OUR PLAN FOR

POPULATION, MIGRATION AND BETTER CITIES
Contents

KEY POINTS .............................................................................................................................................. 3

OUR RECORD ........................................................................................................................................ 4

Managing growth in our cities ............................................................................................................. 7

A strong and prosperous Australia ..................................................................................................... 10

New national population and planning framework ........................................................................... 11

Bringing Australians together ............................................................................................................. 12

Busting congestion in our cities and connecting the regions ............................................................ 12

THE CHOICE ....................................................................................................................................... 16

THE COST ........................................................................................................................................... 17
KEY POINTS

The Liberal and Nationals Government will tackle the impact of increasing population in congested cities and back smaller cities and regions looking for greater growth to secure their economic future.

We are working to keep our economy strong, keep Australians safe and keep Australians together. Australia is the most successful multicultural society in the world and our Government is working to ensure we remain a strong, prosperous and united society.

We will lower the cap on our migration program, build the infrastructure and deliver the services Australians need. It’s all part of planning for more evenly distributed population growth.

But over the past two decades, infrastructure and services have not kept pace, causing congestion on our roads and public transport – especially in Melbourne, Sydney, and south-east Queensland.

In our capital cities alone, the economic cost of congestion is estimated to cost the economy about $25 billion a year.

At the same time many of our smaller cities and regions desperately need workers, with around 60,000 job vacancies in regional Australia today.

The Liberal and Nationals Government’s plan for Australia’s future population will ease the pressure on the big capitals while supporting the growth of these smaller cities and regions.

We will freeze immigration levels for the next term of government.

Last year, we brought the permanent migration intake down to its lowest level in a decade, improving the integrity of the visa system and prioritising Australians for Australian jobs. We will cap our permanent migration intake at 160,000 per year over the next four years. This will mean 120,000 fewer places available for permanent migration to Australia compared with previous settings. And we will cap the numbers of migrants coming to Australia as refugees at 18,750. We will set a target of 60 per cent of the Offshore Component for women, up from 50 per cent in our most recent year, and increase the Women at Risk Program as a proportion of the Offshore Component from 14 per cent in 2017-18 to an allocation of 20 per cent.

Part of our population policy will include stronger incentives for new people to Australia to settle outside the big capitals in areas that will welcome their skills and expertise. We are setting aside 23,000 places each year for regional visas, and we will work with regional communities and across all levels of government to increase the number of refugees and humanitarian entrants settled in regional Australia, in the communities that support them, from a target of 30 per cent to 40 per cent in 2019-20.

And we are providing $71 million for programs that embrace Australia’s multicultural diversity and help all communities become actively part of, and benefit from, Australia’s economic and social development.

To bust congestion and further relieve population pressure, we have increased our record infrastructure investment to $100 billion. This includes a $4 billion Urban Congestion Fund which is
dedicated to removing the pinch points and traffic snarls which frustrate hardworking Australians across the country.

As part of this Fund we are allocating $500 million to a Commuter Car Park Fund which will provide greater access to public transport options and take up to 25,000 cars off the road.

The Liberal and Nationals Government’s plan for population includes:

- Reducing the migration cap by 15 per cent and incentivising more new migrants to settle outside the big cities where there are jobs and services.
- Planning for the future by working more closely with state and territory governments to match infrastructure with local population need.
- Continuing to bust congestion with road upgrades and better public transport.

Labor’s failure to plan for the impact of record migration on our cities has meant we have been forced to play catch-up.

Only the Liberal and Nationals Government has a plan to better match migration to Australia’s needs, ease the pressure on big cities and ensure Australia remains the best country in the world to live, work and bring up a family.

**OUR RECORD**

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, small businesses, farmers, and local councils in some regional centres are crying out for more people to support their economies and to fill critical skills gaps to ensure their communities thrive.

The Liberal and Nationals Government has reduced the size and lifted the quality of Australia’s migration program. The number of temporary skilled visas granted has dropped by about 50 per cent compared to when Labor was last in power, matched by the Liberal and Nationals Government’s track record of significant improvements to the integrity of our temporary and permanent skilled visa intake.
These changes include:

- Abolishing the 457 visa and replacing it with the new Temporary Skill Shortage visa. 457 visas exploded when Bill Shorten was Employment Minister, reaching 126,000 visa grants under Labor in 2012-13 compared to 65,000 visa grants in 2017-18.
- Occupation lists that reflect both short and medium to long term skills gaps, as well as acute shortages in regional Australia.
- Stricter labour market testing – so that skilled migration is only used where an Australian worker is not available.
- Stronger English language, age and work experience requirements.

