

## Submission Template

### Issues Paper on a Sustainable Population Strategy for Australia

Insert your comments in the text box that follows each question. You may answer as many or as few questions as you like.

#### A Sustainable Population Strategy

*Q1: What issues do you think a Sustainable Population Strategy for Australia should address?*

*The first and most important issue here is to accommodate Australia's population growth. There is no doubt that Australia needs to grow its population and skills base. Therefore we need a mechanism to ensure that we have the workforce to ensure this country maximises it's opportunities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

#### Population and the Environment

*Q2: What do you think are the key indicators of an environmentally sustainable community?*

*This issue goes to the question of liveability. In growing our population we need to ensure that the standard of living that we have set over the last 2 decades is maintained. Issues such as transport, health, water, education and cultural facilities all need to be taken into account.*

*Q3: How have changes in the population impacted on your local environment?*

*Not necessarily. Here in Geelong we have found that we have accommodated population growth but at the same time we have protected our local environment. There has been some loss of agricultural land as urban development increases however on balance the environment is probably in better shape than it was 25 years ago. The population growth often means that people take more care of their environment and are more interested in environmental issues.*

*Public transport is an area that perhaps is lacking in our city and we need to address that so that we move away from the car dependant society.*

*Q4: How might technological or governance improvements mitigate the environmental impacts of population growth?*

*Governance is important and governance needs to be pitched at liveability in the 21 century. Technology is all part of that arrangement and the NBN rollout will play an important roll in this as well. We need to get ahead and plan for environmental impacts as apposed to fixing problems that occur. This will take leadership and the ability to take the community with you.*

*Q5: How do population driven changes in your local economy affect your environment?*

*With population growth comes new suburbs and new developments. Certainly in Geelong's case most of these new developments are very environmentally sensitive and create opportunities for sustainable lifestyles. This needs to enhanced and increased as we move forward to a higher population level.*

*Q6: What lessons have we learnt that will help us to better manage the impacts of population change on the environment?*

*Increased housing density and amenities is critical. Inner city living, transport and the provision of open space are all matters that should be fully addressed. Australia and particularly Geelong needs to look at world wide trends in city design and management to ensure we become the modern city we aspire to be.*

## Population and the Economy

*Q7: What do you see as the defining characteristics of a flourishing and sustainable economy?*

*With population growth comes a commitment to employment. There is an argument that says population growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will automatically attract new business. The hunt for skilled workers and employment is on in Australia and around the world and there is a view that cities that grow will attract business accordingly. The Geelong story is slightly different in that we have a city in transition moving from a traditional industrial city to a new age professional and services economy. Either way a steady population growth is key to Geelong's future.*

*Q8: Is your community, business or industry facing skills shortages or other immediate economic pressures, and how are these best managed?*

*There is no doubt that there are skill shortages surfacing in Geelong and across the broader South West region. Again for Geelong to reach its potential as a growing and dynamic 2<sup>nd</sup> tier city we will require a skilled workforce. Geelong needs to make it clear to government that skilled migration targeted at the skills required for this city needs to be encouraged.*

*Q9: In the decades to come, what challenges and opportunities will our economy face, and how will they interact with changes in our population?*

*It is important to note that the baby boomer cohort will be leaving the workforce in the next 10-15 years. It is important that the Australian Government recognises this and puts in place packages that allow workers to stay in the workforce longer and that new skills are attracted for regions. Shortage*

*of workers worldwide will be an issue that Australia and the regions of Australia will need to grapple with. We need to put mechanisms in place now to ensure our employment sustainability.*

*Q10: How should we measure the sustainability of our local, regional and national economies?*

*Australia should conduct an audit across major capitals, 2<sup>nd</sup> tier cities and regions each year to address the issue of measuring sustainability. Key indicators need to be established and each community needs to report on those key indicators. Water supply, public transport, education, health, open space and liveability all need to be a part of these key indicators.*

### **Population and Communities**

*Q11: What are the things that make your community a good place to live?*

*Geelong is now recognised as a lifestyle city and is very much a water based city. Geelong is finding that many people are moving from the major capitol Melbourne to Geelong to seek a better lifestyle and a more sustainable lifestyle. House and land prices certainly have something to do with that but it is more and more evident that people are coming for a lifestyle change. Geelong is perfectly placed to become a lifestyle city in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

*Q12: How have changes in the population changed the way you live your life?*

*There are more people in Geelong that there were some 20 years ago however the city has been reasonably managed and the impacts minimal. Key indicators such as health, education and lifestyle are equally as good as they were 25 years ago.*

*Q13: What sustainability issues need to be addressed in order for your community to accommodate a changing Australian population?*

*We need to look at our major resources, water, power etc to ensure from a basic needs point of view we are accommodated. Geelong has carried out much work in this area and is currently looking at a population growth strategy of ½ a million people by mid century. During that process we are looking at all the issues to do with accommodating more people over that period of time.*

*Q14: What are some useful indicators to help measure the liveability and sustainability of our communities?*

*No doubt the easiest way to do this would be a community survey in which people are asked to talk about their communities over a 5-10-15 year period. Again it would be interesting to ask the aspirations of the communities with a forward look to 50 years.*

Additional comments

Submissions will be accepted until 5pm on **Tuesday 1 March 2010**.  
Submit your completed template via:

- Email at: **sustainablepopulation@environment.gov.au**
- Facsimile at: 02 6274 2505 or
- Mail to: Sustainable Population Strategy  
GPO Box 787  
Canberra, ACT, 2601