



Australian Government

Planning for Australia's Future Population



Planning for Australia's future population

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From the Prime Minister

There is so much that is great about our country. We are a stable, prosperous and peaceful nation. But this doesn't mean we can be complacent. We cannot ignore the big issues in the hope they will solve themselves.

One of these big issues is population. Everyone has a view on what Australia should look like in the future. But I think that all of those views would include new infrastructure and better services.

They would include a safe Australia, where jobs are plentiful and opportunities abound. An Australia that welcomes new migrants but ensures we choose who joins us. An Australia where people can afford a home for their families and be well enough off to give them what they need.

Beyond that, Australians don't want to be stuck in traffic or wedged in overcrowded public transport just to get to where they need to go. They want to feel they live in a country of shared values and ideals. Australians want to feel that they are seeing the benefits of their country's success.

I know some Australians feel that we will not realise this future. For some, it is congestion, pollution, overcrowding, and loss of community affecting their quality of life. For others, it is the difficulty in attracting jobs, skills and new ideas to their cities, towns and regions. As the Government, it's our job to change this. It is our job to draw up a plan for Australia's future population. And we are getting on with that job.

We can't do it on our own – State, Territory and Local governments all play a vital role. But I know Australians don't care who takes action, they just want us to get on with the job. This is why the Commonwealth Government is *planning for Australia's future population* and is working with State, Territory and Local governments on a shared approach to manage the current challenges and develop long term plans.



As part of this plan, the Commonwealth Government is stepping up to the big nation building projects with rail and road both a priority across our cities and regions. We are driving our economy forward to fund the essential services and social infrastructure Australians rely on. We are seeking to manage population growth by adopting well targeted, responsible, and sustainable immigration policies.

Our plan, working across all levels of government, will help to ensure Australia continues to be one of the most liveable places in the world, including for generations to come.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Scott Morrison'.

Planning for Australia's future population

Australia's population is now over 25 million, having increased by almost five times over the last century.

Australia's population story is one of strong growth. Each state and city and region has its own population story and these have varied over time. In general, growth has been strongest in Australia's cities, although some regional areas have also grown strongly.

Population growth has shaped the Australia we know today – an Australia that is the envy of the developed world with strong economic growth and a cohesive society. Australians are proud of their country and migrants generally integrate well into their new communities. Unemployment is low, crime rates continue to fall, more Australians are participating in education, and health outcomes have been continuously improving. All these indicators point to a country with strong living standards for its people.

Managing growth in our cities

- Reducing the migration program ceiling
- Encouraging migrants to settle outside Sydney and Melbourne
- \$1 billion Urban Congestion Fund
- City Deals
- Guaranteeing essential services
- Record investment in hospitals, schools and child care

If Australia is to continue to make the most of population growth, we must meet the needs of future generations. We must manage the rate of growth through the migration program and plan and invest in the infrastructure and services needed in the future.

Better population planning will help overcome capacity constraints and congestion pressures in Australia's biggest cities. This will be a key focus of the Government going forward with major investment in infrastructure right across Australia. Reforms to housing and a continued focus on key services such as health and education will maintain a high quality of life for Australians.

Investing in our regions

- Regional Deals
- Decentralisation agenda
- Designated Area Migration Agreements
- Regional provisional visas
- Destination Australia Scholarships
- Extending the Temporary Graduate visa for regional students
- Roads of Strategic Importance

The Government is investing right across Australia and throughout the regions. We are connecting the major cities with our growing regional centres by upgrading key road and rail corridors. This will connect sectors such as agriculture, mining and tourism to transport hubs. We are also working with State, Territory and Local governments through Regional Deals to support regions to make the most of their natural strengths.

The Government will provide up to 4,720 scholarships over four years for both domestic and international students, studying at a regional campus of a university or vocational education and training provider.

Changes will also be made to the Temporary Graduate visa for international students who have completed their studies at a regional campus of a university, to ensure they can continue to live and work in regional Australia.

This will complement other changes to migration settings, such as Designated Area Migration Agreements, to help regions attract the skills and workers that they need.

A strong and prosperous Australia

- Attracting the best migrants
- Supporting jobs and skills needs
- Managing an ageing population

Australia's economic strength is supported by a successful migration program that brings skilled people of working age. These migrants help offset the effects of an ageing population and address skills shortages in the economy. The Government will focus on attracting the most highly-skilled migrants while ensuring States and Territories and employers can continue to meet their changing needs. We're ensuring that Australia's migration program is equipped for an increasingly globalised economy.

Well-functioning communities

- Community Hubs
- Fostering Integration Grants
- Strengthening communities through sport and recreation activities
- Community Languages Multicultural Grants Program
- Enhanced Community Engagement

Australia is overwhelmingly a harmonious nation where diversity is celebrated. But this relies on continuing community connections and the successful integration of new arrivals. The Government is increasing support for migrant groups to allow them to engage in the community and workforce.

Delivering a National Population and Planning Framework

- Collaboration
- Transparency
- Long-term planning
- Community focus

Planning for and managing population growth is a shared responsibility of Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local governments. This is why we are joining with States, Territories and the Australian Local Government Association to better plan for population changes. Already, this is bringing benefits, with all levels of government working together on practical ways to increase collaboration and form a united approach to population issues.

To provide a central, consistent and expert perspective on population growth in Australia, the Commonwealth Government will establish a Centre for Population. The Centre will help all levels of government and the community better understand how states, cities and regions' populations are changing and the challenges that change presents.

The Government recognises that population changes have broad-reaching effects across the economy and society. Population growth should not be a side effect of other policies. It should reflect an active and deliberate approach, with governments working together.

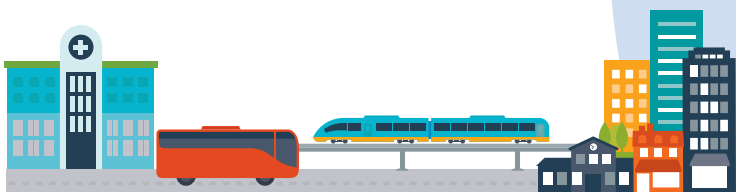
This process marks a turning point in the way population is treated across government, with a move to greater collaboration, transparency and longer term planning. Most importantly, this plan delivers the action necessary to ensure that population growth benefits all Australians.

Taking action to manage



MANAGING GROWTH IN OUR CITIES

Ensuring population growth
supports liveability through new
infrastructure and better services



A STRONG AND PROSPEROUS AUSTRALIA

Keeping the economy strong to
improve the lives of Australians



DELIVERING A NATIONAL POPULATION AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Australia's changing population



INVESTING IN OUR REGIONS

Better connecting regional Australia with opportunities for growth



WELL-FUNCTIONING COMMUNITIES

Building safe and connected communities

- Collaboration
- Transparency
- Long-term planning
- Community focus

Working with State, Territory and Local governments

The Commonwealth Government is taking advantage of the opportunities that population growth offers and meeting the challenges head on.

Managing population growth is a shared responsibility involving Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local governments working together.

The Prime Minister, Premiers, Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) came together at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in December 2018 to discuss this important national issue. Population is a matter of national significance that requires coordinated action by all Australian governments. This is reflected in COAG's decision to include population on the agenda for discussion at all future meetings.

To take immediate action, COAG tasked Treasurers, along with the President of ALGA, to develop a National Population and Planning Framework. COAG asked Treasurers to consider jurisdictions' input to migration settings, opportunities for greater population planning and data sharing, future skills requirements at a regional level, dispersal of international students beyond major capital cities and infrastructure planning and priority setting.

All levels of government will collaborate to find a shared way forward on these issues. This marks the beginning of a new bottom-up process to ensure that population growth is understood, and its pressures are managed and addressed. Only by taking action can governments ensure that population growth improves the lives of Australians through continued economic growth, strong social cohesion and investments to accommodate growth.

Treasurers and ALGA put this into action in February 2019 with the inaugural meeting of the Treasurers' Forum on Population. This meeting was held as part of the Council on Federal Financial Relations (CFFR) and is intended to be held annually, with working groups to continue to progress issues of mutual interest throughout the year.

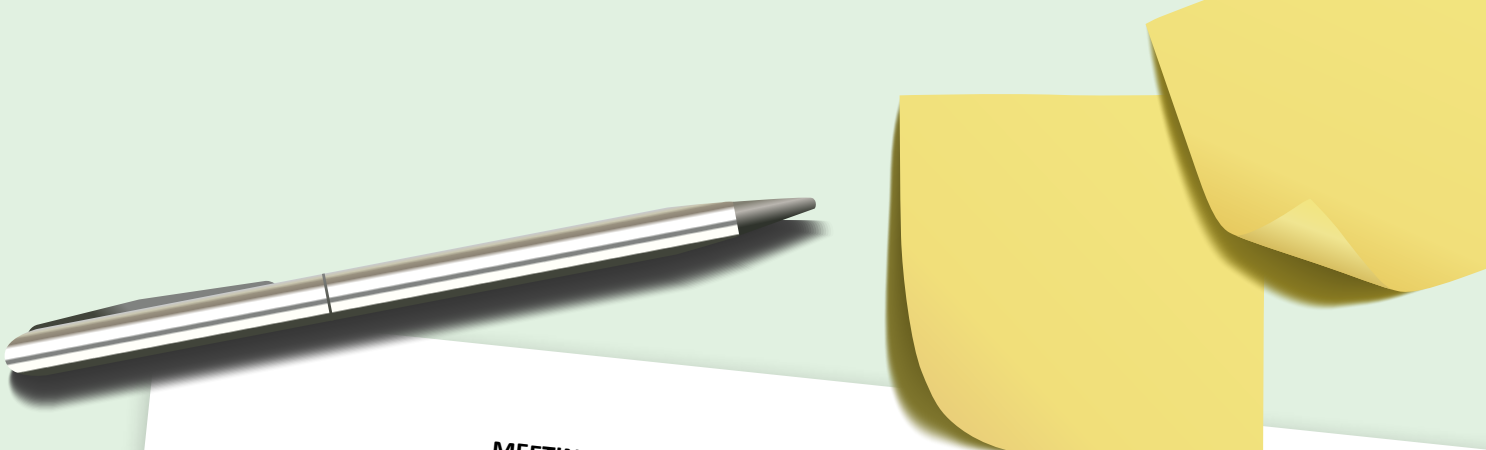
The Treasurers' Forum discussed the importance of a holistic approach to population, which nevertheless recognises the very different population changes happening around Australia.

