

Question on Notice
No. 1938
Asked on 15 November 2007

MRS ATTWOOD asked the Premier (MS BLIGH) -

QUESTION:

Would the Premier advise the effects of Queensland's population growth since 1998?

ANSWER:

Queensland is Australia's powerhouse when it comes to population growth. Since the 1980s Queensland has been Australia's growth State in population terms and together with Western Australia also in economic terms. The State's population has increased by more than 1.46 million over the last 20 years.

Since 2000, Queensland's population growth has accelerated. Recently released population estimates based on the 2006 Census results confirm that the State achieved record growth over the five years to June 2006 with an average annual increase of 92,500 people. This compares to Victoria which had an increase of 64,700 people per annum and New South Wales with 48,400 people per annum.

For 13 of the past 15 years, Queensland has also been Australia's fastest growing State in percentage terms. Over the last five years the State has grown at an average annual rate of 2.4%, almost twice the national average of 1.3%.

South East Queensland has accounted for the majority share of growth in the State capturing more than two-thirds (71.1%) of Queensland's total over the last five years to June 2006. Within South East Queensland, Brisbane and Gold Coast Cities have been Australia's two fastest growing local government areas for at least the last 10 years. Since 2001, these two cities have increased by 95,000 and 83,700 respectively. The Sunshine Coast has also grown rapidly with an increase of 48,000 over the last five years.

Outside South East Queensland, a number of coastal regional centres have performed strongly since 2001. Townsville/Thuringowa lead with a growth of 20,160 followed by Cairns City with an increase of nearly 19,000. Third place was Mackay City with an increase of 14,310, followed by Hervey Bay, 11,820, and the Rockhampton region with 9,400 people.

With this continuing population growth, the Queensland Government is facing unprecedented demand for social and economic infrastructure across the State. Population growth and changing demographics are also affecting regional infrastructure planning and the provision of critical services such as water.

To help drive the State's sustainable development and delivery of infrastructure, the Government has created the Department of Infrastructure and Planning with the focus to optimise the benefits for Queenslanders through the delivery, planning, facilitation and coordination of major infrastructure projects.

To ensure future needs of South East Queensland's growing population are met, the Government publishes the *South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program*, each year which outlines infrastructure development occurring over the next two decades, including major investments in road and public transport projects, water infrastructure, the energy network and social and community infrastructure.

Additionally, the Office of Urban Management continues to plan for the sustainable management of growth in South East Queensland while the *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005-2026* is helping to manage the impacts of population growth and associated change.

These infrastructure plans, which are available on the Office of Urban Management's website at www.oum.qld.gov.au, will build and shape South East Queensland for the next generation and will deliver the infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of our growing population.

While population growth of the magnitude Queensland is experiencing is not without its challenges in terms of infrastructure, service provision, protection of the environment, and maintaining the enviable quality of life that we enjoy, the Government would much rather be tackling these challenges than those associated with a low growth or stagnant population.