



# MATTHEW GUY MP

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## Media Release

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# 20

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## Guy: Liberal Nationals to establish a Population Commission: The right growth in the right places at the right time.

Thursday 20 September 2018

**Liberal Nationals to establish a Population Commission: The right growth in the right places at the right time.**

At five million people, and growing at 2,700 people a week, Melbourne is jam packed.

Unplanned, unmanaged population growth is killing Melbourne's liveability.

The time for talkfests are over.

If we don't take action now Melbourne will go from the world's most liveable city to an urban claustrophobia.

That's why today I am announcing that a Liberal Nationals Government will establish a Population Commission with a board of seven people appointed by the Premier and

serviced by a secretariat based in the Department of Premier & Cabinet.

We need population growth but it needs to be the right growth in the right places at the right time.

The Population Commission will work across state and federal governments to assess and determine the likely population levels for Victoria for the years 2025, 2030, 2040, 2050, 2060, 2070, 2080, 2090 and 2100.

The Commission will also work with local councils to determine how population is likely to change over the same time periods and how it should be managed in each Local Government Area including regional cities to ensure that Victoria and Melbourne's population growth is sustainable and maintains liveability.

The Commission will take advice and information from the Federal Government, Local Government, Infrastructure Victoria, Victorian Government Departments and Victorian Statutory Authorities in determining the sustainable population levels.

The Population Commission will provide its advice on the intended population levels to Infrastructure Victoria, Victorian Government Departments and Victorian Statutory Authorities to allow for planning and provision of infrastructure and services to meet and manage the population levels it has determined rather than playing catch up.

Population growth in too many of our suburbs is growing at a much faster rate than that of local infrastructure and key services like police, transport, education and health.

These localised population limits and targets are to assist with decentralising our population and protecting our communities from overdevelopment.

This 'Capacity Advice' will also include the minimum number of police, doctors, teachers and healthcare workers needed to properly service the population levels for local government areas and towns. We cannot continue to have a situation where suburbs and towns are experiencing population growth but not experiencing a growth in the numbers of police, doctors, teachers and healthcare workers.

The Population Commission will also provide recommendations on planning restrictions for local government areas where there is inadequate infrastructure as well as police, doctors, teachers and healthcare workers to service the community properly. Planning restrictions on suburbs and towns will only be lifted once infrastructure and the numbers of police, doctors, teachers and healthcare workers reach specific levels.

The Population Commission will also advise on linking the re-zoning of growth areas to infrastructure and services funding.

One of the problems with the current unplanned population growth is that there is no co-ordination between the Victorian and Federal Governments. Despite the undoubted good intentions of previous State and Federal Governments, policies and infrastructure funding has often been uncoordinated and sometimes counterproductive.

That's why a key function of the Population Commission will be to work with State and Federal Governments on agreement of what is a sustainable level of population in Melbourne and Victoria as well as co-ordinating federal and state policies to achieve that target.

The Population Commission will also work with the Federal Government on policy changes to the visa program to direct migrants into long term settlement in regional Victoria. But a critical, non-negotiable part of that plan is to build the necessary social and transport infrastructure in regional communities including additional police, doctors, teachers and healthcare workers.

The Population Commission will also work with the Federal Government on taxation incentives and other decentralisation policies to assist with jobs growth outside of Melbourne.

As part of that process with the Federal Government, tough and honest conversations will need to be had about immigration levels and the settlement of immigrants into regions.

If the Federal Government is going to continue to allow the situation where Victoria receives more migrants than other states, then the Federal Government must lift the share of GST paid to Victoria to account for the additional infrastructure and services that we need.

We also need to look at all the different levers that state and federal governments can use to manage the settlement of immigrants to give them the best opportunities and to revitalise our regions with more jobs, infrastructure and services.

The Commission will track and review the population levels on a yearly basis and report those findings to the Premier.

The seven board members of the Population Commission would include experts from business, social services, growth areas and regional Victoria and will include people representing all parts of the political spectrum.

An average of around 2,700 people move into Melbourne every week which affects every aspect of our daily lives, with services cracking under the pressure, people

spending more time sitting in traffic and away from their families because our roads are congested, and our trains, trams and buses overcrowded.

Managing the explosion in our population is the biggest challenge facing Victoria today but also an incredibly exciting opportunity.

With Melbourne now jam-packed there's never been a more vital time to look to regional Victoria.

We need to regionalise our growth, and not just focus on Melbourne alone. We cannot continue to grow the way we have the past 30 years for the next 30 years.

My vision for Victoria is to be a state of cities and not a city state. We need population growth in the right areas, at the right time.

That's why more of the same unplanned growth and playing catch up with social and transport infrastructure is not an option.

The Liberal Nationals are working on a positive plan to manage population growth by decentralising our state by helping create good jobs in regional Victoria and carefully planning for growth in regional Victoria. The Population Commission will be at the centre of that plan.

Only the Liberal Nationals will ease the squeeze on population growth.

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