Treasurers and ALGA also agreed to establish two working groups. One working group will cover Regional Analysis and the other will cover Data and Forecasting.

These working groups will form a strong basis for continued collaboration with States, Territories and ALGA as all levels of government come together to develop the National Population and Planning Framework.

For too long, population issues have been fragmented across governments, reducing the effectiveness of population planning, data analysis, and policy development. To ensure there is a central, consistent and expert perspective on population growth in Australia, the Commonwealth Government will establish a Centre for Population.

The Centre will be the focal point for national expertise on population issues. It will pursue opportunities to improve data and research on population and facilitate collaboration on population planning across Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local governments.



MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS

ADELAIDE – 12 DECEMBER 2018

COMMUNIQUÉ

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) held its 46th meeting today in Adelaide. Leaders made progress on priority economic, social and national security issues to improve the lives and ensure the safety of all Australians.

Improving population planning and management

Population growth is an important economic driver and contributes to our dynamic and diverse society.

Australia's population has grown faster than most other advanced economies in recent years. Over two-thirds of our population increase in the past decade has occurred in Sydney, Melbourne and South East Queensland, driving demand for infrastructure, and services such as housing. At the same time, other jurisdictions and regional centres are calling for more people to support their economies and fill critical gaps to ensure regional communities thrive. Today, leaders committed to working together to improve population planning and management to ensure we strike the right balance for all Australians.

Managing population change is a shared responsibility involving all levels of government working across many fronts – from investment in infrastructure through to service delivery. To ensure we get the best outcomes managing population change over the coming decade and beyond, leaders requested that Commonwealth, state and territory Treasurers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association consider a framework for national population and planning to address population management in Australia, for consideration at a future COAG meeting.

The Treasurers' Forum will meet for the first time in February 2019 to start developing the Framework, including to consider jurisdictions' input to migration settings, opportunities for greater population planning and data sharing, and to identify future skills requirements at a regional level. The Treasurers' Forum will also consider how to encourage dispersal of international students beyond major capital cities and support infrastructure planning and priority setting. Given the importance of population planning and management, leaders also agreed that it be a standing item on the COAG agenda.

COAG recognised Australia's migration program has been an important driver of population change, contributing to our culturally rich society, and is increasingly important for sustaining our per capita economic growth as our population ages. The Commonwealth is committed to working with states and territories to ensure that the program is informed by the needs of local communities, as one element of strengthening coordination of population planning and management across all levels of government.

Australia's population story

Australia has a history of strong population growth, having grown by more than 20 million people since Federation.

Along with nations such as New Zealand and Israel, Australia has seen some of the highest population growth rates in the developed world.

Our population growth rate has fluctuated over time. The growth rate of 1.6 per cent for 2017-18 is the same as the average since Federation, but lower than during the 1950s and 1960s and higher than during the 1980s and 1990s.

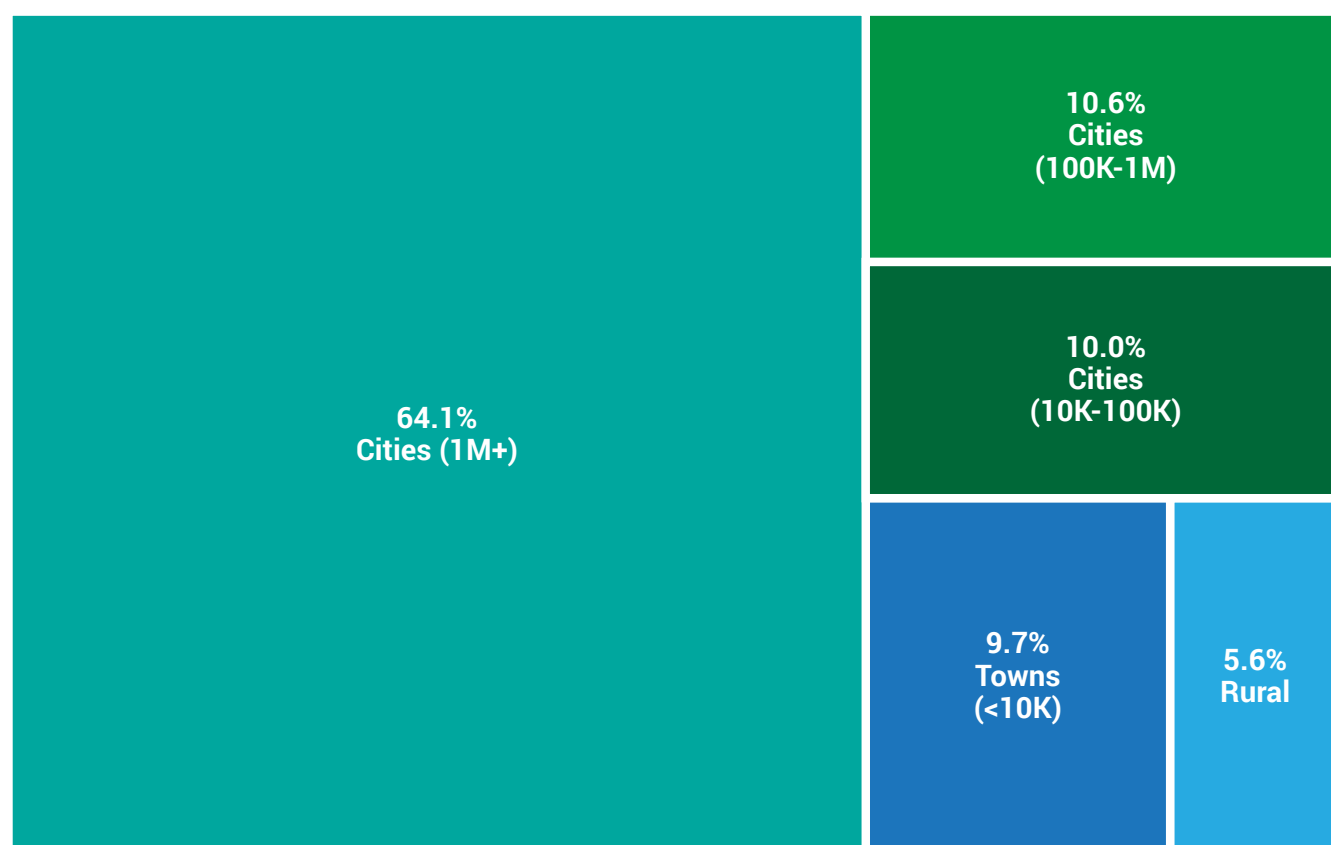
For much of Australia's history, population growth has also been urban population growth. The proportion of people concentrated in cities, and particularly capital cities, is larger now than at any time in history.

In 1911, the eight capital cities accounted for nearly 40 per cent of the population, by 1944 more than half of the population, and by 2017 over two-thirds.

By 2029, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) expects that Australia's population will grow to 29.5 million.

Sydney's population is projected to reach 6.4 million. Melbourne is projected to be Australia's fastest growing city, increasing its population from 5.1 million to 6.3 million. Melbourne is projected to overtake Sydney as the most populous Australian city by 2037.

Where are people in Australia?



