates these programs as met with little success (1999:39).

In Competing for Immigrants: Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, unanimous bipartisan support was expressed for strategically correlating the dispersal of immigrant settlement and increasing skilled immigration (House of Commons 2002). It seems that PNP is deemed the sole means to encourage dispersal of settlement, address skill shortages, and further provincial economic development as recognised in the Government Response to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration: The Provincial Nominee Program Report.

‘All Ministers responsible for immigration supported the objective of improving the regionalization of immigrants to Canada when they met at the federal/provincial/territorial Immigration Ministers meeting, held in Winnipeg on October 15-16, 2002. Provincial governments recognize that the Provincial Nominee Program is one of the main tools available to help realize this objective.’

(Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2003)

PNP involves business and government establishing the skill shortages relevant to their Province and then determining selection criterion to nominate prospective immigrants. Applicants are assessed against federal health and security checks. Part of Citizenship and
Immigration Canada’s core business is ensuring business awareness of PNP. Immigrants are obligated to visit the province and meet with the nominor. Immigrants enter into a social contract with business/government that requires the immigrant be resident in the nominated province for three years and concurrently receive permanency (House of Commons 2002). Preference is given to skilled immigrants and immigrants who are already located and settled within the area\textsuperscript{xiv}.

This resembles Australia’s RSMS and STNI programs and has a similar prerogative of jurisdictions developing their own incentives to attract immigrants as per varying skilled shortages. It also includes the inherent assumption that those participating in such programs will be quickly integrated (see Recommendation 1 & 2, Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2003), though Canada’s language qualifications and employment arrangements under PNP are more lax than Australian requirements, as was noted by Senator Vanstone’s address to the 2004 national ‘Growing Regional Cities’ Conference.

A systematic difference between the Australian and Canadian programs is that Provincial governments and Immigration Offices are under obligation to share their initiatives to perceivably reduce competition between metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions (see Recommendation 7, Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2003). Another difference is there do not appear to be additional bonus points awarded to achieve permanency as in Australia, or previously in Canada, though it is similarly assumed nomination and provincial initiatives\textsuperscript{xv} are substantive enough to attract immigrants to regions. Immigration Minister Dennis Coderre has already deemed PNP successful despite its short inception, such that it has been suggested that local municipalities practice PNP, and equalisation payments gradually subside\textsuperscript{xvi} (International Reform Monitor 2002).

The overall success of PNP remains to be seen, given the short implementation period and more specifically, whether immigrants honour their social contracts. As yet, monitoring does not appear to be addressed adequately in the PNP or in relevant documents, for example, "The Provincial Nominee Program: A Partnership to Attract Immigrants to All Parts of Canada". Nonetheless, Canada and Australia’s regional skilled immigration programs are quite similar,
although PNP initiatives to attract immigrants appear developed to a higher level than in SsMM. The Daily News suggests PNP initiatives have not been expanded *enough* and for example, could embrace corporate-tax breaks for businesses re-location/expansion (25th June 2002). Withers and Powall suggest that Australia could benefit from implementing SsMM at a comparably higher level as PNP, for example, the bonus points system could be tiered (2003).
10. Discussion

From these case studies it should be noted that:

- settlement patterns indicate residency in particular areas of Australia are undesirable or not possible, as was also suggested in Hugo’s address to the ‘Growing Regional Cities’ Conference with regard to the findings of his current research.

The parameters of this report did not include high-density living as opposed to population dispersal, because those are the current Commonwealth Government’s immigration policy’s terms of reference. However, I suggest that policy aimed at dispersing the population needs to be within the context of capitalising on where people desire to settle and where there are pursuable economic, and other, opportunities.

