



991-1471



**THE HON PETER DUTTON MP
MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION
AND BORDER PROTECTION**

Ref No: MC16-001719

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dennis,
Dear Dr Jensen

Thank you for your letter of 1 December 2014 to the former Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, enclosing petition number 991/1471, concerning population growth and its effect on Australia's infrastructure and environment. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Australia has well managed and targeted immigration programmes that are designed to meet its social and economic needs. Australia's permanent migration intake is decided by the Australian Government through the annual Migration Programme. The size and composition of the programme is informed by a wide range of factors, including stakeholder views, immediate and forecast long-term social and economic trends, impacts to population, as well as the family reunion needs of Australians. Based on these factors, there are up to 190,000 permanent migration places available in 2015-16.

Based on Australian Demographic Statistics, published on 17 December 2015 on the Australian Bureau of Statistics website, Australia's population grew by 1.4 per cent for the year ended 30 June 2015, with net overseas migration (NOM) contributing 53 per cent to the total population growth. Further information is available at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3101.0/>.

The Government sets annual planning levels for the permanent Migration Programme and has some control over the circumstances under which temporary entrants enter Australia, such as compliance with their visa conditions. However, it does not have a direct influence on all components of NOM. This is because NOM includes the movements of Australian citizens, long-term temporary entrants (such as international students and temporary skilled business entrants) and the entry of New Zealand citizens under the Trans-Tasman Agreement.

Australia's annual NOM level reached a peak in December 2008 of 315,700, mainly due to the large number of temporary entrants remaining in Australia. It has since declined to 168,200 (June 2015 preliminary estimate) due in part to economic conditions, and as a result of policy measures designed to ensure long-term temporary entrants depart Australia at the appropriate time.

Research conducted in 2013 by Professor Peter McDonald and Dr Jeromey Temple from the Australian National University looks at optimal levels of migration, and suggests that NOM in excess of 160,000 is desirable in the short term as well as the long term from an economic perspective. The full report can be accessed at: <http://www.demographicinsight.com.au/other/McDonaldTemple%20-%20Web.pdf>.

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection publishes information on forecast NOM levels. These forecasts enhance the capability of service providers, including state, territory, and local governments, in their planning and forward work programmes. Copies of the Department's NOM reports can be accessed at: <http://www.border.gov.au/about/reports-publications/research-statistics/statistics/live-in-australia/net-overseas-migration>.

The Government is committed to a whole-of-government approach to balancing the immigration intake against the needs of our labour force, infrastructure and the environment. The size of the permanent Migration Programme is also guided by Australia's long-term demographic trends. Australia's ageing workforce is predicted to have adverse consequences for Australia's prosperity and migration is one way in which to alleviate this issue.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

PETER DUTTON 10/02/16