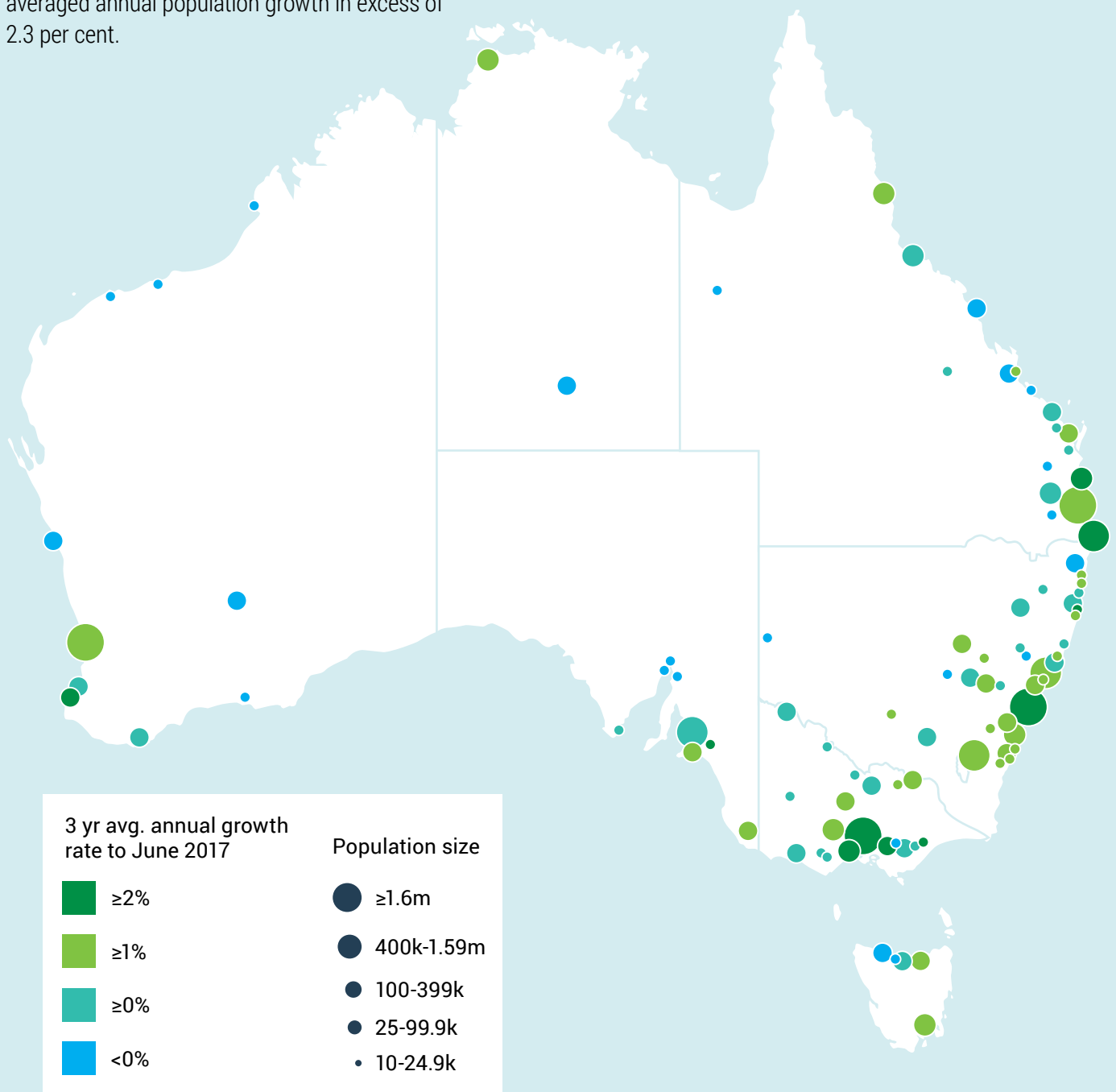
Population growth around Australia

In the three years to 30 June 2017, Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and South-East Queensland all averaged at least 1.9 per cent annual population growth. Annual growth topped 2.8 per cent in Melbourne in 2015-16. Population growth in the other capitals has been more moderate.

Some regional centres also experienced strong population growth. Several regional areas including Geelong, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast averaged annual population growth in excess of 2.3 per cent.

Regional areas such as Ballarat, Bendigo, the Illawarra, Hume and the Hunter Valley (excluding Newcastle) also experienced solid population growth of between 1 and 2 per cent per year.

At the same time, some other Australian regions, particularly outer regional and remote areas, experienced low growth or a declining population.



The origins of a growing Australia

Australia's population growth has been driven by both natural increase and net overseas migration.

Historically, natural increase (births minus deaths) has been the main driver of Australia's population growth. However, net overseas migration (immigration minus emigration) has been the main driver during brief periods in history.

Natural increase, despite some fluctuations, has been slowing for many decades. This has been driven by a falling birth rate.

Since the mid-2000s, a falling birth rate combined with a relatively high number of overseas arrivals, has resulted in net overseas migration again contributing more to population growth than natural increase.

In 2017-18, net overseas migration was 236,700 and natural increase was 153,800. In total, Australia's population grew by 390,500, or 1.6 per cent.

Since 2010, around 42 per cent of population growth has occurred from natural increase, with migration accounting for the remaining 58 per cent.

Migration has contributed particularly strongly to growth in a number of capital cities. In Sydney, overseas born people contributed nearly two-thirds of the increase. In Melbourne and Perth, they contributed half of the population growth.

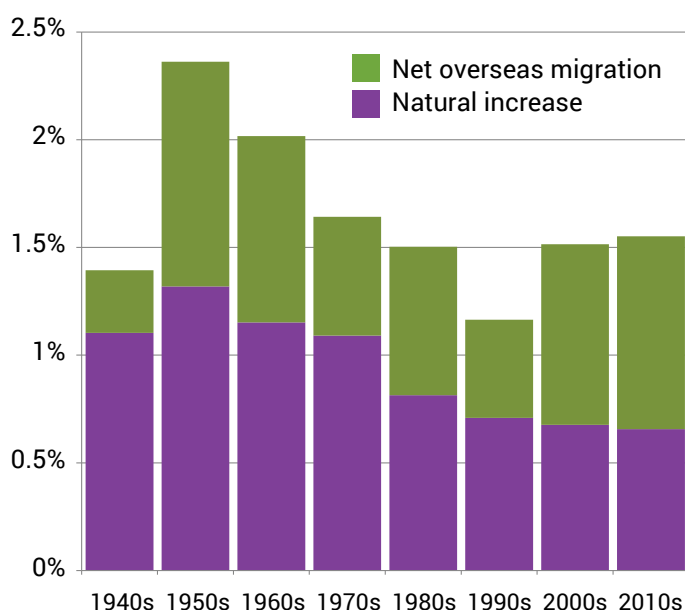
Migration has provided a boost to the economy, bringing skilled, working age people to our shores. This has increased labour force participation, and has likely improved productivity.

Migrants also make an important social contribution to the Australian community, bringing new languages, ideas and cultural perspectives to Australia, and helping to make us one of the most successful multicultural nations in the world.

The ABS projects that Australia's average annual population growth rate will be 1.6 per cent over the decade to 2027 under current projections compared to 0.5 per cent without continued migration.

In the absence of migration, holding everything else constant, Sydney would grow below the national average at 0.3 per cent, while Melbourne would grow at 0.8 per cent. Adelaide and a number of regional areas would experience declining populations in absolute terms over the decade.

What drives population growth?



Population increases in Australia in 2017-18



TEMPORARY MIGRATION

Most temporary migrants will eventually leave Australia, however some will go on to become permanent residents.

- New Zealanders are the largest group of temporary migrants, making up around 40 per cent of temporary residents in Australia at any given time.
- Growth in the number of temporary migrants has largely been driven by international students.
- Around 1 in 2 temporary skilled workers have gone on to become permanent residents, compared to 1 in 6 international students.
- Most tourists and visitors do not visit for long enough to be counted in Australia's population.



PERMANENT MIGRATION

The size of the permanent migration program has remained largely stable since 2012. Around two-thirds of permanent migrants enter through the skilled stream.

Births minus deaths



NATURAL INCREASE

While Australians are living longer, falling fertility rates have meant that the contribution of natural increase to population growth has declined.

Strong population growth in cities

Population growth has been particularly strong in Australia's major cities.

Between 1996 and 2016, population growth in capital cities accounted for 75 per cent of the more than 6 million increase in Australia's population. But growth has not been consistent between cities.

Different cities have grown at different rates as changing economic conditions have attracted workers and families to move and take up opportunities across Australia.

High flows of Australians and newly arrived migrants moving to mining boom states has meant that Brisbane, Perth and Darwin experienced relatively high rates of growth over the past 20 years.

All of these three cities recorded average annual growth at or above 2 per cent over the period. At the same time, the non-mining states saw slower population growth, despite their cities growing strongly in absolute terms.

In absolute terms, Melbourne grew by 1.4 million, Sydney by 1.2 million, Brisbane by 0.8 million, Perth by 0.7 million and the remaining capitals by 0.4 million.

As the mining boom has dissipated, the flows of people have reversed, with Australians and newly arrived migrants attracted to cities such as Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra.

Brisbane's population growth has remained strong, perhaps due to the non-mining component of its economy, while Perth's population growth has slowed.

Adelaide has experienced low population growth throughout the 20 year period, while Darwin has seen high fluctuations in growth from year to year.

Concentrated population growth has created vibrant cities that attract jobs and communities and deliver innovation and productivity.

But it has also heightened existing pressures on infrastructure, housing, services, communities and the environment.

It is likely that our cities will continue to grow as Australians and newly arrived migrants alike seek to take up the opportunities that Australia's cities provide.

But this population growth needs to be sustainable.

It needs to occur at a rate where infrastructure and services can be put in place to match the growing population.

If this does not occur, the result is increased congestion, housing pressures, pollution and lack of support and amenity. This has adverse consequences for quality of life.

Population changes in Australia's capital cities in 2016-17



Sydney

Population
5.1m

Sydney is Australia's largest city and was the most popular first point of arrival for new overseas migrants.

Pop Growth: 2.1% (107,432)

Natural: 0.7% (35,777)

NOM: 1.8% (90,154)

NIM: -0.4% (-18,499)



Melbourne

Population
4.8m

Melbourne was Australia's fastest growing city and is projected to become the largest city within the next 20 years.

Pop Growth: 2.7% (129,394)

Natural: 0.8% (36,283)

NOM: 1.8% (82,938)

NIM: 0.2% (10,173)



Brisbane

Population
2.4m

Brisbane's population growth from internal migration was the largest of all Australian cities in absolute terms.

Pop Growth: 2.1% (50,785)

Natural: 0.8% (17,960)

NOM: 0.9% (20,638)

NIM: 0.5% (12,187)



Perth

Population
2.0m

Perth's population growth has slowed in recent years following a period of high population growth during the mining boom.

Pop Growth: 1.0% (19,778)

Natural: 0.8% (16,326)

NOM: 0.6% (11,920)

NIM: -0.4% (-8,468)



Adelaide

Population
1.3m

Adelaide's growth was boosted by overseas migrants, with natural increase offset by movements to other parts of Australia.