This should not be misconstrued as a suggestion that resources be withdrawn from lowly populated regions or that there is no/limited need for service provision in these areas;

- There is a considerable lack of research into population settlement patterns and motivations for movement, as again noted by Hugo in his address to the ‘Growing Regional Cities’ Conference, and supported by Tasmania’s foremost demographer, Natalie Jackson. Substantive research could lead to better-informed policy (Jackson 2003) and the development of more effective policy and immigration programs; and

- Any attempt at influencing population settlement must be done so considering the divergent characteristics and needs of regions, and with agreement from all three tiers of Government, private, public and community interests. Not so much a national population policy, but committed, socio-economic 20-30 year jurisdictional plans, (made accountable through partnerships) that consider the needs and objectives in strategic plans of other States, to achieve the best population outcomes in progressing Australia’s national interest.
11. Recommendations

There are three primary population settlement options apparent to Australia that can be capitalised on in policy in the attempt to broaden settlement distribution. The first is that maintaining the direct attraction of skilled and other immigrant categories to regional Australia.

11.1 Maintain existent programs and expand to other immigrant categories

The SsMM has potential to be deemed unsuccessful as evaluation is based on numeric terms only. It must be realised that settlement of immigrants to regional Australia diversifies economies, having a multiplier effect on economies of scale otherwise not experienced (McKenzie 1994). Achieving this does not only require the settlement of scores of thousands of new immigrants per region per annum; regional Australia does not attract immigrants en masse anyway.

Despite Withers and Powall’s suggestion to increase regional immigration to 45% of total immigrants received (2003:28) – which is the position the Federal Opposition is maintaining (www.alp.org.au/media) - it would be problematic for such rapid immigrant increase to regions when there are limited employment opportunities, among other factors (Birrell 2003, McHugh 2003, Beswick 2003). Attracting skilled immigrants to regional Australia is inherent to both the Government and Opposition’s immigration policies but neither policy appear connected to regional development, let alone what such an influx of immigrants would do in regional Australia: whether there is relevant use and opportunity for immigrants economically, socially or culturally (see www.minister.immi.gov.au/media_releases).

Current SsMM have only been running for six years at most with participatory numbers being small relative to other immigration programs. Nevertheless settlement under these programs has exponentially increased, as displayed in Figure 6. It is hard to discern whether that is due to growing awareness, immigrants having no other means to achieve permanency, the attractiveness of the program, improved policy, or other reasons, rather than achieving the Government goal of dispersing immigrant settlement.
It is feasible that escalating the level of regional skilled immigration initiatives, as per Canadian PNP’s, could increase immigration directly to regions but would presumably require a relative increase in resources which assumes an increase in Government priority. Irrespective of such an increase Commonwealth priority and allocated resources, regional immigration policy should be within the broader context of regional development and conducted with sensitivity to existent communities. The case studies of Shepparton and Tasmania emphasise the need for regionally specific immigration programs, and illustrate the benefits of close consultative relations (between service industries alone).

11.2 Target integrated migrants
I suggest that regional skilled immigration programs could be greatly enhanced and complimented by encompassing other immigration options. The second settlement option is arguably idyllic: attracting immigrants to regions post-settlement. Hugo (1999) has found that immigrants have much more highly concentrated settlement patterns than the local population, the destination of which Professor Sue Richardson has identified is primarily decided before arrival (2002). As approximately 65% of immigrants consistently locate in Sydney (40%+) and Melbourne (25%+), it is contestable as to how much settlement patterns could actually be rerouted.

Hugo indicates that after immigrants have lived in Australia for a considerable period they are inclined to move to areas that do not necessarily have the presence of the same (source country) ethnic community as is common at initial settlement (1999). The likelihood for settlement dispersal is higher again for second and third-generation migrants. This suggests potential to influence immigrant settlement patterns upon integration, though achieving integration is arguably an arbitrary notion in itself.