Managing population change is a shared responsibility.

It involves all levels of government working across many fronts – from investment in infrastructure through to service delivery. To ensure we get the best outcomes over the next decade and beyond the Liberal and Nationals Government is working cooperatively with Premiers and Chief Ministers across Australia, including by:

- Establishing a new ‘bottom up’ approach to population planning and management by giving the states and territories greater input.
- Tasking state and territory Treasurers and the Australian Local Government Association to work with the Commonwealth to consider a new national framework for population planning and management.
- Securing endorsement from state and territory leaders to make population a standing item at COAG.

Cities are where the majority of Australians live, work and play. They bring families together and build thriving workplaces and community ties.

The Liberal and Nationals Government established a City Deals policy to bring the three levels of government together to help deliver the best possible outcomes for our capitals and major regional cities.

There are City Deals now up and running in seven locations:

- Townsville, agreed in December 2016 and includes:
  - $200 million (including other funding) for Stage Two of the Haughton Pipeline;
  - $100 million for the North Queensland Stadium;
  - $75 million towards the Port of Townsville Channel Capacity Upgrade;
  - $5 million towards the preservation of the Townsville Eastern Access Rail corridor.
• Launceston, agreed in April 2017 and includes:
  o $130 million for the relocation of the University of Tasmania campus in Launceston; and
  o $47.5 million to improve the health of the Tamar River.

• Western Sydney, agreed in March 2018 and includes:
  o $3.5 billion for the first stage of the North-South Rail Link;
  o a world class Aerotropolis including Commonwealth land at North Bringelly to become Western Sydney’s advanced manufacturing, research, medical, education and commercial hub; and
  o $65 million towards a $150 million Western Parkland Liveability Program, to deliver community facilities and amenities that will enable new housing supply.

• Darwin, agreed in November 2018 and includes:
  o $97.3 million of this commitment will facilitate the establishment of an Education and Civic Precinct on Cavenagh Street in the CBD;
  o $4.8 million for the establishment of an Urban Living Lab in Darwin - $2.7 million of which will come from the Commonwealth, with CSIRO also contributing $2.1 million.
  o Divestment of Defence-owned land at Stokes Hill, with a commitment to redeveloping the site within the term of the City Deal.
  o Support for the Larrakia people as the traditional owners of Darwin, including an 8.8 per cent employment target for jobs held by Indigenous Australians.

• Hobart, agreed in February this year and includes:
  o $461 million replacement of Bridgewater Bridge
  o $82.3 million for border services at Hobart International Airport; and
  o $30 million for projects in partnership with community housing providers, delivering over 100 new dwellings.

• Geelong, agreed in March this year and includes:
  o $85.65 million towards visitor economy projects along the Great Ocean Road;
  o $30 million towards the construction of the Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre;
  o $20.85 million for public realm improvements under the Revitalising Central Geelong Action Plan;
  o $10 million for the development of a new ferry terminal at Queenscliff to improve ferry services crossing the heads of Port Phillip Bay.
  o $3.8 million for road upgrades to the Geelong Future Economy Precinct at Deakin University; and
  o $3.5 million for the completion of the Geelong Waterfront Safe Harbour project.
• Adelaide, agreed in March this year and includes:
  • Locating the Australian Space Agency, Mission Control and Space Discovery Centre at Lot Fourteen;
  • $85 million for a new Aboriginal Arts and Cultures Gallery;
  • $30 million towards building the International Centre for Food, Hospitality and Tourism at Lot Fourteen;
  • $20 million for an Innovation Hub at Lot Fourteen to enable joint research between government, business and universities;
  • $10 million in smart infrastructure to support innovative technology-based solutions to urban challenges; and
  • $3 million for an Indigenous Business Sector Strategy to grow Indigenous jobs and businesses.

The Liberal and Nationals Government is working to keep our economy strong, keep Australians safe and keep Australians together. Australia is the most successful multicultural society in the world and our Government is working to ensure we remain a strong, prosperous and united society.

Our plan for Australia will:

1. Create 1.25 million more jobs over the next five years;
2. Maintain budget surpluses and pay down debt;
3. Deliver tax relief for families and small businesses;
4. Keep Australians safe and our borders secure; and
5. Guarantee increased funding for schools, hospitals, medicines and roads that you and your family rely on, already at record levels.

All without increasing taxes.

We know we need to work together with all levels of government to ensure that our cities remain the envy of the world for their liveability, and we need to help grow our regions and rural areas to provide career and lifestyle opportunities for more Australians.