Pop Growth: 0.8% (10,110)

Natural: 0.4% (5,507)

NOM: 0.8% (10,708)

NIM: -0.5% (-6,105)



Canberra

Population
412k

Canberra was Australia's largest and fastest growing inland city.

Pop Growth: 2.1% (8,563)

Natural: 0.8% (3,369)

NOM: 1.0% (3,964)

NIM: 0.3% (1,230)



Hobart

Population
229k

Hobart was the only city where population growth from internal migration exceeded growth from overseas migration.

Pop Growth: 1.4% (3,175)

Natural: 0.3% (703)

NOM: 0.5% (1,201)

NIM: 0.6% (1,271)



Darwin

Population
149k

Darwin had the highest birth rate as well as the largest share of residents moving to other parts of Australia.

Pop Growth: 1.2% (1,782)

Natural: 1.3% (1,877)

NOM: 0.9% (1,329)

NIM: -1.0% (-1,424)



Outside capital cities

Population
8.0m

Population growth rates of regions outside the capital cities varied widely but, on average, were lower than the capitals.

Pop Growth: 0.9% (75,589)

Natural: 0.3% (26,327)

NOM: 0.5% (39,627)

NIM: 0.1% (9,635)

Pop Growth is the combination of natural increase, net overseas migration (NOM) and net internal migration (NIM).

Natural increase (Natural) is the difference between births and deaths.

Net overseas migration (NOM) is the difference between overseas arrivals and overseas departures.

Net internal migration (NIM) is the difference between arrivals from and departures to other areas of Australia.



Taking the pressure off cities

Both Australian-born and overseas-born residents have increasingly chosen to live in Australia's cities.

Overseas-born people are more likely to live in cities, with 83 per cent living in a capital city compared to 61 per cent of the Australian-born population in 2016.

Over the past 20 years, at least half of Sydney and Melbourne's population growth has come from migration.

The Government recognises that the current rate of growth, and its concentration in major cities, has heightened existing pressures in these cities, leading to rising congestion and reduced liveability.

The Government has decided to reduce the permanent migration program ceiling by a cumulative 120,000 places over four years.

This is designed to reduce pressure on Australia's major cities while new arrangements for improved planning across governments and more infrastructure are put in place to manage long-term population growth and settlement across Australia.


To ensure that Australian businesses can still access the skills they need, the Government will seek to increase the proportion of migrants coming to Australia who are sponsored by an Australian business.

The Government will also offer States and Territories a greater say on migration by increasing the number of state nominated places.

This will provide increased flexibility for States to meet their particular population needs. States experiencing low population growth can look to attract a greater number of migrants to their State, while those States experiencing high growth can lower the numbers of migrants nominated.

States may also decide to choose migrants with certain characteristics or those migrants willing to live and work outside Australia's major capital cities.

This is appropriate for a country like Australia where the population needs are very different in different parts of the country.

An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood. In the center, there are several houses with brown tiled roofs. Some houses have solar panels installed on their roofs. The houses are surrounded by green trees and lawns. A paved road runs along the top and left sides of the image. A few cars are visible on the road. The overall scene depicts a typical suburban residential area.

Urban form and access to jobs and housing

Over the past decade, Australia's population increased by 3.8 million people – much of this in Sydney, Melbourne and South-East Queensland.

Much of this population growth has been accommodated by increasing the urban footprint of cities.

For example, Melbourne's outer suburbs have recently experienced strong population growth. Whittlesea alone accounted for 8 per cent of the city's population growth over the decade.

In Sydney, growth patterns were more balanced, but the outer urban ring still accounted for the largest share of population growth.

While population growth has been concentrated in the urban fringes of Australia's major cities, employment growth remains focused in CBDs.

For example, Sydney's inner area added over 90,000 jobs between 2011 and 2016, while the working age population in the area grew by around 75,000.

In contrast, the outer area of the city added over 75,000 jobs while the working age population grew by around 160,000 people.

Consequently, there is a growing mismatch between where people live and where they work.

However, as cities such as Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane grow, they will need to accommodate more people through alternative employment hubs to their CBDs.



Commonwealth infrastructure investment

The Commonwealth's \$75 billion, ten-year investment in infrastructure is delivering record levels of funding to major transport projects across the country.

The Government has funded more than 600 major projects since 2013. There are 162 projects under construction or development, 167 are in the pre-construction stage involving detailed design and planning works, procurements, or environmental assessment, and 279 have been completed.

The investments will reduce congestion, keep our roads safe, connect people to jobs and get our produce to market.

The Government has established the \$3.5 billion Roads of Strategic Importance initiative to upgrade key routes to improve access for businesses and communities to essential services, markets and employment opportunities. The Roads of Strategic Importance initiative includes \$1.5 billion for a Northern Australia Package for Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia, \$400 million for Tasmania, \$220 million for the Bindoon Bypass in Western Australia, and \$100 million for the Barton Highway Upgrade benefiting New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

The Government has also established the \$250 million Major Project Business Case Fund for the Commonwealth's early involvement in business case development for major projects.

Construction of the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport commenced in 2018 and operations are to begin by 2026. The Government is providing equity of \$5.3 billion in WSA Co to deliver stage one of the airport.

Construction of the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail project also commenced in 2018. The Government is delivering Inland Rail by providing \$9.3 billion in equity and grant funding to the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC). The ARTC will also enter into a Public Private Partnership to deliver the most complex sections of the project.

Major projects include METRONET in Perth, the Melbourne Airport Rail Link, the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan, the first stage of the North-South Rail Link in Western Sydney that includes connectivity to the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport, the upgrade of the Bruce Highway in Queensland, the Gawler Rail Line electrification in South Australia, and a new four-lane bridge to cross the Derwent River in Tasmania.



Busting congestion in cities

Infrastructure investments to manage growth and bust congestion are critical to ensuring Australians continue to experience a high quality of life.

Congestion imposes a significant cost on people living in our cities. Urban congestion limits access to employment and services and obstructs access to ports and markets.

Congestion in Australia's capital cities is estimated to cost the economy \$25 billion per year.

Driving is the dominant form of travel, representing over 80 per cent of annual passenger kilometres travelled in capital cities.

With more cars on the road, average travel speeds in capital cities have been slowing. For example, inner Melbourne's road speeds have been rapidly slowing, reducing by 25 per cent over the past decade.

Despite lower average road speeds, average commute times have only increased by around three to four minutes over the past decade.

This indicates that Australians are moving closer to work, changing to a job closer to home, travelling during off peak periods or working from home.

Adaptation is good news and governments are looking to facilitate this where possible. However, adaption is not costless and increased congestion can, over time, make cities less productive and liveable.

Not every person or employer is able to adjust, and adjustment also takes time.

Residents in outer-urban areas may have the greatest difficulty adjusting. These areas have longer commute distances and fewer public transport services.

Outer-urban areas are also more likely to be home to lower income households, meaning that moving to a suburb with greater economic opportunities may be prohibitively expensive.

The Government is committed to busting congestion and is investing \$1 billion in the Urban Congestion Fund, with projects targeting congestion in some of our worst affected urban areas.

Works include road upgrades, technological solutions which improve access to employment and transport hubs, and improving commuter corridors by addressing bottlenecks on bridges.

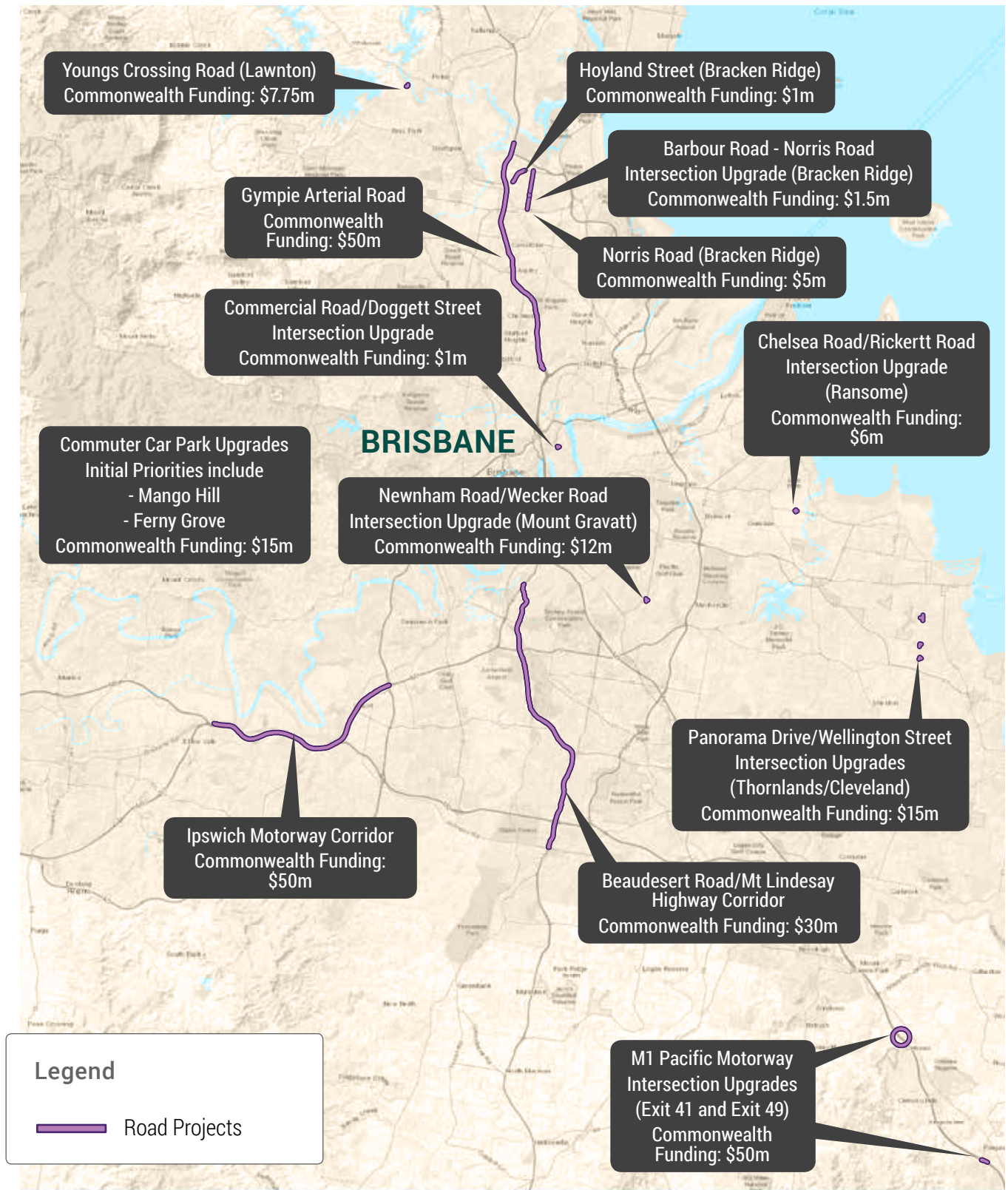
Public transport can also suffer from congestion. Many of the commuter rail corridors in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane have been experiencing capacity passenger loads during morning peaks since 2011.