11.3 Target the local population
The third option of influencing the more even distribution of population is directed at the local population. Australia has one of the most mobile populations in the world, with 42.3% of the population moving in the previous Inter-Census period (ABS 2001a:1). The composition and motivating factors of this population is unclear, though it is suspected that productive and
retiree demographics are prominent and thus economic and social lifestyle factors are primary influences for re-location. Although the actual distance of re-location is surely varied, the proportion of re-locating Australians is considerably greater than what is received in annual net-migration, of which only a fraction settle in regional areas.

The apparent increase in counter-urbanisation and coastal decentralisation (Bell 1995), and considerably higher growth rates of some regional areas than capitals, indicate that influencing the local population could be feasible, though initiatives beyond current trends would have to be highly influential if population trends were truly desired\textsuperscript{xvii}. Again, if such initiatives and programs were engaged, they would have to be within the context of broader regional development to maximise sustainability infrastructure development, environmental viability, and service delivery, and again to avoid alienating existent communities.

12. Summary
The case of Tasmania typifies the population juxtaposition, where economic progress increases population growth and increases pull-factors and retention of skilled and other immigrant category’s attraction to regional Australia. Additionally, Tasmania exemplifies how immigration will not ameliorate demographic problems, a much more holistic approach will as I propose via a three-pronged approach by the means of strategic, jurisdictional plans within the broader context of regional development.

I do not mean to detract from the value immigrants bring to regions, the case of Shepparton clearly displays a buoyant community attributable to cultural diversity. Rather, I suggest that more sufficient ‘carrots’ be dangled to disperse settlement patterns of the population rather than targeting a particular demographic that is proven to not be numerically large. I propose apparent settlement patterns be \textit{capitalised} on, much broader population groups targeted, the level of policy initiatives and awareness of programs increased all within a committed, broader development context, and settlement monitoring given greater credence as it is critical to successful integration and is thus far inadequate (Gerritsen 2003, Beswick 2003).
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14. Endnotes

i Australia’s regional migration policies do not define regional though do exclude some areas that would otherwise arguably be considered as regional, such as Wollongong and New Castle, and includes capital cities and major metropolises that would arguably not be considered regional, such as Hobart and Adelaide.

ii Net migration is calculated by subtracting total emigrants from Australia from total immigrants to Australia, considering the temporary and long-term temporary nature of some immigrants.

iii Extra bonus points are awarded to migrants who have studied for at least 2 yrs at a University in a regional area or in an area with a population of 200,000 or less. Business migrants are being granted greater assistance in taxation and are awarded permanency if having successfully operated a business in a regional area for 2 years whilst maintaining state sponsorship (DIMIA 2003:2).

iv Hugo’s research indicates that longstanding migrants have a tendency to replicate local demographic trends such that settlement patterns of long-term migrants become more relaxed over time and disperse (1999:11).

v Bell (1995), and McKenzie (1994:32) attribute regional growth commonly occurring by absorbing populations from smaller regional and rural localities experiencing increased mobility, improved technology and mechanisation, and the expansion of agricultural economies of scale. The City of Shepparton has extensive industry, infrastructure, employment and education opportunities, and service provision and the ABS would therefore diagnose it in a primary position to absorb populations of smaller surrounding areas (1999:8-9). However, McNeill suggests the City of Greater Shepparton’s growth is not attributable to the absorption of populations from other surrounding towns. McNeill has observed the deregulation and centralisation of services and commercial industries but not that of the population. Rather, surrounding towns are experiencing population growth albeit at a slower rate, with growth of Greater Shepparton estimated as the second highest in Victoria, rather at 1.9% than 1.2% (McNeill 2003).

vi This could partly be explained by most visas requiring immigrants to be aged under-45.

vii According to McNeil (2003), Shepparton has a commercial catchment area of 250,000 made feasible by its highly developed irrigation system. Unsurprisingly, Shepparton’s agricultural industry is highly intensive too with approximately 500,000 hectares of land being farmed within the region, producing 27% of Victoria’s agricultural output!

