



UDIA POLICY PAPER

POPULATION

BACKGROUND

The Australian community has benefited from a growing population since Federation, during which time our wealth and standard of living has increased immensely. Australia's population will continue to grow well into the future, with the Australian Bureau of Statistics projecting that our population will approximately double over the next 50 years, with most growth occurring in our capital cities. Given the inevitability of a growing population, it is up to governments to ensure that the opportunities which population growth presents are fully realised.

UDIA POSITION

Well managed population growth can be a boon for both the economy and existing residents. Population growth enlarges the labour force to support businesses and helps offset Australia's ageing workforce, whilst the new skills and abilities new workers help improve economic productivity and innovation.

By balancing the needs of the economy, the environment, and the Australian community, UDIA believes that a larger Australian population can also be a sustainable population. Australia's population policy should balance these issues to ensure a prosperous economy with a high quality of life, while maintaining social cohesion and environmental protection.

UDIA supports the Federal and State Governments establishing short/medium/long term population forecasts to allow for the orderly planning of infrastructure and land release. Governments must focus on infrastructure investment in order to keep pace with population growth. They must also remove the burden of increasing and unsustainable charges placed on new home buyers (who represent less than 1% pa of the population) for infrastructure that benefits the whole community.

ACTION FOR GOVERNMENT

- Federal and State Governments to collaborate to establish and regularly update regular short/medium/long term population forecasts to support land-use and infrastructure servicing plans.
- The Federal Government should expand the National Cities Performance Framework to measure improvements in Australia's largest cities and identify the base level of service expected from key elements of liveability, affordability, congestion, environment, business investment, to accommodate a larger population.
- Reinstate the National Housing Supply Council to monitor market housing supply pipeline requiring cities to maintain a specified rolling supply of development-ready land to meet short/medium/long term demand driven by population growth and to identify blockages within the system.
- Federal funding to be linked to State Governments establishing comprehensive land use plans which are aligned with detailed, costed infrastructure plans and underpinned by delivery timeframes.
- The Federal Government should maintain the current immigration policy and develop a settlement framework which encourages immigrants to settle in a broader range of locations (to the current overwhelming focus on Sydney and Melbourne) that can accommodate population growth.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Go to www.udia.com.au, call 02 9262 1214, or email udia@udia.com.au