Managing growth in our cities

• Reduce the size of the migration program

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

This concentrated growth has led to rising urban congestion and reduced liveability.
We are reducing the annual migration ceiling from 190,000 to 160,000 places. Over the next four years, this will mean 120,000 fewer places available for permanent migration to Australia.

And we will cap the numbers of migrants coming to Australia as refugees at 18,750. We will set a target of 60 per cent of the Offshore Component for women, up from 50 per cent in our most recent year, and increase the Women at Risk Program as a proportion of the Offshore Component from 14 per cent in 2017-18 to an allocation of 20 per cent.

We are also setting aside 23,000 places each year for regional visas. People who obtain these visas must settle outside of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane/Gold Coast and Perth. We will work with regional communities and across all levels of government to increase the number of refugees and humanitarian entrants settled in regional Australia, in the communities that support them, from a target of 30 per cent to 40 per cent in 2019-20.

Better distribution will reduce pressure on our major cities, creating the breathing room for improved planning and better infrastructure to manage long-term population growth.

We also need to ensure Australian businesses can access the skills they need to grow and create more jobs, particularly in the regions that want them, and also in areas of skills shortage. The Government will seek to increase the proportion of migrants who are sponsored by an Australian business.

We will also offer states and territories a greater say on migration by increasing the number of state-territory nominated places.

- Encourage a greater number of migrants to settle outside Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and south-east Queensland.

Regional Australia has skill shortages and positions that cannot be filled locally, with the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities calculating close to 60,000 job vacancies outside capital cities.

For many regional industries, their ongoing operation will depend on finding the workers they need.

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

The Liberal and Nationals Government’s regional provisional visas are designed to support these efforts by encouraging more migrants to settle and remain in the regions: 23,000 places will be set aside for the new visas. Migrants will be required to live and work in regional Australia for three years before becoming eligible to apply for permanent residency.
The changes mean migrants will stay in regional Australia for longer, building ties through workplace and community involvement – and easing pressure on our congested cities.

- **Designated Area Migration Agreements**

Our Government has agreed new Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMA) for the Northern Territory, the Great South Coast Region of Victoria, the ORANA region of Western New South Wales, South Australia (1x regional and 1x Adelaide) and Kalgoorlie-Boulder in the Western Australian Goldfields.

These five-year arrangements allow employers in designated regions to sponsor skilled workers (via the Temporary Skill Shortage visa and Employer Nomination Scheme visa programs) for occupations not available under the standard visas.

For example, the Victorian Great South Coast Region agreement will assist key agriculture and hospitality businesses to fill critical employment gaps by providing access to a broader range of overseas workers.

- **Regional provisional visas**

Under two new regional visa categories, skilled migrants will be priority processed and afforded access to a larger pool of jobs on the eligible occupation lists compared to those who live in our major cities.

Extra points will be awarded for migrants living and working in regional Australia, and states and territories can request access to an increased allocation of dedicated regional migration places.

We will also simplify and broaden the definition of regional Australia for all skilled migration visas. Regional Australia will encompass all of Australia outside of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane/Gold Coast and Perth, relieving pressure on the big capitals and making skilled workers available to fill critical regional skills gaps.

Skilled migrants will have the opportunity to become established in regional communities and contribute to local economies.

Visa recipients will need to live and work in regional Australia for three years before becoming eligible to apply for permanent residence.

- **Changes to working holiday maker program**

Farmers in regional and rural areas will now receive more support to resolve labour shortages with changes to the working holiday maker program.
The Liberal and Nationals Government:

- Introduced a third year visa option for all Working Holiday Makers who from July 2019 carry out six months of specified work in regional areas.
- Increased the period in which all Working Holiday Makers can stay with the same agricultural (plant and animal cultivation) employer, from six to 12 months.
- Expanded the regional areas where subclass 462 visa holders can work in agriculture (plant and animal cultivation) to qualify for a second year of stay. Previously only those 462 visa holders who worked in Northern Australia were eligible.
- Lifted the caps in 2018-19 on Work and Holiday visas from Chile, Israel, Peru, and Spain with further negotiations underway.
- Increased the eligible age from 30 to 35 years for Working Holiday visa applicants, starting with Canada and Ireland from November 2018.
- Began a new Work and Holiday arrangement with Greece in March 2019.

These working holiday makers are critical to filling short-term workforce shortages in regional areas and they also inject more than $3 billion into our economy each year.

- Growing sustainable and diverse education in Regional Australia

We are providing 4,720 scholarships, for domestic and international students, of up to $15,000 each per year to study at a regional campus of a university or vocational education training provider.

We are also giving international students studying at regional universities access to an additional year in Australia on a post-study graduate visa.