viii Although Tasmania’s migrants are typically from a concentrated source of countries being England, Holland and New Zealand, in the previous three years Tasmania has received the most amount of migrants from Sudan all of whom are humanitarian refugees, followed by South African skilled migrants, then the UK mixed between family and skilled migrants. There are also significant proportions of humanitarian migrants from Sierra Leone and Ethiopia (‘Top 50 Countries of Birth by Migration Stream’ www.immi.gov.au/settle/data/select_dynamic_report.shtml). This is contrasted with Shepparton which overwhelmingly received Albanian family migrants, followed by Iraqis 1/3 of whom were humanitarian refugees, then Kuwaitis 2/3 of whom were...
humanitarian refugees (‘Top 50 Countries of Birth by Migration Stream’ www.immi.gov.au/settle/data/select_dynamic_report.shtml). Interestingly there was only 1 family migrant from Italy during this period. A margin of inaccuracy must be allowed for because this data is based on where migrants intend to settle or where they are enrolled in English classes and so does not allow for change and so may actually understate the numbers and settlement locations of migrants.

ix Tasmania’s population growth is only gradual but this understates the relatively massive activity in population shifts, with out-migration being approximately between 14-15,000 per annum and influx of between a little over 15,000. Tasmania’s Senior Demographer, Natalie Jackson, states such ‘churning’ is a highly economically productive process due to increased demand for various transport and real estate services and commodity and housing goods. The re/productive population predominantly out-migrating is not being reciprocated by the composition of the retiree in-migrant population.

x McHugh (2003) states that a growing and confident economy will attract immigrants (and out-migrants of other States) as is also maintained in Tasmania’s Population 2003: An information paper on recent trends and State Government Policies which pertains economic growth will maintain local Tasmanian’s settlement (2003). In recent years strong economic growth has been occurring in Hobart, albeit Tasmania, as evidenced by increasing and record-high consumer and business confidence, the real estate property boom, and decreasing unemployment rates. It is perhaps too early to tell whether local Tasmanian’s have remained and the impact on immigration levels to Tasmania is unclear, as regional skilled migration programs have only been incepted in Tasmania in recent years.

xi However, it should be noted that immigration is certainly not proportional to Australian population growth or distribution in any case.

xii The right has recently been awarded to DIMIA to cancel permanent status if it is proven that immigrants are abusing regional settlement agreements because it allows easier achievement of permanency. This will ultimately lead to the greater ‘integrity’ of the program, as put by McHugh.

xiii Chain migration to Tasmania is evident in the major migrant communities from Britain, New Zealand and the Netherlands, though is comparatively at a lower rate than other Australian regions. Chain migration is very small for Asian regions, though is existent, as is chain migration from African regions though is more recent than migration from Asia. Migration from Southern and Eastern European and Northern and Western European countries have contributed the most to Tasmania’s migrant population. With the exception of a few countries, chain migration from these regions is now experiencing moderate decline with natural decrease being greater than replacement migration (ABS (c) 2001:B05-7).

xiii During the writing of this report Beswick has taken up the position of Social Planner and Policy Officer at the Melbourne City Council.

xiv There has been particular emphasis on PNP being encouraged, lest the impression of dictating where migrants settle which would directly contravene Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms. (House of Commons June 2002. See National Post 26th June 2003, Ottawa Citizen 26th June 2002, The Daily News June 25th 2002).

The Reform Monitor states the PNP is a ‘challenge to the status quo’, as locational settlement has largely been unregulated in Canada since World War II. Previously cities attracting the clear majority of migrants made ‘equalization’ payments via the federal government to cities not attracting migrants.

Decentralisation of business has been debated at length and is overwhelmingly esteemed as irrational for reasons of competition, efficiency, cost, and networking (Birrell & O’Connor 2002). Increased counter-urbanisation assumes decentralisation of lifestyle choices, which then creates increased regional demand for service and trade industries. This determines expansion of economic diversity, increasing employment opportunities benefiting surrounding areas and making the regions more attractive to relocating Australians and for international immigrants.