Pressure on the public transport network is expected to continue. Government analysis estimates a 60 per cent increase in the number of public transport passengers between 2011 and 2031.

The Government is working with State, Territory and Local governments to build and upgrade transport connectivity in key locations.

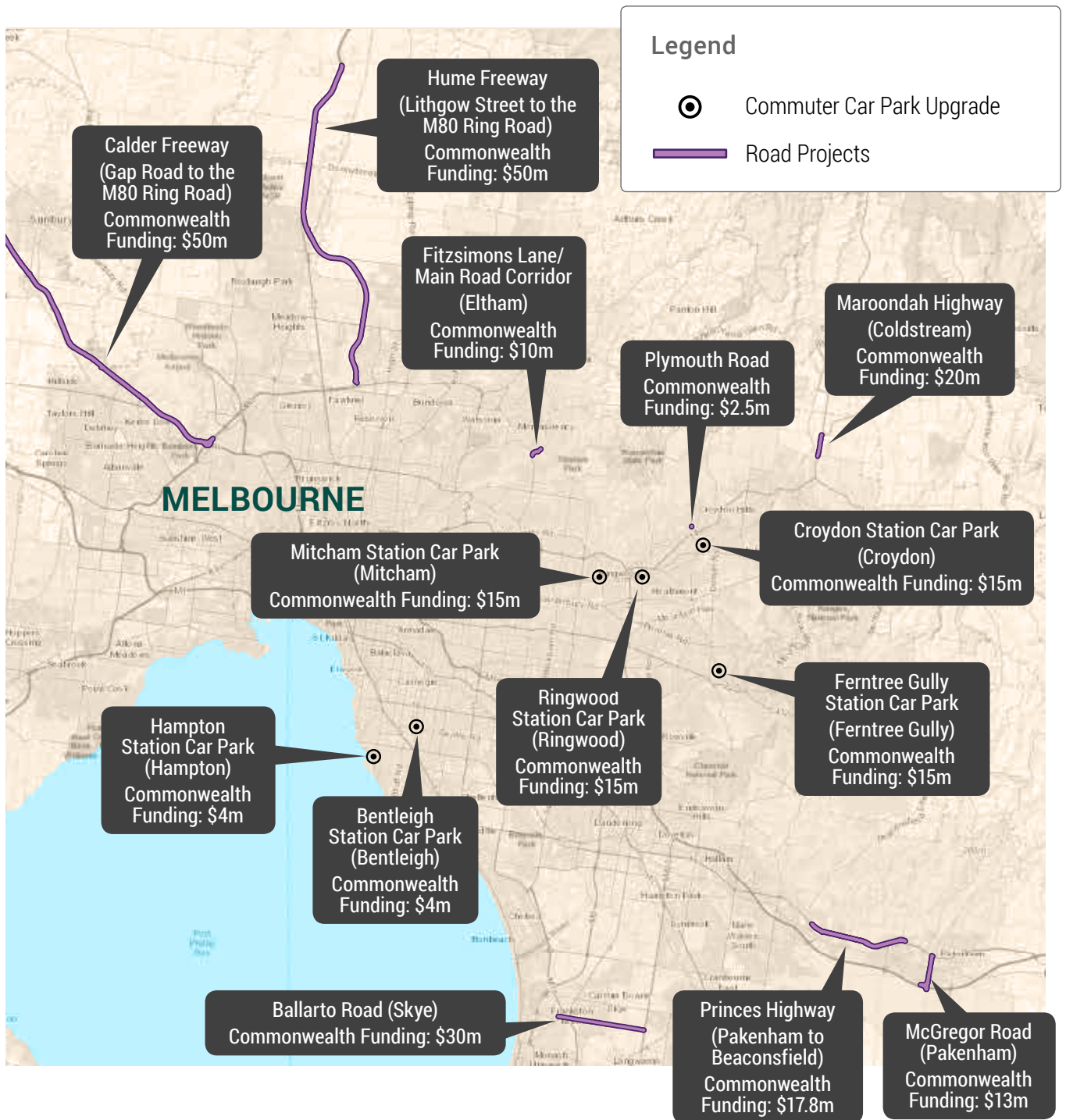
Urban congestion fund

Queensland



Urban congestion fund

Victoria



A background image showing three construction workers in hard hats and high-visibility vests on a construction site. One worker in the foreground is pointing upwards with his right hand while holding a clipboard. Another worker is visible behind him, and a third is partially visible on the right. The background shows industrial structures and a clear sky.

Targeted investment to drive urban development

Along with investments in transport infrastructure, the Government is increasing other forms of infrastructure through cooperative partnerships with State, Territory and Local governments.

A key pillar of the Commonwealth's engagement has been through City Deals which take a proactive approach to developing Australia's cities as a great place to live and work.

City Deals include setting a plan for the future of a city and then aligning policy and investments across all levels of government.

Catalytic infrastructure investments tied with urban governance and land use reform will ensure Australia's cities remain great places to live, work and play.

To date, the Government has negotiated City Deals for Townsville, Launceston, Western Sydney, Darwin, Hobart, Geelong, and Adelaide.

For example, the Western Sydney City Deal will deliver rail, jobs and community infrastructure for the people of Western Sydney, building on the Commonwealth Government's \$5.3 billion investment in the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport.

The centrepiece of the Western Sydney City Deal is a \$7 billion joint government commitment to the delivery of a Stage 1 North-South Rail Link from St Mary's to the Aerotropolis via the Airport by 2026.

Under the Deal, \$280 million in new government funding was announced to support infrastructure projects and liveability initiatives, including \$15 million in Commonwealth Government funding to accelerate planning reforms to support housing supply in Western Sydney.

Building on the success of the Western Sydney City Deal, the Government is progressing negotiations for City Deals with Perth and South-East Queensland.

By having a shared vision for the future of these communities and coordinating investments across all levels of government, the Government is ensuring congestion is reduced and access to jobs, services and affordable housing supports growing and liveable cities.



City Deals

A new way of working with State, Territory and Local governments



Deals being delivered



Townsville

- Constructing the North Queensland Stadium.
- Finalising the Port Channel Capacity Upgrade project business case and commitment of \$75 million in Commonwealth funding.
- Preserving the Townsville Eastern Access Rail Corridor.



Launceston

- \$260 million to support the University of Tasmania to relocate its main campus. This project is the largest single infrastructure investment in Launceston's history.
- \$95 million to improve the health of the Tamar Estuary.
- \$20.3 million for the City Heart project to reposition Launceston's CBD as a competitive, vibrant and attractive retail and visitor experience.



Geelong

- \$171 million to deliver a new Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre in the city centre.
- \$27.9 million to deliver a range of projects to revitalise public spaces in central Geelong.
- \$136 million to deliver priority projects under Stage Two of the Shipwreck Coast Master Plan and improve public infrastructure at key tourist sites along the Great Ocean Road.
- \$7.6 million to expand Deakin University's Future Economy Precinct, \$10 million to construct a new Queenscliff ferry terminal, and a further \$3.5 million for the Waterfront Safe Harbour project.



Darwin

- Revitalising the city centre through a new education and civic precinct, including a new Charles Darwin University city campus.
- Redeveloping State Square to cool the city, making it more liveable and increasing space for outdoor events and festivals.
- Support for the Larrakia people as the traditional owners of Darwin.



Adelaide

- Redeveloping the old Royal Adelaide Hospital site, known as Lot Fourteen, to deliver a precinct that drives entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity.
- Ensuring the right settings to better manage population growth and city planning.



Hobart

- Supporting Hobart Airport to establish direct international flights with \$82.3 million for border services — creating opportunities in tourism and export industries.
- Solidifying Hobart as a gateway to the Antarctic and Southern Ocean, including options to facilitate an Antarctic and Science Precinct at Macquarie Point.
- \$730 million to create a reliable, sustainable and cost effective transport system, including \$576 million to replace Bridgewater Bridge — Tasmania's largest transport infrastructure investment.