**A strong and prosperous Australia**

- Attracting the best migrants

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.
The composition of the program will be maintained at about 70 per cent in the Skill stream and 30 per cent in the Family stream, striking an appropriate balance that maximises the benefits of immigration for all Australians.

Our visa changes enhance the Government’s focus on skilled migration, with the number of Employer Sponsored skilled visas increasing from 35,528 grants in 2017-18 to 39,000 places in 2019-20.

More places will be available in the State/Territory Nominated category, increasing from 28,974 grants in 2017-18 to 38,968 places in 2019-20, providing states and territories a greater say in migration.

The Government will also launch in early 2019 a new Global Talent – Independent program aimed at attracting the very best talent from around the world, with 5,000 places allocated in the 2019-20 Migration Program.

There is no change to the Family stream of the program, with 47,732 places available in 2019-20.

We’re ensuring that Australia’s migration program is equipped for an increasingly globalised economy.

**New national population and planning framework**

- *Working with the states and territories to develop collaboration, transparency and certainty for Australia’s population growth*

Planning for and managing population growth is a shared responsibility.

This is why we are joining with the 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.

- *Establishing new Centre for Population*

To ensure there is a central, consistent and expert perspective on population growth in Australia, the Liberal and Nationals 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 and coordinate population planning across commonwealth, state, territory and local governments.

**Bringing Australians together**

The Liberal and Nationals Government is delivering a $71 million package aimed at bringing Australians together.

This package invests in programs that embrace Australia’s multicultural diversity and help all communities become actively part of, and benefit from, Australia’s economic and social development.

It includes:

- $20.4 million to expand and enhance the National Community Hubs Program helping migrants with school-aged children connect with their community. The expanded program will focus on encouraging community participation and pathways to employment.
- $2.2 million for a National Youth Hubs Program, using the successful approach from the National Community Hubs Program to support migrant and refugee women and young people aged 13-21.
- $7.3 million in additional funding for the Fostering Integration Grants Program, including a new $3 million grant round to support migrants integrating into Australian social, economic and civic life. The grant round will open shortly.
- $19.6 million for Implementing Sport 2030 – a range of initiatives to support Australian sport and the role it plays in promoting social inclusion.
- $10 million for the Community Languages Multicultural Grants Program to help young Australians learn another language and connect people to new cultures.
- $9.5m as part of the Strong and Resilient Grant Program to community organisations with a record of delivering successful grassroots programs to enhance integration, mutual understanding and respect for diversity.
- $1.8m for digital initiatives through the Enhanced Community Engagement Program to help young people counter online hate.
- $0.6m to evaluate Australia’s existing social cohesion measures, to help determine successful policies and programs for the future.

**Busting congestion in our cities and connecting the regions**

- **Urban Congestion Fund increased to $4 billion to bust congestion**

Congestion comes at a significant price if you live in our cities: limiting access to jobs, services, ports and markets. In our capital cities, the economic cost of congestion is about $25 billion a year.
In the 2019-20 Budget, the Liberal and Nationals Government boosted its record infrastructure investment from $75 billion to $100 billion to bust congestion and ensure our towns and communities are better connected.

We also quadrupled our Urban Congestion Fund from $1 billion to $4 billion, 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 tackling bottlenecks on bridges.

The Fund now includes a $500 million Commuter Car Park Fund – to invest in commuter car park upgrades that encourage greater use of public transport.

Public transport itself can also suffer from congestion. Many Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane rail services have been at capacity during morning peaks since 2011.

We are working with state, territory and local governments to build and upgrade transport connectivity in key locations.

- **Fast Rail to regional centres**

  The Liberal and Nationals Government will deliver $2 billion to bring fast rail to life between Geelong and Melbourne, halving the travelling time of the 80km journey to 32 minutes.

  This congestion-busting rail service will travel at an average speed of 160 km/h, unprecedented in Australia.

  It will also be the first of many fast rail projects that our Government will embark on to better link the big capitals with regional centres.

  The Liberal and Nationals Government’s fast rail plan also invests $40 million for detailed assessments of five additional corridors, complementing the three we have already begun and which are due for completion in mid-2019.

  The business cases include:

  ✓ Brisbane to Sunshine Coast (underway).
  ✓ Brisbane to Gold Coast (new funding).
  ✓ Melbourne to Greater Shepparton (underway).
  ✓ Melbourne to Albury-Wodonga (new funding).
  ✓ Melbourne to Traralgon (new funding).
  ✓ Sydney to Newcastle (underway).
✓ Sydney to Wollongong (new funding).
✓ Sydney to Parkes via Bathurst and Orange (new funding).

