

**Submission to the
Productivity Commission Draft Report on
Migrant Intake into Australia**

Demographers are divided regarding if there is “no comprehensive empirical basis for setting an aggregate level of immigration or population over time that would maximise the wellbeing of the Australian community”. ref page 5 of the report. But just looking at the traffic congestion in our major cities it is clear that our road and public transport infrastructure is not coping with increased demand. Population control is beyond the scope of this enquiry but we can mitigate infrastructure problems by managing our migrant intake.

Spike Milligan is reported to have said “Ive had six children and created my own traffic jam”.

Barry Jones is reported to have said “Immigration must be an instrument of population policy. Population policy cannot be a long term side effect of ad hoc immigration practice”.

Draft Finding 4.1 repeats the assertion that: “there is no comprehensive empirical basis...etc.” but what we can do is balance the “economic , social and environmental policy objectives”. For all of these reasons we must be able to move around our cities with more efficiency than we are doing now.

The answer to the problem may be to reduce our migrant intake until our infrastructure can cope.

Draft Finding 6.4 says “Immigration, as a source of population growth in Australia , contributes to congestion in the major cities , raising the importance of sound planning and infrastructure investment”. However, we have not had this sound planning in adequate infrastructure investment and until we do we have the option of reducing our migrant intake to reduce the pressure on our road and rail networks.

Draft Finding 7.1 says “International and Australian evidence suggests the overall net fiscal impact of immigration tends to be small but positive. Selecting immigrants who are relatively young, healthy, skilled and proficient in English is likely to lead to a net positive fiscal outcome..” Providing incentives for these migrants to be placed in large rural centres rather than major cities is likely to lead to even greater net fiscal outcomes.

Draft Recommendation 10.1 suggests we could tighten the English language proficiency and academic results etc. in visa criteria. While reducing the overall migrant intake, the humanitarian refugee intake should be increased. It is harder, in many cases, to apply the test of English language proficiency and academic results to this category.

Characteristics of immigrants. In the Key points on page 77 it is mentioned that “Immigrants are much more likely to settle in capital cities than the Australian born population”. Incentives must be found to encourage migrants to move to rural centres and away from the capital cities.

Conclusion Rather than produce a longer paper I want to repeat, slightly modify and add to Vivienne Ortega’s summary in her submission to this enquiry :

- . maintaining Australia’s present rate of population growth can’t be justified on any level,
- . we should head towards a stable , sustainable population size, i.e. zero net overseas migration,
- . while reducing overall migration, we need to increase our humanitarian refugee intake to fulfil our international obligations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Fred Carter