Western Sydney

- Realising the 30-minute city by delivering the North-South Rail Link.
- Creating 200,000 jobs by supercharging the Aerotropolis and agribusiness precinct as catalysts.
- Skilling residents in the region and initiating an Aerospace Institute.



Upcoming Deals




Perth

- Building on the joint government investment in METRONET, an ambitious plan to connect Perth's suburbs, reduce congestion and meet Perth's future planning needs.



South-East Queensland

- Building on the significant joint government investment in congestion-busting road and rail projects, a long term shared vision from all three levels of government to drive investment and enhance liveability in South-East Queensland.



Connecting regional centres

Strong population growth in Australia's three largest cities is spilling over into the surrounding areas creating vibrant cities which are becoming strong population centres in their own right.

A number of the regional centres surrounding Australia's capital cities have had high population growth over recent years.

For example, Geelong in Victoria and the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast in Queensland averaged annual population growth in excess of 2.3 per cent.

Population growth in these cities is driven by a number of factors including proximity to major capital cities, lower costs of living, retirement amenity and lifestyle preferences.

Improving the transport connections between our capital cities and regional centres has significant potential to support economic and population growth in the regions.

In particular, faster passenger rail links can strengthen economic and social ties and connect people to housing, jobs and services.

The speed and comfort of rail also lends itself to transport over long distances, allowing for more productive time than would otherwise be the case in a private vehicle and helping to support the increasingly flexible nature of work.

Transport, particularly rail connectivity, will be an important factor in further integrating regional and metropolitan economies for their mutual benefit.

Currently, many regional trains run at slower speeds due to track limitations. For example, the average speed between Sydney and Wollongong is less than 60 km/hour.

Among the factors constraining the current speed of this service is the location of a single tunnel only large enough for one line.

This means that trains often need to wait for trains coming from the other direction before they can pass. Single tracks create a bottleneck that restricts the number of trains that can run, which often leads to overcrowding during peak periods.

The Government's 20 year vision is to have faster, more efficient and reliable journey times along strategic corridors connecting major regional centres with capital cities.



Delivering a prosperous Australia

While population growth has increased congestion in our cities, it has also increased economic growth.

The contribution of migrants



Being younger, migrants are more likely to participate in the labour force.

In the absence of migrants, all else being equal, instead of the participation rate increasing 1.4 percentage points over the period from 2000 to 2016, it would have fallen 2.1 percentage points.



Without migration, growth in Australia's workforce would slow dramatically and, in the longer term, would even shrink.

The focus of Australia's migration arrangements on skilled workers has meant that migrants have also likely supported productivity.



In 2016, 68 per cent of recently arrived migrants, aged between 25 and 44, were educated to a diploma level or higher compared to 42 per cent of Australians of the same age.



Skilled and family migrants are estimated to contribute more to Government revenue through income tax than they absorb in expenditure, through the use of services. The 2017-18 permanent migrant intake is estimated to improve the Commonwealth budget by \$4.2 billion across the migrants' lifetimes.

Australia is on track to record our 28th consecutive year of economic growth.

Economic reforms from the 1970s onwards, sound economic and government institutions, Australia's proximity to the growing markets of Asia, high demand for Australia's raw materials, as well as population growth have all contributed to this enviable record.

Over the past 40 years, population factors (i.e. the share of the population that is working age) have contributed almost a sixth of the growth in Australia's GDP per person.

A strong economy has many tangible benefits, including increased prosperity and the creation of new jobs. But the more intangible benefits – that a stable, prosperous economy creates a strong foundation for Australians to feel they have opportunities to lead a life of their choosing – have potentially been even more important.

Australia's migration arrangements, which focus on young, skilled migrants, have contributed to this economic growth.

Despite reductions to the permanent migration program, the focus of the program will remain firmly on attracting skilled migrants to our shores who will help alleviate the ageing of Australia's population, fill labour and skills shortages, and add to our diverse society.



The Government is continuing to ensure Australian businesses can access the skills they need through employer sponsored migration.

This offers Australia the best opportunity to bring forward the economic dividend from migration as these migrants begin working and contributing to the economy immediately.

The Government will also provide additional points to skilled migrants without dependants as well as those migrants whose dependants have strong English language skills. Migrants with good English are more likely to be able to participate in the workforce and contribute to the Australian economy. Strong English language skills also allow migrants to settle into their communities quickly.

Opportunities will, of course, remain for family and humanitarian migration.

While permanent migration, and particularly skilled migration, has contributed to Australia's economic success, temporary migration has also made a large contribution to the Australian economy.

For example, in 2017-18, international students in Australia added \$32.4 billion to the economy and other personal travel (e.g. tourism) added \$21.6 billion, making these our third and fifth largest export industries.

Temporary migration has also contributed to a flexible, responsive and diverse economy.

Temporary migration has fluctuated with general economic and labour market conditions. This has supported structural shifts in the Australian economy, such as the emergence and dissipation of the mining boom, by helping businesses to fill short and medium-term skills gaps when Australian workers were not available.

The Government has sought to retain the responsiveness that temporary skilled workers inject into the economy but ensure that they are only brought into Australia in response to genuine skills shortages. Changes in 2018 to achieve this replaced the 457 visa with the Temporary Skill Shortage visa.

The new visa applies more stringent eligibility criteria to employers and visa applicants, including stricter labour market testing, strengthened English language requirements and new work experience requirements.

Housing for a growing population

A growing population needs access to additional housing. When housing is secure and affordable it can help ensure the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

Over recent decades, new housing supply has not always kept pace with demand for housing from population growth and a reduced average household size.

For example, the NSW Government estimated in 2017 that there was an accumulated undersupply of 100,000 dwellings in Sydney. This mismatch seems to have contributed to higher housing costs, including in the rental market.

Many low income households around Australia have been experiencing rental stress. Over 50 per cent of low income rental households in Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth spent more than 30 per cent of their income on rent in 2016.

Additional demand for housing from population growth may also have an impact on house prices.

However, house price growth has historically gone through cycles. Interest rates and supply restrictions can have an important impact on house price growth.

All levels of government can impact housing outcomes. For example, the States and Territories have responsibility for housing supply through planning, land use and housing infrastructure policies.

In addition to helping States and Territories fund social housing and homelessness services, the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement requires State and Territory governments to have publicly available housing strategies, which include the level of housing supply needed to respond to projected housing demand.





The Commonwealth Government is actively contributing to the supply of housing by:

- selling Commonwealth Government land when suitable for residential housing and deemed surplus to Commonwealth requirements.
- enabling Australians to propose alternative uses for Commonwealth land through the online Australian Government Property Register.
- requiring affordable housing initiatives to be considered in the disposal of all Commonwealth land that is suitable for housing.
- divesting 127 hectares of land in Maribyrnong in Melbourne to cater for up to 6,000 new homes, subject to the approved planning framework, within 10km of the CBD.
- establishing the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) to operate the \$1 billion National Housing Infrastructure Facility that will provide finance for infrastructure to unlock new housing supply.
- limiting tax deductions for expenses associated with holding vacant land which will discourage 'land banking' by individuals.



The Commonwealth Government is creating the right incentives to improve housing outcomes by:

- helping first home buyers save a deposit through voluntary contributions into superannuation.
- reducing barriers to downsizing to free up larger homes.
- strengthening the capital gains tax rules so that foreign residents pay the right amount of tax.
- better targeting tax deductions for residential investment properties.
- strengthening foreign investment rules to discourage foreign investors from leaving their property vacant.

For the most vulnerable Australians, the Commonwealth Government is:

- helping to improve outcomes in social housing and homelessness with NHFIC operating an affordable housing bond aggregator that aims to provide cheaper and longer term finance to registered community housing providers.
- providing over \$1.5 billion to State and Territory governments annually under the new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement.





Supporting a changing population

Australia's strong economic growth has enabled the Government to deliver record investments in essential services, including in education and healthcare.

This year, the Commonwealth Government will invest more than \$80 billion in health, \$35 billion in education, and \$175 billion in social services and welfare.

As the population grows, the Government will continue to prioritise these essential services that Australians rely on.

Changes in the location and characteristics of Australia's population are just as important as its size, with new services required as greenfield developments are built or new people move into an established location.

A different mix of services has also become necessary as Australia adapts to meet the needs of a changing population.

More women are choosing to enter the workforce, increasing the call for affordable, quality childcare. The Government's new Child Care Subsidy will allow more than 1 million families to benefit.

Increasing women's workforce participation will help to fill emerging gaps in the workforce as older Australians retire, but continued migration is needed to slow the rate at which Australia's population ages.

The demand for health and aged care services, in particular, is expected to increase.

The Government is taking action to anticipate this with changes to aged care services to improve availability, safety, and quality as well as record expenditure expected to reach \$23.5 billion in 2021-22.

