



1 March 2011

Sustainable Population Strategy Taskforce  
Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities  
PO Box 787  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback into the Sustainable Population Strategy Taskforce's issues paper *A sustainable population strategy for Australia*. CCIQ is supportive of the Federal Government's election commitment to develop a Sustainable Population Strategy in the aim to meet the major challenges and opportunities created by a changing population.

Last year, CCIQ released a Population and Infrastructure Blueprint which provides the Queensland business community's perspective on population and infrastructure challenges and opportunities. The blueprint builds on the results of a CCIQ survey of 800 businesses to develop strategies and recommendations that will assist in planning for population growth and infrastructure moving forward. A copy of the Blueprint is attached for consideration by the Taskforce, as the findings of this research are equally applicable to this process.

The key recommendation from CCIQ's Blueprint was for the development and implementation of a Queensland Population Policy that ensures the State Government takes a leadership and coordination role to achieve the most consistent, coherent and considered approach to population planning and infrastructure provision state-wide. CCIQ also supports the development of a national Population Policy to ensure the Federal Government efficiently and effectively manages population issues by successfully meeting the needs of a growing population resulting in a thriving and competitive Australian economy.

Overall, CCIQ is supportive of a population policy that takes action to embrace and support a growing population, not one that takes action to cap the population in Australia. Countries with declining populations are facing challenges that could lead to potentially devastating economic impacts, including chronic skill shortages, lower standards of living, reduced opportunities for younger generations, lower taxation revenue for essential services and weakened positions within the global marketplace. These are not issues that CCIQ wishes to encourage for a growing and prosperous Australia.

From a business perspective, population decline is believed to have a greater impact on businesses than population growth, with population decline representing a significant threat to business viability, costs and productivity. Almost two thirds of businesses agree that population decline would be a significant threat to the State's economy and competitiveness. Population decline could also have significant negative impacts on employment due to reduced economic activity and demand for goods and services. It is easy to conclude that Queensland's strong population growth over the last decade has been very important for ensuring that Queenslanders continue to enjoy a high standard of living and for a vibrant Queensland economy and community.

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As a result, CCIQ is strongly supportive of taking action that supports a growing population to ensure all Australian regions remain sustainable long into the future and support continued economic growth. In order to do this, the Chamber recommends the development and implementation of a Population Policy that incorporates the following strategies:

- Encouraging the settlement of more people in regional areas;
- Planning and development of infrastructure networks that meet the needs of the growing population and economy;
- Marketing and promotional campaigns to increase the knowledge, awareness and attractiveness of all regions;
- Developing strategies to meet the labour and skills demands of business in all regions. For example, businesses support a population policy that embraces skilled migration to expand the nation's workforce and allow them to continue driving economic growth and prosperity through accessing the skills required to successfully run their business;
- Developing regional and industry specific 'Industry Development Plans';
- Implementing strategies that enhance the tax competitiveness of regions;
- Adopting innovative and practical ways to reduce the regulatory burdens impacting on all businesses and communities; and
- Strengthening community engagement and consultation practices.

CCIQ is strongly supportive of linking the development of a Sustainable Population Strategy with other major policy initiatives and reforms. However, there are also several concurrent activities occurring around population policy including the development of a National Urban Policy by the Department of Infrastructure and Transport as well as the development of a regional policy. CCIQ believes it is essential to bring all of these activities together in order to develop one overarching population policy with one Minister responsible for its development and implementation, and subsequently responsibility for driving a whole-of-government approach to population policy.

With good policy and planning, strong population growth will be a positive outcome for Australia. It does provide challenges, however it also provides abundant opportunities for our economy and communities. It is essential that Australia successfully capitalises on these opportunities whilst meeting challenges head on to secure our future prosperity.

If you have any questions regarding this correspondence or the attached Blueprint, please do not hesitate to contact CCIQ Policy Analyst Leanne Usher on (07) 3842 2237. CCIQ looks forward to working with the Federal Government to finalise and implement a national population policy.

Yours sincerely,



**Nick Behrens**  
General Manager – Policy

Att. CCIQ Population and Infrastructure Blueprint