Our business cases will coincide with investments being made in Victoria and New South Wales:

- Melbourne to Ballarat (under investigation by Victorian Government).
- Sydney to Canberra (under investigation by New South Wales Government).

We are also progressing a separate business case for Brisbane to Toowoomba passenger rail alongside our work to deliver Inland Rail between Melbourne and Brisbane.

To progress fast rail, a National Faster Rail Agency will be established to guide the work, determine priorities, work with state governments, communities and the private sector and provide innovative finance solutions.

As our population grows, fast rail networks are crucial to easing the congestion pressures in our cities and shaping Australia’s future.

  - **City Deals**

Since 2016, the Liberal and Nationals Government has taken a proactive approach to developing our cities and regions, including through City Deals.

City Deals are negotiated across the three tiers of government to leverage each city’s unique strengths and respond to specific needs.

They are developed by working with local and state or territory governments and other stakeholders.

Solutions are sought for issues that may be inhibiting a city from reaching its full potential. Commitments are centred on:

- Jobs and Skills.
- Infrastructure and Investment.
- Liveability and Sustainability.
- Innovation and Digital Opportunities.
- Governance, Planning and Regulation.
- Housing (supply and affordability).

Through its pioneering City Deals and broader cities policy, the Liberal and Nationals Government is building stronger, better and more liveable cities.

  - **Regional Deals**
The Liberal and Nationals Government has prioritised adopting the City Deal framework for our regions. 'Regional Deals' have been established for three locations so far:
- Barkly (covering Tennant Creek and the surrounding region in the Northern Territory).
- Hinkler (focusing on Bundaberg and Hervey Bay in Queensland).
- Albury Wodonga on the New South Wales-Victoria border.

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

They support ‘a place-based approach’ by putting community-identified priorities at the centre.

- **Roads of Strategic Importance**

  Our Government has established the Roads of Strategic Importance (ROSI) initiative to deliver the upgrades that our key freight and supply corridors across the nation require.

  These upgrades will improve access for businesses and communities to essential services, markets and job opportunities.

  We have already allocated funding for corridors and will work with the states and territories on initial priorities.

Corridors being funded under ROSI include:

**Northern Australia**
- Cooktown to Weipa
- Cairns to Northern Territory Border
- Townsville to Roma
- Mount Isa to Rockhampton
- Tennant Creek to Townsville
- Adelaide River to Wadeye
- Alice Springs to Darwin
- Alice Springs to Hall Creek
- Newman to Katherine
- Karratha to Tom Price

**Southern Australia**
- Toowoomba to Ipswich
- Toowoomba to Seymour
- Tenterfield to Newcastle
- Barton Highway
- Echuca to Robinvale
THE CHOICE

Our controlled approach to managing population growth stands in stark contrast to Labor’s track record.

Last time Labor was in office, they opened our borders to criminal people smugglers, resulting in 50,000 people arriving on more than 800 boats. Six years and more than $16 billion later, we are still dealing with Labor’s mismanagement of our borders.

At the same time, Bill Shorten as Employment Minister presided over a record growth in 457 visa numbers and did little to protect Australian workers from being displaced by temporary visa holders.

Bill Shorten also approved deals with fast food outlets to bring in hundreds of foreign workers to flip burgers.

In 2013, Labor’s then Immigration Minister, Brendan O’Connor, reluctantly admitted that over 10,000 visa holders rorted Labor’s 457 visa program.

And Kevin Rudd turbo-charged population growth as he chased his ‘Big Australia’ dream—a dream which had no plan for coping with rapid growth rates in our major cities.

Labor’s mismanagement has been felt by Australians experiencing negative consequences of population growth that has outpaced infrastructure.

Labor still do not have a plan for Australia’s population growth.

Labor do not have an infrastructure plan and they are promising to significantly increase other areas of our visa program.
Labor will increase the Humanitarian Program by 13,000 refugees per year, or 52,000 over four years, at a cost of $6.2 billion dollars.

Labor will introduce an uncapped 10 year parent visa, meaning an unlimited number of people will be able to come to Australia under Labor’s policy.

The Coalition has fixed Labor’s border protection and 457 mess.

We have a proven track-record of strong border security policies and an orderly and managed immigration program.

Only the Liberal and Nationals Government has a plan for Australia’s future population. You can’t trust Bill Shorten to manage Australia’s population growth because it requires strong control of border security and immigration.

THE COST

The Liberal and Nationals Government’s plan for Population, Migration and Better Cities will not place additional costs on the Budget.