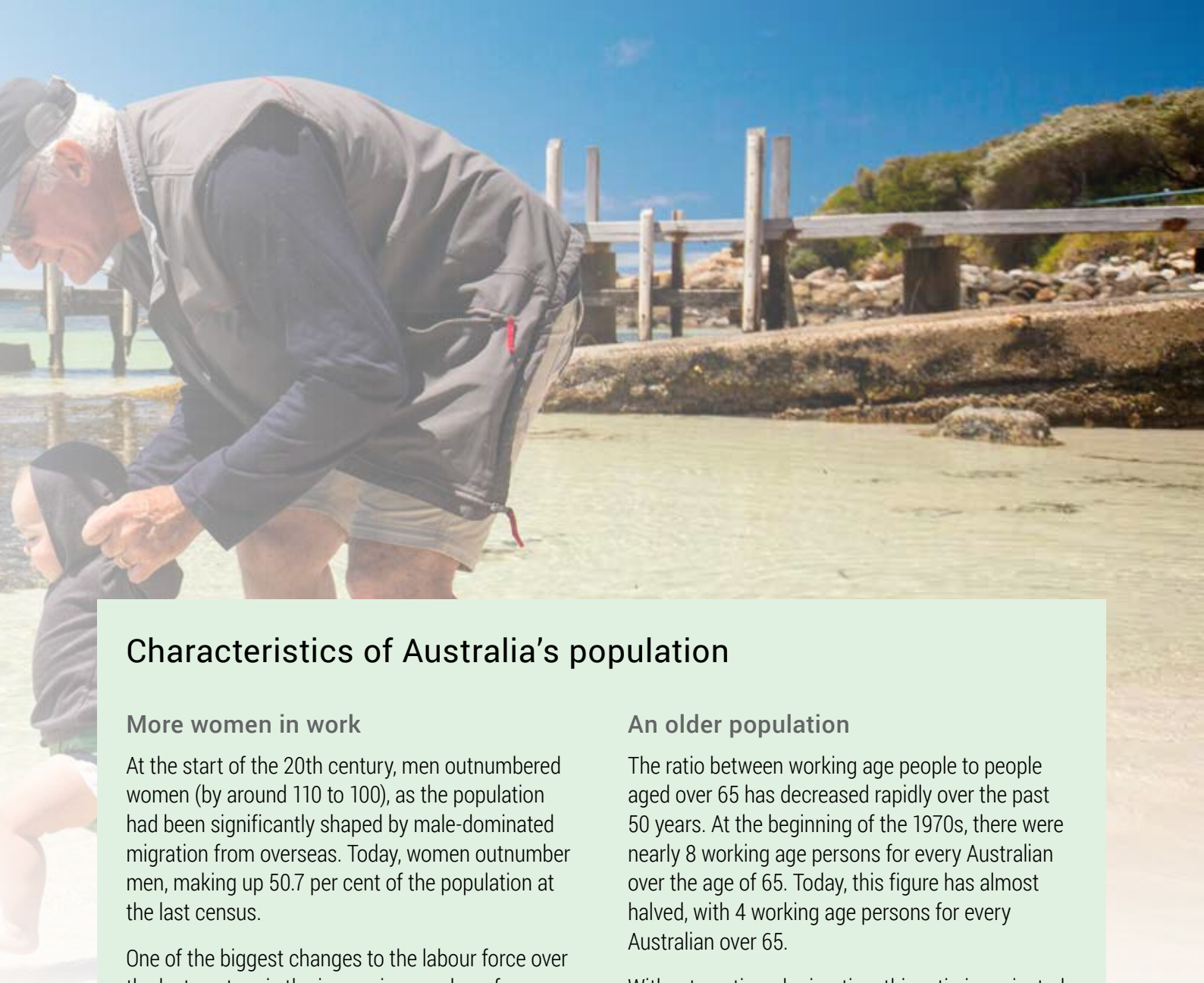
The Commonwealth Government is also making a record investment in public hospitals with funding increasing by more than 50 per cent over the five years to 2018-19 and expected to further increase to \$24.4 billion in 2021-22. In addition, the \$1.25 billion Community Health and Hospitals Program will improve patient care and reduce pressure on community and hospital services across the country.

Education is becoming more important in a globalised economy, increasing the need to ensure quality education for our young Australians.

The Government is delivering fairer funding for schools through needs-based funding to ensure those students with the greatest need receive the support they require.

The Government's needs-based schools funding will deliver a record \$307.7 billion in recurrent school funding from 2018 to 2029.

To ensure the welfare system encourages self-reliance and is targeted to those most in need, the Government has increased the time that new skilled and family migrants must wait to access certain benefits, ranging from one to four years. Exemptions exist for vulnerable cohorts.



Characteristics of Australia's population

More women in work

At the start of the 20th century, men outnumbered women (by around 110 to 100), as the population had been significantly shaped by male-dominated migration from overseas. Today, women outnumber men, making up 50.7 per cent of the population at the last census.

One of the biggest changes to the labour force over the last century is the increasing number of women in work. In 2019, the participation rate for women was over 60 per cent, compared with around 54 per cent 20 years earlier.

This has helped to boost living standards for families and drive Australia's economic growth.

More highly educated

We are becoming a more educated society. Around 67 per cent of 20 to 64 year olds have a vocational or university qualification, up from 59 per cent a decade ago.

Over 75 per cent of people aged 20 to 24 in 2018 already hold or are studying towards a vocational or university qualification.

An older population

The ratio between working age people to people aged over 65 has decreased rapidly over the past 50 years. At the beginning of the 1970s, there were nearly 8 working age persons for every Australian over the age of 65. Today, this figure has almost halved, with 4 working age persons for every Australian over 65.

Without continued migration, this ratio is projected to halve again by 2066. With current migration levels, the ratio would fall to 3 working age persons for every Australian over 65. Trends for Australians to work longer may also lessen the impact of an ageing population.

Australians aged over 85 are projected to be one of the fastest growing age cohorts in the country. In 2018, there were 503,000 Australians aged 85 years and over, making up 2 per cent of the population. This group is projected to triple in size to around 1.5 million by 2066, growing to 4 per cent of total population.

Migration has helped alleviate the ageing of Australia's population since migrants to Australia are younger on average than the resident population – around 84 per cent of migrants arriving in 2015-16 were less than 40 years old, compared to only 54 per cent of the resident population.

Delivering the skills needed in regions

Regional Australia is also experiencing a changing population. But there is not one regional population story, just as there is not one Australian population story.

As agricultural and manufacturing employment has declined, there has been a movement of people away from inland towns.

In contrast, there has been an increasing flow of people to coastal regions driven by increased technological connectivity and lifestyle preferences.

This has meant that a town's amenity has become an important feature in understanding population flows.

For example, over the past 50 years, the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast have grown from around 133,000 to almost 1 million residents. Cairns and Townsville have grown collectively from around 100,000 people to over 300,000.

Some regional inland towns have also experienced strong bursts of population growth.

During the recent mining boom, a number of inland regional areas and cities such as the Pilbara, the Kimberley, and Mackay experienced rapid population growth driven by significant capital investment. Since 2012, this trend has reversed, with some regions now experiencing population decline.

Regional Australia has been built on hard work, resilience and community mindedness. An important element has been the hard work of families that have migrated to regional Australia for a new life.

Regional Australia has skill shortages and positions that cannot be filled locally. Many regions and industries are desperate to fill positions so that they can continue to operate. The Regional Australia Institute estimates there are 47,000 job vacancies outside capital cities.

We need migration that contributes to regional communities, meets local skill shortages and invests in local economies and communities.

The Government's new regional provisional visas are designed to support these efforts by encouraging more migrants to settle and remain in regional areas. These visas will enable skilled migrants to become established in regional communities and contribute to regional economies, with a pathway to permanent residency at the end of a three year period.

Overseas migration has played an important role in maintaining population in regional areas, contributing slightly more to population growth than natural increase.

For example, migrants are the largest contributor to population growth in New England and the Riverina in NSW, Warrnambool and the Mallee region in Victoria, and the wheat belt and resource-rich southern part of Western Australia. Of those migrants who settled outside Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, at least 85 per cent were still there five years later.

In addition to building the local workforce, migrants support entrepreneurship, business development and job creation in regional Australia.



To attract Australian and international students to study in regions, the Government will provide 4,720 new Destination Australia scholarships over four years. Students will be able to access up to \$15,000 each per year for studying at a regional campus of a university or vocational education and training provider.

The Temporary Graduate Visa will be extended for international students who have completed their studies at a regional campus of a university, have lived in regional Australia during their first post-study work visa, and wish to continue to live and work in regional Australia.

The Commonwealth has entered into a new Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) for the Northern Territory and agreed a DAMA for the Great South Coast Region of Victoria.

These five year agreements allow employers in designated regions to sponsor skilled workers under the Temporary Skill Shortage visa and Employer Nomination Scheme visa programs, for occupations which are not available under the standard visa arrangements.

For example, the Victorian Great South Coast Region agreement will assist key agriculture and hospitality businesses to fill critical employment gaps by providing them access to a broader range of overseas workers. The Government is also in negotiations to introduce DAMAs in other areas around Australia.

The Government will continue to consult across Australia to ensure that the Migration Program is fit for purpose and is addressing critical skill shortages.

The Government has also made changes to the Working Holiday Maker, Pacific Labour Scheme, and Seasonal Worker visa programs to address workforce shortages in regional Australia. This will help to provide farmers with more workers when they need them.

What attracts people to the regions?

Australia's regions are diverse and the factors attracting people to a particular region are just as varied. For instance, Bunbury in Western Australia has experienced significant population growth from mining and natural gas workers who are able to commute to jobs in remote mining regions whilst taking advantage of the attractions of coastal living.

Furthermore, those regional centres in close proximity to the major cities have also enjoyed increased growth. Regional centres such as Geelong, Ballarat, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast have experienced significant growth as their neighbouring capital city has grown.

There have also been smaller towns which have been successful in unlocking their intrinsic economic potential, such as Margaret River in Western Australia which has taken advantage of the nexus between agriculture, amenity and tourism.



Investing in regional Australia

Government support to regional Australia focuses on supporting regional communities to realise their potential.

The Government has committed significant funding to provide the infrastructure, connectivity and access to essential services to make regional Australia an attractive place to live and work.

Based on the Government's successful City Deals model, Regional Deals bring together all levels of government around a clear set of objectives.

Deals are tailored to each region's comparative advantages, assets and challenges and reflect the unique needs of regional Australia.

Regional Deals support 'a place-based approach' by putting community-identified priorities at the centre.

The Barkly Regional Deal, covering the Tennant Creek region in the Northern Territory, and the Hinkler Regional Deal, covering the Bundaberg and Hervey Bay region in Queensland, are under negotiation.

The Government's regional programs ensure the necessary infrastructure to maintain local services needed for liveability and support economic growth.

The Government's \$3.5 billion Roads of Strategic Importance Program will upgrade key freight routes and better connect key sectors, such as agriculture, mining and tourism, to transport hubs.

The Building Better Regions Fund provides dedicated funding to communities outside the major capitals to invest in infrastructure and community development activities to create jobs, drive economic growth and build stronger regional communities.

The Regional Growth Fund will provide grants of \$10 million or more for major transformational projects which will support long-term economic growth and create jobs in regions which are undergoing structural adjustments.

Digital connectivity is critical to supporting regional growth. The Government has put the NBN on track to provide high speed broadband access to all Australians in regional areas by mid-2020 with services already available to over 91 per cent of Australian homes and businesses outside major urban areas.

The Government has also invested \$220 million in the Mobile Black Spot Program to extend and improve mobile phone coverage and competition in regional and remote areas of Australia.

The Decentralisation Agenda to relocate public sector jobs outside Canberra, inner Sydney and inner Melbourne will also benefit regional communities by creating local jobs, promoting economic diversification, and stimulating further regional growth.



Supporting the regions



Regional Deals

Like existing City Deals, Regional Deals bring together all levels of government to capitalise on the opportunities for a region and make the most of local strengths to foster economic development.

Regional Deals support a 'place-based approach' by putting community identified priorities at the centre.

Initial Regional Deals

Barkly



Hinkler



Designated Area Migration Agreement

Designated Area Migration Agreements allow employers in the designated regions to sponsor specific skilled workers to meet local needs under the Temporary Skill Shortage visa, for occupations which are not available under the standard visa arrangements.

Initial DAMAs

Northern Territory



Great South Coast Region of Victoria



Roads of Strategic Importance

The Government's \$3.5 billion Roads of Strategic Importance Program will upgrade key freight routes and better connect key sectors, such as agriculture, mining and tourism, to transport hubs.

Example projects

Northern Australia Package



Bindoon Bypass



Tasmanian roads package



Regional Programs



Building Better Regions Fund

\$641.6 million in funding for regional communities to build infrastructure and community development activities.



Regional Growth Fund

\$272.2 million investment for major transformational projects to support economic growth and jobs in our regions.



Mobile Black Spot Program

\$220 million to extend and improve mobile phone coverage and competition in regional and remote areas of Australia.



Keeping Australians together

Population growth can enliven and add diversity to communities, whether this growth comes from newly arrived migrants or Australians moving to new locations.

Australia is one of the most culturally diverse and socially cohesive nations in the world. Twenty-nine per cent of the population were born overseas and half of the population were either born overseas or have a parent born overseas. These benefits rely on successful integration and cohesion within communities.

A cohesive community is one where people have a strong sense of identity and are engaged with their local community.

As population growth changes the make-up of communities, people can become concerned about issues such as respect for shared values, community safety, economic security and discrimination.

The Government understands that all Australians want to share common ideals and feel safe. Being connected to strong, resilient, diverse and inclusive communities is a great source of strength for people.

It provides a sense of belonging, the opportunity to contribute and help others and a support network in tough times.

Sharing common ideals and values does not mean rejecting diversity, but rather embracing an Australia where a diverse population can come together, and grow together, while retaining individual diversity.

To date, Australia has largely managed to achieve this ideal. We come from all corners of the globe and from many walks of life but we share a strong sense of belonging and pride in our country.

Australians have high levels of life satisfaction and continue to believe that multiculturalism has been good for Australia.

The majority of Australians believe that migrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures and are generally good for the economy.

Consistent with Australia's Multicultural Statement, *Multicultural Australia: United, Strong, Successful*, the Government continues to strengthen its engagement with Australia's diverse communities, to enhance community-wide integration and social cohesion outcomes.



A diverse Australia

Australians speak many languages

Australians speak over 300 languages, including 150 Indigenous languages.

English remains the most common language spoken at home – over 72 per cent of the population speaks English only.

Australians come from many different countries

Australian-born people account for 71 per cent of the population. Almost 3 per cent of Australians identify as Indigenous but they make up 25 per cent of the Northern Territory's population.

Of Australians born overseas, those born in Asia now outnumber those born in Europe.

Despite this, Australians born in the United Kingdom and Ireland remain the largest group of overseas born residents (5 per cent).

This is followed by China (2.5 per cent), New Zealand (2.3 per cent), India (2.2 per cent), the Philippines (1.1 per cent) and Vietnam (1.0 per cent).

Recent migrants from Indonesia, South Korea, Iraq and Pakistan have overtaken Croatia, Malta, Poland and Serbia in the list of top 20 migrant source countries.

Different parts of Australia have attracted different nationalities

Migrants from the United Kingdom account for 12 per cent of the population in Perth compared to 4 per cent in Melbourne and Sydney.

People born in China accounted for over 2 per cent of Australia's population – around 5 per cent of Sydney's population, 4 per cent of Melbourne's population, 3 per cent of Canberra's population but only 1 to 2 per cent across most of the other capital cities.

People born in India accounted for 2 per cent of the national population – around 4 per cent of Melbourne's population but only 2 to 3 per cent across most of the other capital cities.

Australians practice over 100 religions

Christianity remains the most common religion (52 per cent), with Islam and Buddhism practiced by around 2.5 per cent of the population each.

Supporting migrants to adapt to life in Australia

The Government is increasing support for migrants to become established and integrated in their communities.

The Government funds a range of programs to increase support for migrants to become oriented, established, and integrated in their communities.

For example, humanitarian migrants and other eligible migrants receive early, tailored and intensive settlement support in the first five years of their arrival in Australia. Government settlement services assist these migrants with employment, education and training, housing, health and well-being, community participation and networking, family and social support, legal and language services.

There are a number of other Government programs which support newly arrived migrants such as the National Community Hubs Program. This program helps migrants with school-aged children to connect with their community.

Similarly, the Government's Fostering Integration Grants program funds community organisations supporting migrants to integrate into Australian social, economic and civic life.

Groups assisted through this program include newly arrived migrants and emerging ethnic communities, with a particular focus on women, young people and regional migrants.

Social cohesion allows our nation to benefit from the economic and social contribution of all communities, and acts as a protective factor against safety and security issues caused by social cohesion.

The Government will deliver a new package of social cohesion measures. The package focuses on the everyday experiences Australians have in common – how we communicate, live and engage with each other.

It will include investment in:

- the **National Community Hubs Program**, helping migrants with school-aged children to connect with their community; and a pilot National Youth Hubs initiative, using the successful approach used in the National Community Hubs Program to supporting migrant and refugee women and young people aged 13-21;
- the **Community Languages Multicultural Grants Program** to help young Australians learn another language and connect people to new languages and cultures;
- **Implementing Sport 2030**, which includes a range of initiatives supporting Australian sport and the role it plays in promoting social inclusion;
- the **Fostering Integration Grants Program** to help local community organisations assist migrants to integrate into life in Australia;
- digital initiatives through the **Enhanced Community Engagement program** to help young people to understand and counter online hate; and
- **grants to community organisations** with a record of delivering successful grassroots programs to enhance integration, mutual understanding and respect for diversity.

Some programs will celebrate diversity and inclusion through sport, while others will encourage community participation and pathways to employment. The package will complement existing programs that celebrate our unique diversity, connecting Australians with new cultures and the cultures of their ancestors.



The Government's Community Sport Infrastructure Grants program is improving community sport infrastructure to support greater community participation in sport and physical activity and providing safer, more inclusive community sporting hubs.

Sport and physical activity bring people together – young and old Australians, women and men, Indigenous Australians, people from various ethnic backgrounds. All brought together because of their passion for sport.

Sport epitomises Australian values of team work, playing by the rules, hard work, trying your best, and life lessons of winning and losing. Sport helps break down barriers and fosters community pride.

The Government has long promoted and supported sport and physical activity through support for national sporting organisations and programs and campaigns targeted at specific population groups. The Indigenous Marathon Project, Girls Make Your Move campaign, and the Big Issue Community Street Soccer Program are just some examples.

Nhill settlement story

The settlement of migrants works best when communities connect with migrants who reflect their unique needs and character.

This was the case for a Karen refugee community from Myanmar who were resettled in Australia through Australia's Humanitarian Program, and were attracted to live and work in the small, regional town of Nhill in north western Victoria.

In recent times, Nhill has faced a declining working-age population.

In 2009, Luv-a-Duck, a family-owned agricultural business, needed workers.

Through AMES Australia, a not-for-profit migrant and refugee settlement agency funded by the Commonwealth Government, Luv-a-Duck managers and community leaders in Nhill established close ties with leaders from the Karen refugee community who were initially living in Melbourne.

The positive experiences of the first small groups of families who moved to Nhill inspired others and, by the following year, there were more than 70 Karen refugees in the community.

Between 2010 and 2015, approximately 160 Karen refugees resettled in Nhill.

Fifty-four of these refugees are directly employed in Luv-a-Duck, with the remainder enabling the creation and filling of additional jobs across a number of broader community businesses.

In addition to the economic benefits this has brought, these refugees have slowed population decline, revitalised local services and increased social capital across both communities.

Employment and labour market opportunities were a core part of the Nhill story, however successful settlement required support services for those relocating and leadership from both the local and the Karen refugee community.

